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Casagrand Premier Builder Limited is proposing, subject to receipt of requisite approvals, market conditions and other considerations, to make an initial public offer of its equity shares and has filed a draft red herring prospectus ("DRHP") with the Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI"). The DRHP is available on the website of our Company, at [www.casagrand.co.in](http://www.casagrand.co.in), the SEBI at [www.sebi.gov.in](http://www.sebi.gov.in) as well as on the websites of the book running lead managers Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors Limited and DAM Capital Advisors Limited at [www.motilaloswalgroup.com](http://www.motilaloswalgroup.com) and [www.damcapital.in](http://www.damcapital.in) respectively, and the websites of the stock exchange(s) at [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com) and [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com), respectively. Any potential investor should note that investment in equity shares involves a high degree of risk and for details relating to such risk, see "Risk Factors" of the RHP, when available. Potential investors should not rely on the DRHP filed with SEBI for making any investment decision. The Equity Shares have not been and will not be registered under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended ("U.S. Securities Act") or any other applicable law of the United States and, unless so registered, may not be offered or sold within the United States except pursuant to an exemption from, or in a transaction not subject to, the registration requirements of the U.S. Securities Act and applicable state securities laws. Accordingly, the Equity Shares are being offered and sold outside the United States in "offshore transactions" as defined in and in compliance with Regulation S under the U.S. Securities Act and the applicable laws of the jurisdiction where those offers and sales occur.

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**₹3849/sft.****BIG REASONS TO BUY**98 world-class amenities | 77% open space  
28,550 sft. lavishly planned clubhouse**CASAGRAND MAJESTICA**

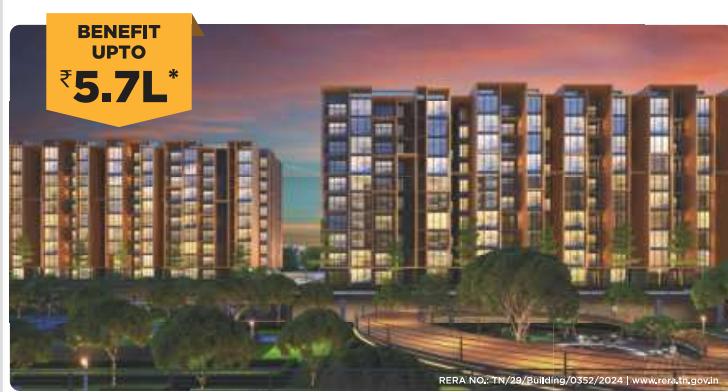
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₹1.2CR - ₹1.7CR\*CASAGRAND PRICE  
~~₹6299/sft.~~CASAGRAND VALUE PRICE  
**₹5999/sft.****BIG REASONS TO BUY**91 world-class amenities | 6-acre landscaped area  
Italian marble flooring | 32,000 sft. grand clubhouse**CASAGRAND JARVIS**

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**₹5575/sft.****BIG REASONS TO BUY**23-acre open space | 161 world-class amenities  
1.7-acre duo storeyed clubhouse**CASAGRAND CASAMIA**

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~~₹4649/sft.~~CASAGRAND VALUE PRICE  
**₹4499/sft.****BIG REASONS TO BUY**22-acre Spanish themed community | 15-acre open space  
162 premium amenities | 1.5-acre clubhouse**CASAGRAND MASSIMO**

KUNDRATHUR 100FT. MAIN RD.

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**₹4599/sft.****BIG REASONS TO BUY**85% open space with tropical forest | 70 world-class amenities  
24,000 sft. lavish clubhouse**CASAGRAND OSAKA**

PORUR

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~~₹5149/sft.~~CASAGRAND VALUE PRICE  
**₹4899/sft.****BIG REASONS TO BUY**Japanese themed community | 13,000 sft. clubhouse  
105 amenities | 4.5-acre open space**CASAGRAND REVA**

PALLAVARAM

3 & 4 BHK Apts. (1339 sft. - 2522 sft.)  
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~~₹4649/sft.~~CASAGRAND VALUE PRICE  
**₹4399/sft.****CASAGRAND MADELYN**

PALLAVARAM

2 & 3 BHK Apts. (1217 sft. - 2059 sft.)  
₹59L - ₹90L\*CASAGRAND PRICE  
~~₹4549/sft.~~CASAGRAND VALUE PRICE  
**₹4399/sft.****BIG REASONS TO BUY**

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MANAPAKKAM  
2 & 3 BHK APTS. FROM ₹63L - ₹99L\*  
**BENEFIT UPTO ₹4.5 L\***  
RERA NO.: TN/29/BUILDING/000173/2023 | www.rera.tn.gov.inCASAGRAND FLAGSHIP  
PALLIKARANAI  
2, 3 & 4 BHK APTS. FROM ₹73L - ₹1.3CR\*  
**BENEFIT UPTO ₹4.6 L\***  
RERA NO.: TN/29/BUILDING/0531/2022 | www.rera.tn.gov.inCASAGRAND ARIA  
ON TAMBARAM - MUDICHUR MAIN RD.  
2 BHK APTS. FROM ₹51L - ₹54L\*  
**BENEFIT UPTO ₹2.5 L\***  
RERA NO.: TN/01/BUILDING/0497/2022 | www.rera.tn.gov.inCASAGRAND FIRSTCITY  
SHOLINGANALLUR  
2 BHK APTS. FROM ₹58L\*  
**BENEFIT UPTO ₹2 L\***  
RERA NO.: TN/01/BUILDING/0114/2021 | www.rera.tn.gov.inCASAGRAND CLOUD9  
SHOLINGANALLUR  
4 BHK APTS. AT ₹1.6CR\*  
**BENEFIT OF ₹4.7 L\***  
RERA NO.: TN/29/BUILDING/0184/2023 | www.rera.tn.gov.inCASAGRAND HIGHCLERE  
ON KUNDRATHUR 100FT. MAIN RD.  
2 BHK APTS. FROM ₹56L - ₹58L\*  
**BENEFIT UPTO ₹2.2 L\***  
RERA NO.: TN/1/BUILDING/0177/2025 | www.rera.tn.gov.inCASAGRAND SOUTHBROOKE  
5 MINS FROM KELAMBAKKAM  
3 BHK APTS. FROM ₹51L - ₹56L\*  
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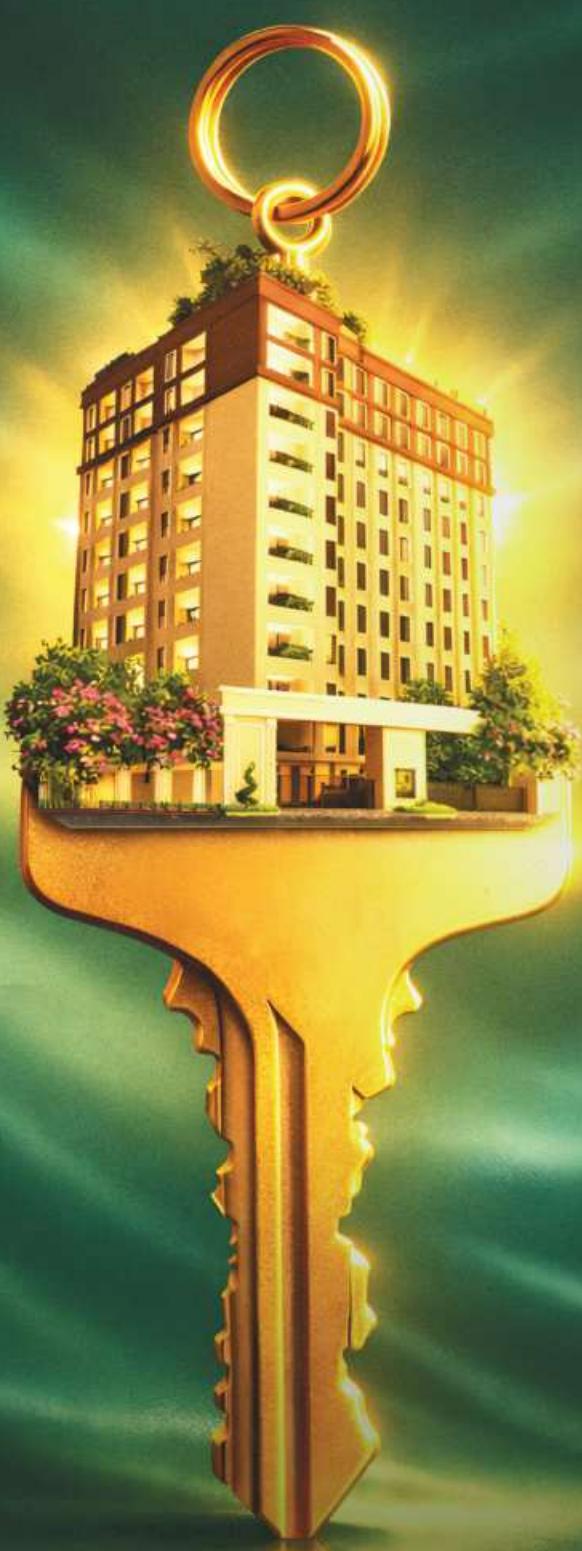


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#### Forum Vijaya Mall

12 mins

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#### Be Well Hospital

4 mins

#### SIMS Hospital

9 - 10 mins

### Colleges

#### St. Thomas College of Arts & Science

7- 8 mins

### Nearest Metro Stations

#### Koyambedu Metro

4 - 5 mins

#### Anna Nagar Metro

7 - 8 mins

### Bus Terminus & CMBT Metro Station

4 - 5 mins

### Airport

30 mins

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|-----------------------------------|
| Kendriya Vidyalaya<br>5 mins      |
| Chennai Public School<br>10 mins  |
| SBOA School, Anna Nagar<br>8 mins |
| The Schram Academy<br>10 mins     |
| DAV School<br>10 mins             |



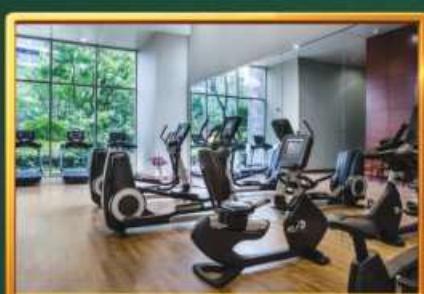
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**₹1.88 Cr\***

| Location   | Base Price | Market Price (3BHK) | Altitude 9 Launch Price |
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| Koyambedu  | ₹15,550    | ₹3.05 Cr            | Base price ₹12,500      |
| Anna Nagar | ₹16,100    | ₹2.99 Cr            | ₹1.88 Cr*               |
| Vadapalani | ₹18,200    | ₹3.00 Cr            |                         |



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'AD-HOC' APPOINTMENTS

SC slams States for not posting regular DGPs

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TIES TO CRIMINAL OUTFIT

U.S. shuts down 200 online drug stores

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SC REPRIEVE

Anurag Thakur free to involve in BCCI affairs'

NEWS » PAGE 10

PARLEY

Governor's Address: should it be scrapped?

Stand-off in Assemblies has become a constant

OPINION » PAGE 9



FLIGHT BOOKED

India will travel to Colombo: Suryakumar

SPORT » PAGE 13

NEARBY



Chennai's second pedestrian plaza inaugurated

CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated the pedestrian plaza on Khader Nawaz Khan Road in Chennai on Thursday. The city's second pedestrian plaza was built at a cost of ₹19.81 crore. » PAGE 7

T.N.'s first glow garden opens in Mamallapuram

CHENNAI

The State's first glow garden, a day-and-night entertainment hub, has opened on East Raja Street in Mamallapuram. It was inaugurated by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin recently. » Page 5

FRIDAY REVIEW » 4 PAGES

## 18 killed in blast at illegal coal mine in Meghalaya

The explosion, likely caused by dynamite, had trapped several persons at an unspecified depth, say police; CM promises action after one of the worst mining tragedies in the State since 2012

Rahul Karmakar  
GUWAHATI

An explosion in an illegally operated rat-hole coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district killed 18 miners on Thursday, officials said.

This is one of the biggest mining-related tragedies since July 2012, when 15 miners died in a flooded mine in the State's South Garo Hills district. Two years later, in 2014, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned the hazardous mining method.

Vikash Kumar, East Jaintia Hills district's Superintendent of Police, said the police received information about an explosion at an illegal coal mine at Mynsyngat in the Thangsko area around 11 a.m. A team rushed to the spot and confirmed that an explosion, suspected to have been caused by dynamite, had trapped several persons at an unspecified depth. "We



recovered 18 bodies. An injured person, initially rushed to a community health centre, was referred to a higher medical centre for treatment," he said.

District officials said teams from the National Disaster Response Force and the State Disaster Response Force have been engaged at the site to continue with the rescue and recovery efforts. Officials

said they were trying to identify the victims, although locals said most of the deceased were from Assam.

Inquiry ordered

Expressing sympathies to the families of those killed, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma said the government has ordered an inquiry. "Accountability will be fixed, and those res-

Deep death traps

Many workers have died in Meghalaya's rat-hole coal mines before and after the NGT banned the practice in April in 2014. Some of the major mishaps:

- July 2012: Underground stream flooded a mine in South Garo Hills district, killing at least 15 miners
- Dec. 2013: Five fell to death after a cable of a carriage mechanism breaks in East Jaintia Hills district
- Dec. 13, 2018: At least 15 drowned in a flooded 370-foot-deep mine in East Jaintia Hills
- Feb. 5, 2026: At least 16 died after a suspected dynamite blast trapped them
- Jan. 21, 2021: Six killed

ponsible will face strict legal action," he said. The Chief Minister also announced an ex gratia of ₹3 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased worker.

"We have started an investigation," Mr. Kumar said, adding the police were gathering information about the mine owner.

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 10

## Talks on India-U.S. deal joint statement in 4-5 days'

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

NEW DELHI

India and the U.S. will "finalise and sign" a joint statement on the first tranche of the bilateral trade agreement in the next four to five days, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday.

He said U.S. tariffs on Indian exports will be cut from 50% to 18% through an executive order from the U.S. President following the statement.

India can reduce tariffs on U.S. imports after signing the legal and formal agreement, which is expected mid-March, the Minister said.

"Meaningful talks are going on between India and the U.S. on the decisions that were announced by the leaders of the two countries," Mr. Goyal said. "The first tranche of the Bilateral Trade Agreement is nearly ready."

On the commitment to buy goods worth \$500 billion from the U.S., the Minister cited India's growth requirements and said one

"can clearly see before our eyes as potential that we

goods from other member nations.

PIYUSH GOYAL  
Commerce Minister

can import from the U.S. over the next five years".

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said a joint statement has followed each free trade agreement that India has negotiated with other countries.

\$500-billion imports

"Once the joint statement is there, it needs to be converted into a legal agreement," he said. "The legal agreement will give us the authority to reduce our tariffs. Their (U.S.) tariffs are executive tariffs [and so can be amended by executive orders]. Our tariffs are most-favoured nation (MFN) tariffs that can only be cut after the legal agreement has been signed."

MFN tariffs are those that World Trade Organisation members impose on

Mr. Goyal said India's growth would require large volumes of energy, data centre equipment, information and communication technology products and aircraft plus spares. "When we estimated what we would need from the U.S., we came to a figure of at least \$500 billion," he said, adding that India's current and future orders with U.S. aircraft maker Boeing stand at \$70-80 billion. "You add engines and spare parts, it will probably cross \$100 billion," he said.

India's global imports of critical items are above \$300 billion, said Mr. Agrawal. "In five years, these are going to be over \$2 trillion... the U.S. will add to diversification," he said.

## Opposition has defiled the temple of democracy: Modi

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday that successive defeats inflicted by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) were proving indigestible to the Opposition, but he had the support of the poor and any plan to "dig his grave" would not be successful.

Replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President for her Address to the joint sitting of Parliament, he referred to the absence of a reply by him in the Lok Sabha on the same debate as a "defilement of the temple of democracy" and an insult to not just President Droupadi Murmu, her position, and her tribal identity, but also the Constitution.

Congress retorts

The Opposition benches staged a walkout as Mr. Modi began his speech. The Prime Minister deplored Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's "traitor" comment on Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, and termed it an insult to the entire Sikh community.

The Congress, on the other hand, accused the Prime Minister of "hiding behind" Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. After Mr. Birla claimed that Opposition members were planning to hurt Mr. Modi, speaking outside the House, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra dismissed the claim as "absolute lie".

Told PM to avoid LS as Cong. MPs planned an 'unexpected act': Birla

Sreeparna Chakrabarty

NEW DELHI



Om Birla

Speaker took up the Motion of Thanks and put the amendments moved by the Opposition to vote. They were rejected. Mr. Birla then read out the Motion of Thanks to the President for her address on January 28, which was passed by a voice vote, even as the Opposition Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi to make a speech.

After repeated disruptions since morning, the

₹34,237-crore investment proposals get Cabinet's nod

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Cabinet has approved 15 proposals for a cumulative investment of ₹34,237.39 crore, Minister for Industries T.R.B. Rajaa said on Thursday, following a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin.

The Cabinet approved the proposed investments in Chengalpattu, Chennai, Kancheepuram, Karur, Krishnagiri, Perambalur, Namakkal, Ramanathapuram, Ranipet, Thoothukudi, Tiruchi, Tiruppur, Tiruvallur, and Tiruvannamalai districts. These were expected to generate 55,000 jobs, the Minister said.

Mr. Rajaa said the announcement regarding one of the major proposals approved by the Cabinet would be made on February 13. Referring to the 'Conversion Conclave' scheduled for February 12, the Ministers said many announcements would be made during that conclave.

Investment proposals by Kaynes Circuits India Private Limited (printed circuit boards, camera modules) and Johnson Electrical Private Limited (BLDC motors, power cooling motors) were among those approved.

"Evervan Kothari Footwear Limited's proposal would generate 25,000 jobs. We are bringing the Adidas brand to Tamil Nadu," Mr. Rajaa said.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 10

## A Royal show



Captain Marvel: Smriti Mandhana's sizzling knock led Royal Challengers Bangalore to its second Women's Premier League title at Vadodara on Thursday. In an exciting final against Delhi Capitals, RCB won by six wickets with two balls to spare. VIJAY SONEJI (REPORTS ON PAGE 13)

## Kuki-Zo groups boycott tribal MLAs in Manipur govt., accuse them of 'betrayal'

Rahul Karmakar  
GUWAHATI

Kuki-Zo tribal groups declared a social boycott on Thursday of Kuki-Zo legislators who have joined the newly formed Manipur government of Yunnan Khemchand Singh.

The boycott and a "total shutdown" across the hills inhabited by the Kuki-Zo, to protest "betrayal" by these MLAs, were enforced hours before the seventh session of the 12th Manipur Assembly began with an address by Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla.



Up in arms: Kuki-Zo people at a protest carry posters calling some Kuki-Zo MLAs "traitors". SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Normal life was hit in Chandel, Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, and Pherzawl districts as people rallied with posters calling some Kuki-Zo MLAs "traitors". There were reports of arson in these districts, where protesters accused the MLAs of prioritising go-

vernment formation over pressuring the Centre for a separate Union Territory-like administration for the Kuki-Zo community.

Anger was directed at Nemcha Kipgen, sworn in as a Deputy Chief Minister on Wednesday, and two other legislators – former Director General of Police L.M. Khaute and Ngursanglur Sanate, who flew to Imphal from New Delhi with other NDA legislators. All three are Bharatiya Janata Party legislators.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 10



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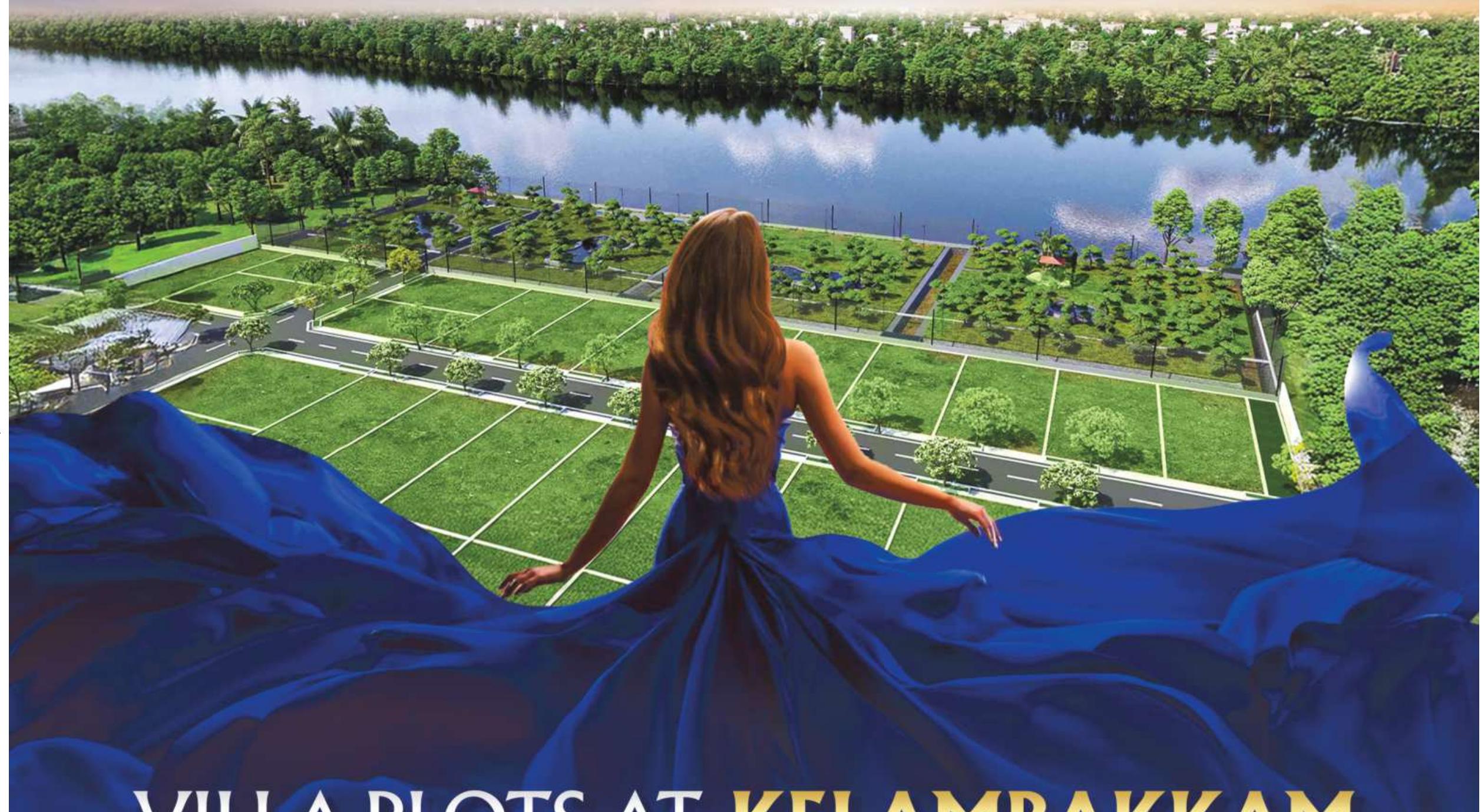
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|-------------------|------------|-----------|
| CHENNAI           |            |           |
| SATURDAY, FEB. 07 | RISE 06:34 | SET 18:12 |
| RISE 06:34        | SET 09:30  |           |
| SUNDAY, FEB. 08   | RISE 06:34 | SET 18:12 |
| RISE 22:55        | SET 10:06  |           |
| SUNDAY, FEB. 08   | RISE 06:34 | SET 18:13 |
| RISE 23:44        | SET 10:44  |           |

| Chennai Weather | max | min |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Tiruvallur      | 30  | 18  |
| Chennai Airport | 31  | 20  |
| Chennai City    | 30  | 21  |

Chennai Airport Today  
30°C The morning will be pleasant. The day will be slightly warm. The night will be pleasant. Mostly dry weather to prevail.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow  
31°C The weather will be dry. The day will be slightly warm. The night will be pleasant.

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## THE HINDU

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# State's first glow garden opens in Mamallapuram

An amphitheatre, food kiosks, selfie points, walkways lined with artificial trees, plants and flowers, and seats that light up are among the features of the garden that has come up on TTDC land

### The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

The State's first glow garden, a day-and-night entertainment hub, has opened on East Raja Street in Mamallapuram.

Spread across one lakh sq. ft with indoor and outdoor facilities, the garden was inaugurated by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin recently.

An amphitheatre, food kiosks, selfie points, walkways lined with artificial trees, plants and flowers, and seats that light up are among the features of the garden that has come up on land belonging to the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation.

It has been developed by Sunvin Mamallapuram



Entertainment hub: Visitors at the glow garden on East Raja Street in Mamallapuram. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Glow Garden LLP, which will also operate and maintain the facilities.

S. Rajesh, a resident of Oorapakkam, said the sights and sounds were wonderful. "I have come

here with my family. My son Hridhayan says he doesn't want to leave the place," he added.

S. Kannappan, a tour guide, said, "When tourists come here, they don't have

anything to do after dark as the monuments close by sundown. This will be a major attraction for residents of nearby villages, too. TTDC should, perhaps, consider operating battery cars and even a train/tram around the monuments."

### Entry fee

Visitors have to pay ₹100 to visit the glow garden, located inside Maragathai Poonaga, between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., and ₹200 to enjoy the toy train ride, joker toy ride, bee carousel, and crazy roller.

Other rides inside the park include bungee trampoline, human gyro, 360-degree cycle, and boating for children, for which separate tickets have to be purchased.

## CM Stalin inaugurates projects across T.N., hands over awards

### The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday virtually inaugurated 183 projects completed by the Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department in various locations across the State at a total cost of ₹3,511 crore.

He also laid the foundation for 10 projects to be implemented at a cost of ₹1,267 crore.

The completed projects include integrated drinking water supply projects in Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram, Namakkal, Tirupattur, and Tiruvallur districts,

drainage projects in Greater Chennai Corporation and Coimbatore Corporation, and civic infrastructure projects in Hosur, Namakkal, and Thanjavur Corporations, an official release said.

At another event, the Chief Minister handed over various awards to craftspersons and artisans who have excelled in their respective fields. He handed over the 'Living Craft Treasure' awards to 10 craftspersons, and Poompuhar State Awards to 10 artisans.

C. Kulunthan, N. Rajendran, K. Rethinam, S. Gopal, C. Indhir, K. Subramaniam, T. Thirumoolthy, K. Balraj, S.S. Sangeetham, and K. Subramanian received the 'Living Craft Treasure' awards for 2025-26.

Mr. Stalin handed over the Poompuhar State Awards for 2025-26 to K. Venkatesh, C. Sangeetha, A. Babu, K. Reeta, M. Shabana, S. Murugan, A. Raj, A. Gavvabeevi, T. Celine Mary, and M. Kumar.

At the Secretariat, the Chief Minister gave an enhanced government grant of ₹36 crore towards administration and maintenance of temples in Kanniyakumari, Pudukkottai, and Thanjavur. He also provided ₹1.17 crore in grants for the Mukti Nath pilgrimage of 389 people.

### APPOINTMENT

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**Incentive: ₹5,000 – ₹10,000 / pm**

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• Age criteria: 18 years to 40 years only.

Walk-in Date: February 07, 08 & 09 | Time: 10:00 am to 04:00 pm

Walk-in Interview Venue:  
**The Chennai Silks**

T.Nagar : Usman Road, Chennai - 600 017. ☎ 044 - 2431 0888  
Velachery : Near Railway Station, Chennai - 600 042. ☎ 044 - 2243 9888  
Chromepet : GST Road, Chennai - 600 044. ☎ 044 - 2241 3888  
Tiruvallur : Near Collector Office, Tiruvallur - 602 001. ☎ 044 - 2767 7888

For more details: **90030 89016**

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Two arrested for hurling country-made bombs at house

### The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

Two persons have been arrested for hurling country-made bombs at a house in Maduravoyal.

According to the police, Sakthivel had married Varsha three years ago. Due to personal reasons, Varsha had left him, and was staying with her mother.

On Wednesday, Sakthivel and his friend Sathish asked her to return home. When she refused, Sakthivel abused her. When her relatives intervened, he hurled the country-made bombs at their house.

The two were arrested on Thursday.



gar on Wednesday.

The city police said P. Natarajan, who had epilepsy, suffered a seizure and fell from the balcony.

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Natarajan, who had epilepsy,


**GFTN**


**Shri Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister



**Shri Mohan Charan Majhi**  
Chief Minister, Odisha



**Smt. Droupadi Murmu**  
Hon'ble President of India



**Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati**  
Governor of Odisha

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In august presence of

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Governor of Odisha

**Shri Mohan Charan Majhi**  
Chief Minister of Odisha

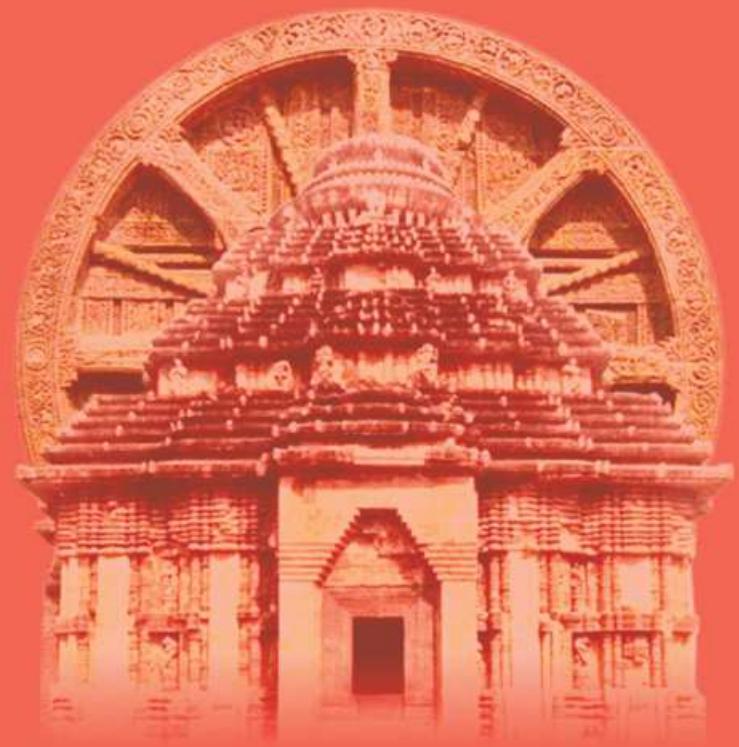
**Smt. Pravati Parida**  
Deputy Chief Minister,  
Odisha

**Dr. Mukesh Mahaling**  
Minister, Health and Family Welfare,  
Parliamentary Affairs,  
Electronics & Information Technology, Odisha

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Electronics & Information Technology Department, Government of Odisha

**From Page One****Investment proposals worth ₹34,237 crore get T.N. Cabinet's nod**

With the intention of taking the blue economy to the next level and providing opportunities for fishermen, a shipbuilding initiative was under way, he said. Following the Cabinet's approval, Chennai Radha Engineering Works would make hulls for ships, he added.

Proposals by Yazaki India Private Limited (auto components), Hyundai Wia India Private Limited (expansion), and Zetsol Energy Private Limited (manufacture of solar cell), among others, were also approved, the Minister said.

Mr. Stalin and Tata Group chairman N. Chandrasekaran are scheduled to take part in the inauguration of a car manufacturing plant in Ranipet on February 9.

**First facility in country**

Recalling the efforts undertaken by the Tamil Nadu government, Mr. Rajaa said: "In the EV plus luxury segment, this is the major investment received by Tamil Nadu. The car manufacturing plant of Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) and Tata Motors, estimated to cost ₹9,000 crore, will be the first such facility in India to manufacture the luxury models of JLR."

**IN BRIEF****SIMS Hospital strengthens partnership with Seychelles**

President of the Republic of Seychelles Patrick Herminie and Health Minister Marvin Nolan Fanny met Ravi Pachamuthu, Chairman, SIMS Hospital, to discuss a collaborative roadmap aimed at strengthening healthcare services through sustainable healthcare solutions. These include super-specialty medical outreach, hospital infrastructure development, digital health integration, workforce support, affordable medicines, and dialysis expansion. A team of specialists from SIMS Hospital will travel to Mauritius and Seychelles next week to evaluate the healthcare systems in Seychelles, and assess the way forward in coordination with the Ministry of Health. As part of the discussion, it was also proposed to establish periodic super-specialty camps for patients accessing the Seychelles Government Healthcare System, aimed at enhancing diagnostic accuracy and improving clinical outcomes through advanced medical technology, according to a release.

**Text & Context and Health**

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (*thehindu.com*) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (February 6, Friday), the following explainers are available:

- DISCOMs and the road ahead [newsth.live/discoms](#)
- Infertility in India: bringing mental health to the forefront [newsth.live/fertilityhealth](#)

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**India must scale up non-animal methods for pre-clinical drug testing, say experts****The Hindu Bureau**

Non-Animal Methods or NAMs, for pre-clinical testing of drugs, have been gaining ground across the world. With the development of new technologies and with countries updating their regulations on drug development and testing, there is now an opportunity for India, which houses a giant pharmaceutical sector, to not only benefit from this trend but also make significant contributions.

This was highlighted by experts during a webinar held on Thursday to mark the launch of a report, 'Landscape Analysis on Alternatives to Animal Testing for Drug Development in India', jointly brought out by Humane World for

**An industry-led consortium and a central agency for NAMs must be set up, they say**

Animals India, DBT-DBT-STEM, Animal Law and Policy Network and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd.

The experts said that every year, millions of animals in India are sacrificed for pre-clinical testing. Shifting to NAMs was not only an opportunity to improve scientific relevance in the development process but also a means to reduce costs and accelerate timelines, while being ethically aligned with global best practices, they said.

The report states that NAM technologies – such as organoids, organ-on-

**CM Stalin inaugurates city's second pedestrian plaza on Khader Nawaz Khan Road**

The GCC implemented the project at ₹19.81 cr. The plaza in Nungambakkam features play areas and walkway for persons with disabilities. Shop owners expect the number of visitors to increase

**CITY MATTERS**

**Aloysius Xavier Lopez**  
CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday inaugurated the pedestrian plaza on Khader Nawaz Khan Road in Nungambakkam. The project was implemented at ₹19.81 crore.

After the inauguration of the stretch from Uthamar Gandhi Salai junction to Shafi Mohammed Road junction, which was implemented as part of the Complete Streets Project of the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), visitors started pouring in, leading to traffic congestion in parts of the stretch.

The GCC has developed play areas, cobblestone carriageway, a walkway for persons with disabilities, seating arrangements, lighting, and stormwater drains along the 650-metre stretch of Khader Nawaz Khan Road. This is the second pedestrian plaza in the city after the one in T. Nagar.

Surbhi Mehta, who is part of a business establishment on the stretch, said the street looked beautiful because of the

**Major facelift**

The Greater Chennai Corporation is creating pedestrian plazas as part of its Complete Streets Project.



**Paved pathway:** The pedestrian plaza that has come up on Khader Nawaz Khan Road in Nungambakkam. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

**All about the plaza**

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Length   | Approximately 570 m (0.57 km)   |
| Spans    | From Uthamar Gandhi Salai junction to Rutland Gate 4th Street   |
| Width    | Footpaths measuring between 1.8 m and 2.0 m in width on both sides  |
| Features | Continuous footpaths with cobblestone paving, street furniture, shaded seating, bollards, signage                     |
| Parking  | No on-street parking, only pick-up/drop-off; off-street paid parking nearby; in-house parking for abutting properties |

pedestrian plaza. "This will attract tourists. The number of visitors is expected to increase. This will be among the best in the country," she said. Litan Mia, an employee from Tripura, said the road had improved after the creation of the pedestrian plaza.

Mohamed Thameem Ansari, a delivery agent, said a large number of people visited the stretch after midnight, creating reels on social media. "The hotels remain open till 3 a.m. There is a huge rush then," he said.

The Greater Chennai Traffic Police and the GCC plan to permit one-way

traffic from the Rutland Gate Fifth Street junction towards Uthamar Gandhi Salai.

Cars were found parked in slots meant only for dropping visitors. Vehicles were not permitted to enter from Uthamar Gandhi Salai as the road was blocked at the Uthamar Gandhi Salai-Khader Nawaz Khan Road junction due to Metrorail work.

Dinesh, who works at a business establishment on the stretch, said the decision to reduce the width of the carriageway for increasing the space for pedestrians had prevented heavy vehicles from entering the road.

Manikanda Prabhu, a delivery agent, said, "The road used to be flooded. Huge pipes have been laid to drain water during the monsoon."

A. Rama Krishnan, an employee of another establishment on the stretch, said many business establishments on the stretch faced financial losses as inadequate parking space kept visitors away. "The parking spaces have been converted into pedestrian spaces. Visitors refuse to use the basement parking area. So, we lose revenue," he said.

GCC officials said they would create more parking spaces near the stretch.

**Foundation stone laid for Guindy-Velachery flyover**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin laid the foundation stone for the construction of a flyover connecting Sardar Patel Road in Guindy and Guru Nanak College junction in Velachery, through video conference from the Secretariat here on Thursday.

This project was announced during the Tamil Nadu Budget session in 2025.

According to a press release, the project is being implemented by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) under the Infrastructure and Amenities Fund, at an estimated cost of ₹310 crore.

The two-lane flyover

**The two-lane flyover, worth ₹310 crore, will connect Sardar Patel Road in Guindy and Guru Nanak College junction in Velachery**

will be three-km-long and 11.9-m-wide.

The project includes approach roads at Five Furlong Road and Velachery Main Road.

The flyover will span from the Sardar Patel Road-Velachery Main Road junction to Guru Nanak College, via the Race Course Road junction, the Five Furlong Road junction, and the Velachery Bypass Road junction, the release said.

A 5.5-m-wide approach bridge will be constructed at Five Furlong Road, while another, measuring four metres in width, will be built near the Guru Nanak College.

**Service roads**

Service roads measuring 5.5 metres in width, and footpaths measuring 1.5 metres in width will be built on both sides of the flyover.

Once completed, the project is expected to benefit more than two lakh residents in Velachery, Guindy, and the surrounding areas by easing traffic congestion at the Velachery Main Road junction and Five Furlong Road junction, the release added.

**Man dies after being stabbed in Tiruvallur, one arrested**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The Tiruvallur police on Thursday arrested Ashok Kumar, a construction worker, for stabbing a 36-year-old man to death.

On Tuesday, Nithyanandam, a resident of Poonga Nagar in Tiruvallur, accompanied his friend Chandrabose to Ashok Kumar's house in the same locality. Chandrabose was angry with Ashok Kumar for being in a relationship with his cousin. When they asked Ashok Kumar to end the relationship, Ashok Kumar stabbed them.

They were taken to the Tiruvallur Government Hospital, where Nithyanandam died on Wednesday night.

**S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER**

Deputy Chief Engineer/Line South Eastern Railway, Kolkata-700043 for and on behalf of the President of India, invites Open E-Tender for the following work: Tender No. SER-HQ-TR-W-PAUT-CKP-1-26; Name of the Work: Carrying out USFD testing of Flash Butt (FB) welds on all types of rails using contractor's RDSO approved Phased Array Ultrasonic Testing (PAUT) weld tester over Chakradharpur divisions of South Eastern Railway; Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 9,28,34,942.40; Earnest Money: ₹ 6,14,200.00; Date and time of Closing of Tender: 27/02/2026 at 15:00 hrs.; Website particulars: Complete details for e-tendering and online participation for the above work are on website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). (PR-1150)

**NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY**

**Open E-Tender Notice**  
DRM (Electrical) Jaipur, for and on the behalf of president of Union of India, invites e-tenders for following works: NIT No.: EL-JP-11R-III-2025-26, Name of work: JP Div: Replacement of overhead line network by underground cables over Jaipur Division, NIT Cost: 18,859,825.94, Earnest Money: 24,430.00, Tender opening: 27/02/2026, NIT No.: EL-JP-66-2025-26, Name of work: JP Div: Electrical work in c/w Raising the level of PF No. 1 from Rail Level to High level & PF No 2 from Medium Level to High Level at Hirmoda (HDA) Station and Dhindha (DHND) Halt station. Raising the level of PF No. 1 & PF No. 2 from Medium Level to High Level with extension of length of PF No. 1 & PF No. 2 to 600 meters at Kanakpura (KKU) station. Raising the level of PF No. 1 from Medium Level to High Level at Dhankya (DNK) Station. Raising the level of PF No. 1 & 2 to High level at BDYK, NIT Cost: 43,481,59.17, Earnest Money: 87,000.00, Tender opening: 27.02.2026, NIT No.: EL-JP-67-2025-26, Name of work: JP Div: Electrical work in c/w Raising the level of PF No. 1 from Medium Level to High level & PF No 2 from Rail Level to High Level with extension of length of PF No. 1 & PF No. 2 to 600 meters at Kanakpura (KKU) station. Raising the level of PF No. 1 from Medium Level to High Level at Dhankya (DNK) Station. Raising the level of PF No. 1 & 2 to High level at BDYK, NIT Cost: 43,481,59.17, Earnest Money: 87,000.00, Tender opening: 27.02.2026, NIT No.: EL-JP-67-2025-26, Name of work: JP Div: Electrical work in c/w Raising the level of PF No. 1 from Medium Level to High level & PF No 2 from Rail Level to High Level with extension of length of PF No. 1 & PF No. 2 to 600 meters at Kanakpura (KKU) station. Raising the level of PF No. 1 from Medium Level to High Level at Dhankya (DNK) Station. 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Raising the level of PF No. 1 & 2 to High



## Intent and outcome

India must match its climate ambitions with higher allocations

**U**nion Budgets began reflecting greater climate concerns from 2021, in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a modest ₹4,500 crore to localise solar photovoltaic production and to reduce India's dependence on Chinese imports. But there has been a cautious, disjointed approach to the scale and allocations. While five broad sectors (cement, steel, aluminium and fertilizers; decentralised solar power; greening irrigation pump sets; green hydrogen; and nuclear energy) received attention in Budget 2026-27, the most prominent announcement was the proposed five-year outlay of ₹20,000 crore for Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS). This is a modest provision for a suite of costly and complex technologies. The allocation signals that India is entering a pilot and demonstration phase, rather than embarking on immediate industrial deployment. While operational examples exist in Norway, Canada and the U.S., scaling CCUS has proven expensive and uneven. The technology is primarily relevant to sectors where emissions are embedded in the production process. The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) will impose carbon costs on imports of high-emission products, so for India, decarbonising industrial production is no longer only a climate imperative. It is now a question of export competitiveness, particularly for steel and aluminium, which form the bulk of India's CBAM-exposed exports to the EU.

The Budget also substantially scales up the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana rooftop solar scheme – ₹22,000 crore in 2026-27 from ₹17,000 crore (RE) for the current year. It is a welcome push towards decentralised energy systems that reduce land pressure, transmission losses and household energy costs. However, implementation challenges remain, including discom cooperation and upfront finance. Similarly, allocations for PM-KUSUM (solar irrigation pumps), have been sustained at ₹5,000 crore. Revised estimates suggest stronger-than-anticipated absorption. For nuclear energy, the government has extended zero basic customs duty on imports of nuclear plant equipment until 2035. While this reduces input costs, nuclear power remains capital intensive, with long construction timelines and financing risks. Recent legal changes permit private participation, but whether private capital will enter a sector entwined with national security, safety and liability concerns remains uncertain. Green hydrogen, despite budgetary support, continues to see modest actual spending, highlighting the persistent gap between policy ambition and execution. Overall, India's climate budget for 2026-27 repeats a pattern: big on intent, cautious on allocations, and uncertain in its ability to mobilise the private capital required to accelerate decarbonisation across vital sectors.

## More, and less

The health-care component of Budget 2026 is a mixed bag

**W**hile this year's health-care allocations are aggressive in certain key sectors, it has failed expectations that Budget 2026 would be a milestone for increased health-care spending as a percentage of GDP. The total allocation this year is over ₹1.05 lakh crore, marking an increase of about 10% over the previous year's revised estimates. However, experts have pointed out that the 2026 health budget is approximately 1.9% of the total government expenditure, and about 0.26% of GDP. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman fronted the Biopharma SHAKTI scheme, among the projects with the single highest budgetary allocations this year. This ₹10,000 crore government initiative will transform India into a manufacturing hub for biologics and biosimilars over the next five years, she said. A pan-country clinical state-of-the-art trial infrastructure will also be created, through a network of 1,000 accredited clinical trial sites. No doubt, this will take care of an angle that has long been languishing in India – research and development. Additionally, the government will set up three new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) and modernise seven existing units, besides establishing a second NIMHANS campus in north India and two upgraded national mental health institutes. The government has set itself a target of training one lakh allied health professionals over the next five years, while another 1.5 lakh care workers will also be trained to take care of the health needs of the elderly; this is appreciable at a time when India is well on its way towards becoming a grey nation, with fertility levels falling. In the area of making care affordable, the government has exempted 17 cancer medicines and several treatments for rare diseases from customs and import duties, while also reducing the tax collected at source on medical and educational remittances from 5% to 2%. For patients suffering from these conditions, and their families, this will no doubt lead to better affordability for treatments.

Primarily under fire was the Union government's stodgy refusal to increase the allocation for health care to reach 2.5% of GDP by 2025, as committed in the National Health Policy of 2017. Public health activists have lambasted the drop in funding for the National Health Mission, despite the fact that funds have been consistently well utilised here. While fiscal devolution has enabled States to invest more heavily in the health sector, there are concerns, however, that the Centre steadily reducing its share will result in patchy outcomes, not even improvements, in the health-care sector of the country.

**F**rom its Aravalli ranges to its mangroves, India is at the same moral crossroads that Amitav Ghosh captures in *The Hungry Tide*, where the tides remember what the law chooses to forget. If environmental justice continues to be diluted in the name of development, the Constitution of India risks becoming a silent witness to ecological loss, where the consequences, like the tide itself, will return with unforgiving force.

On December 18, 2025, for non-coal mining projects, the policy of land acquisition first and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) later was changed. Now, an EIA can be done without details about the location and area. The Supreme Court of India helped in the dilution of environmental justice by recalling the case, *Vanashakti vs Union Of India* (2025) that banned retrospective environmental clearances. Within five months, a Bench led by (then) Chief Justice of India (CJI) B.R. Gavai, recalled the progressive judgment.

### From mountains to mangroves

Recent developments indicate a slow, but systematic, dilution of ecological protection. The CJI, Justice Surya Kant, *suo motu*, stayed the controversial order, saving the reputation of the Court. But the debate concerning the Aravallis is not just about a technical argument on definition. It marks a paradigm change in the perception of development, the role of the environment, and the constitutional obligation by the state.

Similarly, the judicial sanctions to the destruction of 158 mangroves for Adani Cementation Limited (2025) in Raigarh, Maharashtra, and the new environmentally unfriendly infrastructure schemes such as the Char Dham highway in the Himalayas, highlight a dangerous trend – that the health of the environment is further being undermined by the government whose proximity with the corporate world is an open secret though it is also true that the private sector has been severely criticised in the annual Economic Survey presented in January 2026.

The Aravallis, traditionally acknowledged as the ecological backbone of north-western India, play a vital role which includes checking desertification, enhancing the recharge of groundwater, controlling micro-climates and maintaining biodiversity. Interestingly, the Court itself has recognised this ecological role. In *M.C. Mehta vs Union of India and Ors.* (2004), a ban was imposed on mining in the Aravalli region.

Later orders that culminated in the year 2010 admitted that unregulated mining in the area had had irreparable effects on the environment. More importantly, in these proceedings, the Court quashed efforts to restrict the Aravallis to a definition based on the landform's height, especially the suggestion that only landforms over 100 metres could be a component of the Aravalli ranges.

The Court realised how such a strict interpretation would ignore huge tracts of ecologically crucial land, thus foiling the objective of environmental conservation. The 100m norm was discarded in 2010 on an ecological basis. The



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hills and ridges at a low altitude are of significant importance in the preservation of groundwater and soil stability in the semi-arid landscapes. The Aravallis are not just a cluster of isolated peaks but are a geomorphological system.

Unfortunately, the latest height-centric definition does not pay attention to crucial factors such as hydrology, biodiversity and ecological interdependence. It was due to the need to circumvent this reductionist strategy that the Court relied on the precautionary principle, in *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum vs Union of India and Others* (1996), rejecting the idea of any artificial limit.

The strange acceptance by the top court of the 100-metre definition, in *In Re: Issue Relating to Definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges* (2025), marked a clear departure from the position taken in 2010. In trying to keep landforms above a predetermined elevation as the sole subject of legal protection, the Court has efficiently deprived the Aravalli ranges of any statutory and judicial protection over large portions. Such a change has serious constitutional implications.

The right to a clean and healthy environment, which has been broadly understood in the application of Article 21, is directly involved. Article 48A, which requires the state to ensure the conservation and the enhancement of the environment, is now a hollow proclamation in instances where the interpretation of the law by the judiciary can promote rather than safeguard ecological exclusion. In fact, India's courts have been more enthusiastic about cow slaughter (Article 48) and uniform civil code (Article 44).

The discriminatory protection or preservation of some landforms in relation to their height creates an absurd classification that has no rational nexus to ecological goals. An interpretation of a law that safeguards outstanding hills and exposes the surrounding ecosystems to exploitation contravenes the principle of non-arbitrariness that forms the core of Article 14.

### A leniency

This watering down of environmental protection is seen not only in the case of the Aravallis. This has been the case over years with courts and regulatory bodies supporting development projects based on the assurance of mitigation instead of their enforcing environmental norms to the letter. This is evident in the undermining of the EIA process and the legalisation of post-facto and conditional clearances, even after the judicial warnings. In *Common Cause vs Union of India* (2017), the Court had made it clear that the legalisation of illegal mining and environmental offences could not be done after the fact, and that the environmental law is to serve as a deterrent. But judicial leniency later in regard to lapses in procedure corresponds to a slow weakening of this principle.

The results of this kind of dilution are seen in cases of coastal urban ecology, especially the mangroves of Mumbai. Mangroves are multi-layered ecosystems which act as natural flood control systems, sinks of carbon and reservoirs of biodiversity. They protect against

The higher judiciary appears to be aiding a watering down of environmental protection

storm surges and tidal flooding. Continued judicial authorisations to fell (and transplant) about 34,000 mangrove trees to build infrastructure are a setback. Allowing mangrove destruction on a large scale on the 'promise of compensatory afforestation' marks the destruction of ecological science and constitutional responsibility. It requires decades to develop mature mangrove ecosystems, which cannot be compensated by having a plantation drive in some other place.

Another example is the Char Dham highway project in Uttarakhand. A June 2025 study identified 811 landslide zones along the Char Dham project. The Himalayan ecosystem is one of the most delicate in the world, and the road widening project on such a large scale has grave dangers – triggering landslides and disturbing rivers.

In *Citizens for Green Doon vs Union of India* (2021), the Court recognised the ecological importance of the area, but still allowed wider roads on the grounds of strategic defence needs. The flash floods and ecological disturbances that affected Uttarakhand raise questions about this 'balancing act'. The ill-effects of the current infrastructural rush affect future generations, especially when the constitutional obligations on the government and the citizen, under Article 48A and Article 51A(g), make it clear that it is the responsibility of citizens to safeguard the environment.

### Strong players and the issue of fairness

Environmental clearances of corporations and large-scale infrastructure projects, especially those supported by serious capital in mining, highways or urban redevelopment, can pass through regulatory barriers rather easily. If there is a hearing, it is cut short, objections raised are considered obstructionist, and environmental compliance becomes a mere checklist. This casts grave doubts on procedural fairness and transparency which are contained in Article 14. When it disproportionately gives more privileges to economically strong players, environmental governance can destroy the trust of the populace and constitutional equality.

The changing stance of the judiciary in this dismal picture is crucial. Traditionally, courts have been the custodians of environmental rights as they have broadened the constitutional interpretation on issues of environmental damage. Judgments such as *M.C. Mehta vs Kamal Nath and Ors.* (1996) held that the public trust doctrine was deeply rooted in the belief that natural resources belonged to the state, were held in the trust of the people and could not be sold to be exploited privately. When such definitions or clearances are approved by the courts to promote the degradation of the environment, they basically go against the court's own jurisprudence. The Green Bench of the Supreme Court must sit regularly. Similar Benches must be set up in all the High Courts. Ease of business should not make destruction of the environment easy.

The views expressed are personal

## More money for defence, now fix the process

**T**he Finance Minister has been rather generous. The new defence budget is being touted as being the first double digit jump in India's defence expenditure in decades, ever since its steady decline from 2017. At 2% of the Budget, it sends a signal of strategic determination in a more than unusually turbulent world. The funds will have to be used prudently and expeditiously, which demand systemic change, not tinkering, in the Budget process. As 'frenemies' abound and a tenuous 'rules-based order' collapses, there is no time to lose.

### The good and the bad

The most talked about aspect is the Budget's 15% hike hitting 2% of GDP (up from 1.9% last year). Second, in a notable shift, capital expenditure has outpaced the revenue budget, up more than 22%, reversing years of neglect. Third, there is a clear thrust toward modernisation. The Indian Air Force gets a hefty 32% rise, while the Indian Army has got a 30% hike for heavy vehicles and weapons.

Oddly, the Indian Navy, with its ambitious commitments in the Indian Ocean, gets 3%. Ironically, this is probably due to its success in indigenisation, and a proven capability to absorb allotted funds.

All this is good. But the rupee has weakened substantially against the dollar, which means that payment for capital goods such as aircraft has become more expensive. It is not all bad news. Defence exports are rising – ₹23,000 crore last year as against ₹1,000 crore in 2014. A chunk of the Indian Army's mobility equipment is made here by the Tatas, Ashok Leyland and others. But this does eat into the 'double digit' increase.

There are also the pension payments which



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printing, logistics, freelance honoraria, and author royalties – attracts GST. Publishers cannot claim input tax credit or seek refunds, effectively turning GST into a hidden tax. With costs rising relentlessly, this policy quietly penalises knowledge creation while Parliament

rose by 6.56% but it is still at 21.84% when compared to 27.95% for capital expenditure of the Ministry of Defence (MoD)'s allocation. Before FY1987-88, they came under central government pensions and were not clubbed with the defence budget. Despite this, the Budget was still 3.31% of GDP. The size of the economy then was less than half of what it is today, but it still provides a certain perspective.

It might be time to reinvent that wheel.

### Bureaucracy and delays

A welcome aspect is that 75% of the capital acquisition budget for procurement has been earmarked for domestic industries, which includes private players. The government's thrust in this direction has been consistent, with defence production recording a 174% surge from 2014-15. But beyond this is the reality of a complex bureaucratic system, one aspect of which is the L-1 (lowest cost) rule which favours large industries rather than innovators who are vital for a tech-intensive industry. They cannot compete, especially when transitioning to manufacturing. This needs not only hand holding but also clarity in forward planning and promised volumes.

The next factor is this – the interminable delays in vital programmes such as Project 75 for submarines approved in 1997. Expected delivery times are now in the mid 2030s. The Rafale fighter aircraft deal which was envisioned in the 1990s, saw results only 2019-20. It is unsurprising then that the MoD had to return ₹12,500 crore of its capital allocation in FY2024-25.

It is time to re-examine the repeated demand for a Non-Lapsable Defence Modernisation Fund, which was announced in the FY 2004-05 Budget

speech but never implemented. Financial convenience cannot result in the defence industry being held hostage.

### R&D lies scattered

A key area is research and development (R&D). Funds for the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and a slew of research organisations have been increased; many have potential benefits for defence production. But research is segmented. Despite often being dual use, it seldom translates into better defence capabilities. India's overall research budget also remains 0.66% of GDP. Compare that to Japan at 3.70%, funded primarily by the private sector. In India, there is a near absence of private sector R&D. Those in the big league must loosen up and unify research and its direction.

A 'pacifist' country such as Japan has now allocated 2.2% for its defence. So has Australia with a far lower threat profile. Europe too is moving to larger allocations. At issue here is the 'guns vs butter' lens through which the defence budget is viewed. Instead, it needs to be melded with the vision of Viksit Bharat's \$30 trillion economy. The Border Roads Organisation, for instance, delivers the connectivity for 'Vibrant Villages' programme which is vital to border development.

In another example, the Prime Minister remarked that indigenous shipbuilding has a 6.5 multiplier effect on employment, with its multiple ancillary industries. This applies almost across the board. The Budget has to be seen as a tool for powering growth, rather than being a 'non development' section. Once this is done, the processes will follow.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The cover story

What a sad commentary it is on how Parliament's time is squandered on unproductive debates over books. The Leader of the Opposition suddenly raises an issue over a former Army Chief's book, stalled by the Defence Ministry for opaque reasons. In response, ruling

party MPs theatrically brandish books whose contents have long been in the public domain. As someone who has spent a lifetime in publishing, I expected Parliament to confront a far graver anomaly: GST on books.

While books are 'exempt', every input – paper,

argues over dust jackets. **N. Nagarajan**, Secunderabad

**The online age**  
It was shocking to read the report on three minor girls ending their lives in Uttar Pradesh due to the restrictions their parents had imposed on them on

the use of mobile phones (Front page, February 5). We find that many children cast their pens or pencils aside and are content with being immersed in their mobile phones. Letter writing is an alien concept.

**A.J. Rajarajan**, Chennai  
Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

# Should the Governor's address be scrapped?

**PARLEY****P.D.T.****Achary**Former  
Secretary  
General of the  
Lok Sabha**Alok  
Prasanna  
Kumar**Co-founder of  
Vidhi Centre for  
Legal Policy

**L**ast month, during the joint session of the Karnataka Legislature, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot walked out of the House after reading only a few lines of his customary address prepared by the State Cabinet. The Chief Minister accused the Governor of violating his constitutional obligation. The incident followed similar developments in other Opposition-ruled States. In DMK-ruled Tamil Nadu, Governor R.N. Ravi walked out of the Assembly without delivering his inaugural address. In LDF-ruled Kerala, Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar omitted portions of the speech cleared by the Cabinet. Should the practice of Governors addressing the State legislatures be scrapped? P.D.T. Achary and Alok Prasanna Kumar discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Aaratrika Bhauamik**. Edited excerpts:

**Does a Governor's refusal to read the Cabinet-approved opening address violate the Constitution?**

**P.D.T. Achary:** Under Article 176, a Governor is constitutionally mandated to address the State legislature at the commencement of the first session each year and at the first session following a general election. The address sets out the government's legislative agenda, outlining the policies and programmes it proposes to pursue during the session and the year ahead. The text of this address is prepared by the State Cabinet, and the Governor, as a constitutional functionary, is required to deliver it in that form. A Governor who declines to address the House, or who makes only a token appearance by reading selective portions of the address, cannot be said to be acting in conformity with the mandate of Article 176.

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** Such conduct is contrary to the constitutional mandate. The Governor is an integral part of the State legislature, as recognised under Article 168 of the Constitution. This aspect is often overlooked, as the legislature is frequently understood to comprise only one or two Houses of elected representatives. As a constitutional head within this structure, the Governor is expected to facilitate, not obstruct, the functioning of the legislature.

**Can a Governor use discretion to alter such an address?**

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** No. In *Nabam Rebia v. Deputy Speaker* (2016), the Supreme Court clarified that the Governor's address to the



Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot at the joint session of the State legislature, at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru.

House is an executive function performed strictly on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. The recurring departures from this constitutional convention are a consequence of the existing institutional design. Unlike the President, who is indirectly elected and subject to impeachment by Parliament, the Governor holds office at the pleasure of the President, in effect, the Union government. Consequently, while the President remains institutionally answerable to Parliament, the Governor's continuance in office depends upon the confidence of the Union government rather than the legislature within which the office functions.

**P.D.T. Achary:** I agree. The Governor cannot alter the address prepared by the State Cabinet and is required only to read it before the House. The Governor bears no responsibility for its contents and incurs no liability for what it states. In a representative democracy such as ours, executive authority is vested in the Council of Ministers, as the elected representatives of the people. The Governor is therefore precluded from running a parallel government or taking independent decisions de hors the aid and advice of the State Cabinet.

**What recourse does a Governor have if there are genuine reservations about the address's contents?**

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** The Governor cannot hold an independent view on whether the government's policies are desirable or even constitutional. Personal opinions need not be forfeited, but they must be conveyed through candid, private exchanges with the State Cabinet. Once the Governor assumes office, such personal views must yield to constitutional discipline. A Governor may offer counsel, but must recognise the limits of the office.

At the same time, it is a healthy convention



At least two other sessions of the State legislature each year commence without a Governor's address, which indicates that the legislature's functioning is not inherently dependent on this ceremonial formality.

**P.D.T. ACHARY**

for the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers to maintain regular communication with the Governor and to be receptive to any contrarian views he or she might have. Where such rapport and constitutional civility exist, it is unlikely that an elected government would disregard the Governor's counsel.

**Is this address a colonial remnant that ought to be dispensed with?**

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** The practice ought to be retained, even if it is largely symbolic and serves little functional purpose. The focus should be on addressing instances of constitutionally impermissible gubernatorial discretion rather than abandoning the convention altogether. The address recognises the Governor's place as an integral part of the legislature and reflects the continuity of the Westminster parliamentary model adopted in India.

**P.D.T. Achary:** I do not believe there is anything sacrosanct about this practice. At least two other sessions of the State legislature each year commence without a Governor's address, which indicates that the legislature's functioning is not inherently dependent on this ceremonial formality. Moreover, Article 175 of the Constitution provides an alternative mechanism through which the Governor may address the House or send messages regarding any pending legislation. Reconsideration of this practice becomes particularly pertinent in light of the increasing instances of visibly partisan conduct by Governors in Opposition-ruled States.

Further, Article 355 imposes a duty upon the Union government to ensure that the governance of every State is carried on in accordance with the Constitution. When a Governor declines to deliver the address mandated under Article 176, it raises concerns about whether that constitutional obligation is being meaningfully upheld. Such situations also risk precipitating a constitutional crisis, as the legislative session cannot formally commence in the absence of the Governor's address.

**Is Presidential intervention necessary when Governors fail to discharge their**

**constitutional duties?**

**P.D.T. Achary:** Yes. When Governors act in a partisan manner and fail to discharge their constitutional duties, it is incumbent upon the President to intervene and require the Governor either to perform those duties or to demit office. Article 160 of the Constitution empowers the President to issue directions for the discharge of a Governor's functions, particularly to address contingencies not expressly provided for in the Constitution. However, there have been no notable instances of Presidents invoking such powers to avert situations where gubernatorial conduct threatens to create a constitutional crisis in the States.

**Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has called for a constitutional amendment to do away with this address. How feasible is it to bring about such an amendment?**

**P.D.T. Achary:** It is unlikely that such a constitutional amendment will be achievable. The Union government is unlikely to support it, and its passage would require a special majority in Parliament – a majority of the total membership of each House and a two-thirds majority of members present and voting. This is a difficult threshold to meet without a broad consensus between the government and the Opposition. Moreover, when the existing framework yields evident political benefit, there is little incentive to alter it.

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** Such an amendment would be futile. If the Constitution is to be amended, a more meaningful reform would be to reconsider the manner in which Governors are appointed and removed. Such reform could ensure that Governors remain mindful that their allegiance lies with the Constitution, not the Union government, and that any departure from this role carries consequences for their continuance in office. This also explains why Presidents generally discharge their functions without controversy, while Governors often do not. The former is institutionally accountable to Parliament by virtue of indirect election and the possibility of impeachment.

However, as Mr. Achary has pointed out, even this would require political consensus that may be difficult to secure. Nevertheless, a serious discussion on such reforms is necessary to halt the gradual weakening of constitutional governance in Opposition-ruled States.



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**NOTEBOOK**

## The free press dies in broad daylight

The fate of *The Washington Post* serves as a cautionary tale

**Narayan Lakshman**

**T**he writing was on the wall. William Lewis, publisher of *The Washington Post*, and blue-eyed boy of its owner, Jeff Bezos, scarcely attended meetings with the editorial staff of the venerable newspaper since he took over in early 2024. But he set alarm bells ringing across the newsroom with less-than-constructive comments to journalists such as "People are not reading your stuff," openly calling for staff who "do not feel aligned with the company's plan" to leave, and reportedly describing some of them as "activists, not journalists."

Driving internal corporate disenchantment with the journalistic practices of the nearly 150-year-old newspaper was an apparent deepening ideological clash between the management and the long-standing, well-considered political position of the Post on a number of issues. For example, Mr. Bezos's decision to end the established practice of endorsing a presidential candidate before the U.S. election – thus effectively avoiding the image of the newspaper supporting Kamala Harris in November 2024 – raised eyebrows among insiders and external observers alike. Last year, he said that the opinion pages would defend "two pillars: personal liberties and free markets".

It should have come as little surprise then that the Post has now led what is widely being described as a "bloodbath" for quality journalism. In what will be remembered as a pivotal moment in the struggle of the U.S. media to stand up to challenging economic conditions and a president who routinely denigrates the free press of the country, Editor-in-Chief Matt Murray, reportedly told employees this week that the newspaper was undergoing a "strategic reset to better position the publication for the future". To this end, he announced sweeping layoffs of close to one-third of all editorial staff across departments, including international desks and correspondents worldwide, the books and sports divisions, and metro and cultural coverage.

At first glance, the proposal – apparently the motivation for this large-scale termination exercise – to narrow the focus of the broadsheet exclusively to politics and national security coverage might work in theory; yet upon closer inspection it fails the common sense test. Even if we accept the premise of the management that it is unprofitable to pursue the idea of a broad news offering – in the face of evidence to the contrary, offered by *The New York Times*, for example – how is the bottom line served by a strategy that rips away some of the finest international reporters and desk editors who are critical to producing quality journalism in politics and national security? A simple example highlights the contradictions inherent: shutting down reporting hubs in Ukraine – as reports suggest the Post has done – would directly impinge upon the newspaper's coverage of the machinations of the Donald Trump-led White House as it seeks to curry favour with Russia or reset ties with Europe by brazenly undermining NATO unity.

The deep learning for media houses across the free and democratic world is this: overzealous corporate owners of newspapers who are prone to genuflection to their political masters will happily seize the excuse of falling subscriptions or profits, even of a publication with a rich, hoary legacy of quality journalism, to re-bundle it as a prosaic, pliant publication that might offer a steady income stream to shareholders.

Editorial leaders who hope to avoid this fate would do the opposite of what the combative Mr. Lewis suggested, which is to pre-empt an exodus of readers and financial losses by reassessing what the core readership of the publication cares about and double down on multi-pronged offerings built on the latest and most suitable technology platforms.

The fate of the Post is a cautionary tale and its moral is this: while democracy may die in darkness, the free press dies in broad daylight.

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## PICTURE OF THE WEEK

**A time for reflection**

Kashmiri Shiite Muslims light candles at the graves of their relatives to mark Shab-e-Barat, at a graveyard in Srinagar. Shab-e-Barat means the Night of Salvation and it reflects the belief that Allah grants mercy to those who sin and blesses those who pray. IMRAN NISSAR

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

**FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 6, 1976**

### Harold Macmillan to visit Madras

Madras, Feb. 5: The former British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Macmillan, will be in Madras for a couple of days this month. He is due to make a 10-day visit to India in his capacity as the President of the Macmillan group of companies. Arriving from Calcutta on February 20, a day after his landing in India, Mr. Macmillan will visit the local office and the press, besides meeting prominent citizens of Madras. On February 23, he will inaugurate the company's computerised type-setting

**The Hindu.**

export project at Bangalore. Mr. S.G. Wasani, Managing Director, Macmillan Company of India, said computerised typesetting represented a major breakthrough in printing technology. To begin with, the company would have one such unit, costing Rs. 40 lakhs. Another unit would be installed within two years. He expected the firm's exports to increase from the present Rs. 5 lakhs to Rs. 20 lakhs, by the end of 1976 as a result of this advanced process. In reply to a question, Mr. Wasani said the State Governments' policy of nationalising school text-books gradually had not affected the company's business, though many other publishers had to quit the field. If anything, the firm's turnover of school textbooks had risen from Rs. 60 lakhs to Rs. 91 lakhs during the last three years, he said.

**A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 6, 1926**

### Control of Buddha Gaya

A meeting to consider the Indian Committee's Report issued in connection with the Buddha Gaya temple was held on 3rd February at the Olcott Memorial Hall, Ananda College. The Rev. Kahave Ratnasara, High Priest of the Maligakanda Temple, presided and a large number of delegates from various Buddhist Associations was present. Dr. O.A. Hewaritarne said that the agitation for the control of Buddha Gaya by the Buddhists began as early as 1891. After persistent efforts, they succeeded in getting the Indian National Congress to appoint a Sub-Committee to enquire into the matter.

**From Page One****18 killed in blast at illegal coal mine in Meghalaya**

The police registered a *suo motu* first information report (FIR) at the Khliehriat (district headquarters) police station under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, read with the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act and the Explosives Substances Act.

Activists claim mine owners, backed by politicians and other influential people, continue to operate illegally despite the NGT's blanket ban on the mining of coal and its transportation in April 2014, which was later upheld by the Supreme Court.

**Several accidents**

There have been several cases of coal mine accidents before and after the ban, killing at least 50 workers to date. The last major incident was in December 2018, also in East Jaintia Hills district, where at least 15 miners were trapped in a flooded mine 370 feet below the surface.

Multiple agencies, including the Indian Navy, could retrieve only two bodies in the rescue operation that lasted months.

"Rat-hole mining, entailing digging holes about 4-5 feet in height, allowing an adult to squat and work, is risky. However, daily wages as high as ₹2,000 attract many people to take up the job," Shillong-based anti-illegal mining activist Agnes Kharshiing said.

Earlier, the High Court of Meghalaya constituted the one-man Justice (retired) B.P. Katakey Committee to investigate, monitor, and recommend measures for environmental restoration following the ban on illegal coal mining in the State. The panel's periodic reports have hardly made any difference, activists say.

**'Oppn. has defiled the temple of democracy'**

Speaking about the achievements of his government, the Prime Minister said that much of it was to correct the mistakes of previous governments, which were more focused on vote-bank politics rather than development.

Referring to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's appearance in the Supreme Court in the special intensive revision (SIR) case without naming her, he termed the Trinamool Congress-led government as *nirmam* or merciless, pushing for inclusion of "infiltrators rather than citizens", whereas every country in the world was determined to stop infiltrators along their borders.

He added that the throwing of papers during Opposition's disruption in the Lok Sabha at presiding officers in the House on Tuesday and Wednesday, belonging to the Dalit community of Andhra Pradesh (TDP's Krishna Prasad Tenneti) and Assam (BJP's Dilip Saikia) was an insult to both Dalits and Assamese.

Referring to slogans about "digging Modi's grave", he said that those who talk of "*mohabbat ki dukaan*" (a shop of love used by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi) are raising slogans like "*Modi teri kabr khudegi*" (Modi we will dig your grave), which he said, highlighted the Opposition's frustration over successive electoral defeats. "They will never be able to dig my grave, the blessings of the poor are with me," he said. "The Congress thinks that the Prime Minister's chair is reserved for the members of a particular family, they have been abusing me for 25 years, but the people of India, women, poor, farmers have blessed me, repeatedly," he said. Mr. Modi listed out the achievements of his government in the last 11 years, while asserting that high growth and low inflation reflect the strength in the country's economy.

**Kuki-Zo groups boycott tribal MLAs in Manipur**

It was the first such visit by any Kuki-Zo MLA to the State capital since the ethnic conflict between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities broke out in May 2023.

The Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) said the decision of some Kuki-Zo legislators to join the government was in violation of a resolution adopted unanimously to abstain from government formation till the Central and the State governments gave written political commitment to support a separate administration. The KZC said these MLAs were party to the resolution along with leaders of Kuki-Zo social organisations and some rebel groups that had signed the Suspension of Operations agreement with the Centre in August 2008.

"By joining a Meitei-dominated government, these MLAs have effectively aligned themselves with our enemy, disregarding the immense pain and sacrifices endured by the Kuki-Zo community," the KZC said, viewing their act as a serious betrayal and a deliberate attempt to undermine the unity, sentiments and collective political stand of the Kuki-Zo people.

"This boycott shall remain in force until they refrain from participation in the Manipur government and realign themselves with the collective position of the Kuki-Zo people," it added.

The Thadou Inpi Manipur (TIM), however, welcomed Ms. Kipgen's "historic appointment" as a Deputy Chief Minister and asked her to "uphold the Thadou identity, protect Manipur's territorial integrity, and disassociate from Kuki tags, organisations, and separatist ideology".

Meanwhile, in his address to the House, the Governor said maintenance of law and order remained the foremost priority of the government.

**DAC to weigh acquisition of Rafale ahead of Macron visit**

Eighteen aircraft are likely to be acquired in flyaway condition to meet immediate needs, with the rest to be manufactured in India, an official says; the source code will remain with the French side

**Saurabh Trivedi**  
NEW DELHI

**A** head of French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India for the artificial intelligence Summit, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, is scheduled to meet in the second week of February to consider key procurement proposals aimed at enhancing the operational capabilities of the armed forces.

A senior defence official confirmed that the DAC meeting would grant Acceptance of Necessity for several acquisition proposals. During his stay, President Macron is expected to meet Mr. Singh to discuss bilateral defence cooperation between India and France.

Another defence official said that multiple proposals will be tabled at the meeting, including the acquisition of 114 Rafale fighter aircraft from France. Following DAC clearance, the proposal will be placed



The procurement will take the total Rafale fleet in India to 176, with the IAF already operating 36. PTI

before the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by the Prime Minister, for final approval.

Under the proposed plan, the bulk of the aircraft will be manufactured in India, with indigenous components accounting for approximately 30% to 40% of the overall content, providing a significant boost to domestic defence manufacturing. The official added that 18 aircraft are likely to be acquired in flyaway condition to meet the Indian Air Force's im-

mediate operational requirements, while the remaining jets will be manufactured in India. The source code, however, will remain with the French side.

**Largest acquisitions**

Defence experts noted that once cleared by the CCS, the deal will rank among the largest defence acquisitions undertaken by India. The procurement will take the total Rafale fleet in the country to 176 aircraft, with the IAF already oper-

ating 36 Rafale jets and the Indian Navy having placed orders for 26 naval variants last year.

The AI summit is expected to see participation from representatives of several countries, including Brazil, Switzerland, Greece, Serbia, Spain and Finland.

Separately, Indian Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, in his interaction with presspersons earlier, had flagged concerns over delays in fighter aircraft deliveries, noting that Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. has fallen behind schedule, partly due to delays in the supply of the F404-IN20 engines from GE.

The IAF has repeatedly underscored the urgency of strengthening its fighter fleet amid a rapidly evolving regional security environment. "To maintain a comfortable strength, we need two squadrons, around 30 to 40 aircraft, produced every year. Replacement is not a choice; it's a necessity," the Air Chief had said earlier.

**EC holds briefing for observers in poll-bound States**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

**They were instructed to remain accessible and ensure that the grievances of voters were redressed**

various aspects of preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of elections. The observers were also briefed on the IT applications and platforms, and media-related matters during the sessions.

They were asked to familiarise themselves with all the election laws, rules, guidelines and provide inputs directly to the commission and ensure their strict and impartial compliance.

The briefing was done by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi.

The CEC said the observers should ensure free, fair and transparent elections, and their presence would energise the entire election machinery across 824 constituencies where elections were going to be held.

Senior EC officials also briefed the observers on

Centre signs tripartite pact to create Naga authority

**Vijaita Singh**  
NEW DELHI

A tripartite agreement for creation of the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) was signed between Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO), Nagaland government and Union Home Ministry on Thursday.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio. ENPO is an apex body representing eight recognised Naga tribes of the six eastern districts of Nagaland.

The agreement paves the way for creation of the FNTA for six districts of Nagaland – Tuensang, Mon, Kiphire, Longleng, Noklak and Shamator – and devolution of powers in respect of 46 subjects to the FNTA.

Mr. Shah said it was a significant day for a dispute-free Northeast. "Eleven years ago, several armed groups and disputes in the Northeast were pushing the region towards fragmentation and disturbing its peace. At the same time, many inter-State disputes were disrupting the peace of the States," he said.

Mr. Shah said that since 2019, the Centre has signed 12 important agreements in the Northeast. Mr. Shah said that he wants to assure the representatives of ENPO that the Government of India will assist in the development of Eastern Nagaland and also will shoulder its responsibility. He added that a fixed amount will be determined every year, and the MHA will cover the initial expenditure for its establishment. The agreement provides, *inter alia*, for a mini-Secretariat for FNTA, headed by Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary, sharing of development outlay for the Eastern Nagaland region proportional to population and area. However, this agreement does not affect in any manner, the provisions of Article 371(A) of the Constitution, the Ministry said.

**U.S. shuts down 200 'illegal' online pharmacies tied to an India-based criminal organisation**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI



The DEA says that counterfeit medications are often made with fentanyl and taking them can lead to serious health risks. FILE PHOTO

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has announced the shutdown of over 200 website domains tied to an India-based transnational criminal organisation (TCO) allegedly responsible for at least six fatal and four non-fatal overdoses. Four persons have been arrested so far.

The DEA executed the operation in cooperation with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. "The TCO tied to these illegal online pharmacies has been under investigation by DEA's Rocky Mountain Field Division since 2022," read its statement.

"Leveraging its global reach, DEA actively collaborates with our Government of India law enforcement partners to identify, investigate, and dismantle dangerous criminal organisations that engage in these types of illegal drug trafficking operations," said the DEA, adding that it would continue its crackdown on illicit pharmaceutical distributors at the source through joint operations.

The agency's field offices launched the searches on January 27 across the U.S., leading to the arrest of four individuals along with the issuance of five Immediate Suspension Orders (ISO) and one Order to

Show Cause (OTSC) against DEA-registered pharmacies. "These actions were in addition to the U.S. government shutting down more than 200 online pharmacies accused of filling hundreds of thousands of orders of diverted pharmaceuticals and counterfeit pills without valid prescriptions," the DEA said.

The agency has approached hundreds of customers who bought medications with drug traffickers to fulfill online orders with counterfeit pills or diverted pharmaceuticals.

"This case demonstrates how foreign-based traffickers exploit our healthcare system, hide behind the internet, and use people inside the United States to move dangerous drugs under the guise of legitimate commerce," said DEA Administrator Terrance Cole. In 2024, DEA had cautioned the

U.S. citizens against an increase in illegal online pharmacies, many of which sold and shipped counterfeit pills made with fentanyl to unsuspecting customers, it said.

The agency said that many of the sites taken down as part of Operation Meltdown claimed to be legitimate, based in the U.S., and FDA-approved, but it found that their operators were often working with drug traffickers to fulfill online orders with counterfeit pills or diverted pharmaceuticals.

"These counterfeit medications are often made with fentanyl or methamphetamine and taking them can lead to serious health risks, including harmful side effects, ineffective treatment, and even death," it added.

**Anurag Thakur is free to participate in BCCI affairs: SC**

**Krishnadas Rajgopal**  
NEW DELHI



Anurag Thakur

The Supreme Court on Thursday modified its 2017 order in a major relief for former Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president and current BJP Lok Sabha member Anurag Thakur, and said he shall be free to participate in the affairs of the cricket Board according to rules and regulations.

On January 2, 2017, the top court had directed Mr. Thakur to "forthwith cease and desist from being associated with the working of BCCI".

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said Mr. Thakur was "hitherto free to participate in the affairs of the BCCI as per the rules and regulations". The Bench, including Justice Joymalya Bagchi, on Thursday lifted the embargo on Mr. Thakur considering the fact that he had given an

conditional apology and he has been unconnected with the BCCI for nine years now.

In January 2017, the court had declared Mr. Thakur and then BCCI honorary secretary Ajay Shirke "unfit" to continue at the helm of the BCCI for their "obstructionist" attitude and failure to implement the Justice Lodha Committee reforms in the BCCI.

Mr. Thakur had urged the court in 2018 for recalling the order barring him from having any association with the BCCI.

**Army renames 246 roads, buildings, and facilities to shed colonial legacy**

**Saurabh Trivedi**  
NEW DELHI



Malcolm Lines in Mhow Cantonment has been renamed Piru Singh Lines.

The Indian Army has renamed 246 roads, buildings, and facilities across establishments nationwide as part of an effort to shed colonial-era symbols and reinforce an identity rooted in India's military heritage.

The Army stated that the revised nomenclature gives pride of place to the nation's gallantry awardees, battle heroes and distinguished military leaders, reflecting the core values of courage, sacrifice and leadership. Officials say the initiative is part of the Army's continuing efforts to align its institutional spaces with India's military traditions and national ethos.

The renaming exercise covers a wide range of infrastructure, including 124 roads, 77 residential colo-

mains embedded in everyday military life.

Across several cantonments and military stations, British-era names have been replaced with titles drawn from India's military history. In Delhi Cantonment, Kirby Place has been renamed Keniguruse Vihar, and Mall Road is now known as Arun Khetrapal Marg. Ambala Cantonment's Patterson Road Quarters is now Dhan Singh Thapa Enclave, while New Horn Line in Mathura Cantonment has been renamed Abdul Haq Lines.

Similar changes include Queens Line Road in Jaipur Cantonment, which has been renamed Sundar Singh Marg, New Birdwood Line in Bareilly Cantonment is now called Thimayya Colony, and Malcolm Lines in Mhow Cantonment has been renamed Piru Singh Lines.

Congress flags 'procedural irregularities' in Lok Sabha

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Congress MP K.C. Venugopal on Thursday wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla alleging "serious procedural irregularities" and questioning the "authenticity" of the procedure adopted to pass the Motion of Thanks to the President without the customary reply by the Prime Minister.

In his letter, he said that under Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure, it is mandatory for the Prime Minister to explain the government's position at the end of the discussion. If the Prime Minister is unable to do so, the House must be informed, he said, adding that neither of these requirements was met.

"In the present case, neither did the Hon'ble Prime Minister reply to the debate nor was the House informed about his inability to do so. This clearly amounts to a violation of provisions of Rule 20," the Congress leader wrote.

Mr. Venugopal also referred to Rule 362, under which a debate may be closed without a Minister's reply only if a motion to that effect is moved by a member and approved by the House. He said that no such motion had been moved before the Motion of Thanks was put to vote. "This action, therefore, constitutes a violation of Rule 362," he added.

# PM absent, Lok Sabha passes Motion of Thanks

Amid continued protests by Opposition, Lok Sabha was adjourned; Speaker says the conduct of some Opposition members in his office on Wednesday was not appropriate, terms it a 'black spot'

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address before it was passed in the Lok Sabha on Thursday. In fact, he was not present in the House when the Motion was put to vote. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh were also not present.

The last time that the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address was passed without the Prime Minister's reply was in June 2004, when then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh could not deliver his reply to the debate in the Lok Sabha following BJP protests.

He had then asked the Lok Sabha to put the Motion to vote without his reply. In his 2005 speech, Dr. Singh mentioned that he had not been allowed to speak the previous year.

**Concrete information** On Thursday, as the Opposition continued its protests after the passage of the Motion, Mr. Birla adjourned the proceedings yet again.

When the House reconvened at 3 p.m., the Speaker said: "When the Leader



**Stormy scenes:** Opposition leaders trooping into the Well in the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session in New Delhi on Thursday. SANSAD TV

of the House was to reply [to the debate on the Motion of Thanks], I had concrete information that many members of the Congress party could carry out an unexpected act by reaching the spot where the Prime Minister sits."

He added: "If this incident had taken place, then this would have left the democratic traditions of the country in shreds."

The Speaker added that the conduct of some Opposition members in his office on Wednesday was not appropriate and was, in fact, "like a black spot".

"With sadness, I have to inform [the House] that some members displayed such behaviour in the

House on Wednesday that had never been witnessed in its history," he said.

On Wednesday, women MPs from Opposition parties charged towards the Prime Minister's seat in the Lok Sabha, holding up banners ahead of his scheduled speech. The incident took place while BJP member P.P. Chaudhary was making his remarks on the Motion of Thanks. The Prime Minister was not present in the House at that point.

Mr. Birla thanked the Prime Minister for acceding to his request and avoiding unpleasant scenes in the Lok Sabha by not coming to the House on Wednesday.

He then adjourned the House for the day as Opposition members continued to protest and raise slogans.

## Persistent protest

The Lok Sabha had witnessed protests since the morning, with Congress MPs trooping into the Well, carrying posters featuring a picture of the Prime Minister, with 'Narendra-Surjender' slogans written at the top.

MPs from the Samajwadi Party and the Trinamool Congress were also in the Well, while other members of the INDIA bloc, including the DMK and the Left, stood at their seats and in the aisle in solidarity.

# Tensions escalate in Rajya Sabha over Rahul issue, Opposition stages walkout

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress and other Opposition parties staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, accusing the government of preventing Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi from speaking during the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President for her Address to the joint sitting of Parliament. The protest followed a heated exchange between the Treasury and Opposition benches.

In the Upper House, Leader of the Opposition and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge attempted to read out excerpts from an unpublished book by former Army chief General M.M. Naravane (retd), the very point of contention in the Lok Sabha. Chairman and Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan disallowed him from doing so, prompting Opposition members to walk out in protest.

Leader of the House J.P. Nadda criticised the Congress, and said that the party should not allow itself to be held hostage by an "abodh balak" (ignorant child), in a reference to Mr. Gandhi.

Tensions escalated soon after Zero Hour began. Raising the issue first, Mr. Kharge said Mr. Gandhi



**Speech row:** Rajya Sabha MP Mallikarjun Kharge speaking in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session on Thursday. SANSAD TV

had not been permitted to speak in the Lok Sabha despite wanting to address matters of national interest.

Before he could continue, Mr. Radhakrishnan ruled that the proceedings of the Lok Sabha could not be discussed in the Rajya Sabha, and handed the floor to Mr. Nadda.

Mr. Nadda countered, saying that the Opposition should advise its Lok Sabha members to participate in the debate rather than disrupt the House. Opposition MPs responded with slogans, alleging that democracy was being "throttled".

**Rijiju questions protest** Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju questioned the timing of the protest, noting that the Rajya Sabha debate had proceeded uninterrupted for three days. Reiterating his ruling, the Rajya Sabha

Chairman cited a precedent based on an intervention by former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, advising against references to Lok Sabha proceedings in the Upper House.

Mr. Nadda said the government was prepared for discussion "in all forms and at all times". He advised Mr. Kharge, as Congress chief, to run the party independently and not allow it to become hostage to the "abodh balak". He added: "You shouldn't let pride, arrogance and ignorance dictate... Arrogance and ignorance are a potent combination and you should stay away from it."

The Congress president said such language was unacceptable and accused the BJP of stifling democratic processes. Mr. Kharge said BJP members were not free to speak their minds even as they lectured the Opposition.

# Rajya Sabha adopts the Motion of Thanks amid protests by Opposition

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Thursday adopted the Motion to Thank President Droupadi Murmu for her Address to the joint session of Parliament. The amendments moved by Opposition MPs were defeated in a voice vote in their absence. The Opposition had walked out of the House during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply to the debate.

Earlier in the day, BJP members addressed concerns expressed by Opposition members over the India-U.S. bilateral trade deal and said the deal was in the interest of the country. Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi said even External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar was unaware of the details of the trade deal. Quoting U.S. President Donald Trump, she said agriculture and



**Talking point:** Opposition MPs walk out from the Rajya Sabha during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech. ANI VIDEO GRAB

dairy products were part of the deal and sought clarification from the government.

**Farmers are a priority** BJP MP Maya Naroliya said under the Narendra Modi government, the allocation to agriculture sector had increased, helping the farmers to modernise farming systems. Under

the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) alone, she said ₹4 lakh crore was distributed to farmers.

"Farmers are priority for the government," she said, adding that India had become the world's largest rice producer.

Another BJP MP, Mahendra Bhatt, said the PM-Kisan scheme instilled confi-

**Opposition parties say agriculture and dairy part of the India-U.S. bilateral trade agreement**

dence among farmers to further their livelihood.

"This is a truth that farmers have an important role in India. If farmers remained poor and if their interests were not protected, India could have also faced a famine-like situation that some other countries suffered," he said.

Aam Aadmi Party MP Sandeep Kumar Pathak said nobody was against the special intensive revision of voter lists but it should be a gradual process. "You are rushing an activity which should take two years in three months. Who on earth can achieve this? I am very sure it is not achievable," he said.

# Ensuring energy security of Indians is top priority: govt.

**Kallol Bhattacharjee**  
NEW DELHI

India's latest decisions on energy sourcing were taken keeping in mind the need for "diversifying" energy supplies, the External Affairs Ministry said on Thursday in response to a question regarding U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "agreed to stop buying Russian oil".

Elaborating further on Mr. Trump's assertions regarding India agreeing to purchase crude oil from Venezuela, made on social media platform Truth Social on Monday, Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India "remains open to exploring the commercial merits" of crude oil supply from multiple sources, "including from Venezuela".

"Diversifying our energy sourcing in keeping with objective market conditions and evolving international dynamics is at the core of our strategy to ensure this. All of India's actions are taken and will be taken with this in mind," he said, highlighting that "ensuring energy security of 1.4 billion Indians is the supreme priority" for the government.

Russia had emerged as the biggest supplier of crude oil to India against the backdrop of the Ukraine conflict that erupted on February 24, 2022.

Russia attracted immediate sanctions from the West as the war escalated, but India maintained that the energy trade with Russia was in its interest. However, officials here indicated that India is weary of "overreliance" on any single source as such dependence increases the vulnerability of the Indian



Randhir Jaiswal

economy to any possible supply disruption.

**Ties with Venezuela** Mr. Jaiswal described Venezuela as a "long-standing partner of India in the energy sector encompassing trade and investments". "Consistent with India's approach to energy security, India remains open to exploring the commercial merits of any new crude oil supply options, including from Venezuela," he said.

Mr. Jaiswal described the India-U.S. trade deal announced by Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump on Monday as one of the biggest commercial moves by the two sides.

"This agreement will give a major boost to India's export, labour intensive industries, job creation, growth and bring prosperity to our people," he said.

In remarks shared with the news agency ANI, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that he was not "directly" part of the negotiations on the deal and referred to the role played by Mr. Goyal.

"It is hard for me to say, and the Commerce Minister would know it better, because he is in direct engagement with the U.S. Trade Representative," Mr. Jaishankar said, adding that "a detailing of the trade negotiations is under way as we speak".

# Take note of Assam CM's 'hate speech' group urges Gauhati HC

**The Hindu Bureau**  
GUWAHATI

A group of 43 citizens have urged the Gauhati High Court to take *suo motu* cognisance of "repeated instances of hate speech and constitutional impropriety" by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The citizens included academic Hiren Gohain; retired Director-General of Police Harekrishna Deka; former Archbishop of Guwahati Thomas Menamparmpil; Ajit Kumar Bhuyan, MP; and environmental scientist Dulal Chandra Goswami.

In a memorandum submitted to the Chief Justice

on Thursday, they cited public statements by the Chief Minister, which, they say, targeted the Bengali-origin Muslim community, called the 'Miyā' community. According to the representation, the remarks go beyond political rhetoric and amount to dehumanisation, collective stigmatization, and threats of state-backed harassment.

**Social humiliation** The memorandum highlighted a recent statement attributed to Mr. Sarma in which he allegedly urged people to make members of the community "suffer", including by underpaying them for their services.

**Okram Ibobi Singh is new Manipur unit chief of Cong.**

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday appointed former Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh as its Manipur unit chief, replacing K. Meghachandra.

The party appointed Mr. Meghachandra as the new Congress Legislature Party Leader (CLP) with K. Ranjit Singh as his deputy. Mr. Ibobi Singh was the CLP leader till now.

Victor Keishing and Manga Vaiphei have been appointed working presidents, according to a party release.

"It is an absolute lie. There is no question of anybody raising hands on the Prime Minister, trying to hurt him or any such thing... there was no such plan," she added.

Congress leader Pawan Khera accused the BJP of insulting Dalit MP Varsha Gaikwad by casting aspersions on her conduct. "Were the Modi government and their compliant journalists uncomfortable with a Dalit woman MP standing up? Do they consider them untouchable," Mr. Khera asked in a post on X.

In a social media post, Leader of the Opposition



**Sport****PERIOD OF DOMINANCE**

Three titles in as many years for RCB is amazing: Smriti



Three titles in three years for the franchise is amazing. The role clarity we got from the support staff helped us a lot. I had the feeling that Georgia Voll would play a match-winning knock in the final, and I am happy for her. The group was hard-working and we believed we could do anything – RCB captain Smriti Mandhana.

**SHOWING GRACE**

I tried to bring energy to an exciting game: Harris on final



I said to the girls that you get this opportunity only once. Want to quote Roger Federer and that he only won 54% of his points. We wanted to give it a good crack. I tried to bring a little bit of energy to what is an exciting game. In the crowd, there is a lot of representation, and we really appreciate that — Grace Harris.

**OVER THE MOON**

To play that way and perform in the final is super special, says Voll



Disappointing we could not finish it together but what a great season it has been. To play that way in the final... could not have hit the ball better. To perform in the big game is super special. It's awesome watching her (Smriti Mandhana) go about it. She's one of the cleanest hitters I have ever seen – Georgia Voll.

**THE BIG ONE**

A battle between unbeaten teams as India takes on England in final



India and England, both unbeaten so far, will meet in the final of the ICC under-19 World Cup in Harare on Friday. While Ayush Matre's side will bank on its swashbuckling batting line-up to clinch a record-extending sixth title, Thomas Rew's team will look to its in-form skipper to deliver in the big clash.



**Heady stuff:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru capped a memorable campaign by edging out Delhi Capitals in a dramatic final. The six-wicket victory also helped Smriti & Co. draw level with Mumbai Indians' tally of two titles. VIJAY SONEJI

## Smriti-Voll blitz powers RCB to second crown

The two put on a record 165-run stand for the second wicket as the Bengaluru side chases down 204 in a thrilling finish; the Delhi outfit falls short in a final for the fourth successive time

**WPL-4****Vivek Krishnan**  
VADODARA

Smriti Mandhana and Georgia Voll couldn't have found a better occasion to produce a partnership for the ages.

With the Women's Premier League trophy up for grabs against Delhi Capitals at the Kotambi Stadium on Thursday, the Royal Challengers Bengaluru pair came together in pursuit of a target of 204 and

left the opponent in a daze with a sublime show of strokeplay.

The record stand between skipper Smriti and Voll, worth 165 runs, helped RCB clinch its second title in four years. While Smriti caressed her way to a 41-ball 87 (12x4, 3x6), Voll hit 79 (54b, 14x4) as the southern side tracked down the highest target in a WPL final with six wickets in hand and two balls to spare.

The climax wasn't without its nervous moments as RCB lost three wickets in

**SCOREBOARD****DELHI CAPITALS**

Lizelle Lee c Harris b de Klerk 37 (30b, 3x4, 3x6), Shafali Verma c Richa b Arundhati 20 (13b, 3x4), Laura Wolvaardt run out 44 (25b, 3x4, 2x6), Jemimah Rodrigues c de Klerk b Sayali 57 (37b, 8x4), Chinelle Henry (not out) 35 (15b, 4x4, 2x6); Extras (w-10): 10; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 203.

**FALL OF WICKETS**

quick succession. With 10 runs needed by the Bengaluru outfit off the final over, bowled by Shree Charani, a couple of singles were

1-49 (Shafali, 5.5 overs), 2-72 (Lee, 7.3), 3-148 (Jemimah, 15.6), 4-203 (Wolvaardt, 19.6).

**RCB BOWLING**

Bell 4-0-19-0, Sayali 4-0-46-1, Arundhati 4-0-40-1, Shreyanka 2-0-32-0, de Klerk 4-0-48-1, Radha 2-0-18-0.

**ROYAL CHALLENGERS**

Grace Harris c Henry 9 (7b, 2x4), Smriti Mandhana b Henry 87

(41b, 12x4, 3x6), Georgia Voll c Shafali b Minnu 79 (54b, 14x4), Richa Ghosh c Minnu b Nandani 6 (6b, 1x4), Nadine de Klerk (not out) 7 (5b, 1x4), Radha Yadav (not out) 12 (5b, 2x4); Extras (b-2, w-2): 4; Total (for four wkts. in 19.4 overs): 204.

**FALL OF WICKETS**

1-9 (Harris, 1.1), 2-174 (Voll, 16.3), 3-181 (Richa, 17.4), 4-191 (Smriti, 18.4).

**CAPITALS BOWLING**

Kapp 4-0-38-0, Henry 4-0-34-2, Nandani 4-0-41-1, Shree Charani 3.4-0-46-0, Shafali 1-0-9-0, Minnu 2-0-19-1, Sneh 1-0-15-0.

**Toss:** RCB.**PoM:** Smriti.

RCB won by six wickets with two balls to spare to clinch the title.

twinkling feet against spin in serene fashion, notably dancing down the track to Shree Charani for a six over long-on in the 11th over.

RCB's response with the bat overshadowed Jemimah's 37-ball 57. The rest of the Capitals batters chipped in with brisk contributions.

Laura Wolvaardt (44, 25b, 3x4, 2x6) and Chinelle Henry (35 n.o., 15b, 4x4, 2x6) provided the finishing kick with a blistering stand of 55 off just 24 balls. Wolvaardt also forged a 76-run partnership with Jemimah.

## Flight booked and we are going to Colombo, says Suryakumar

**T20 WORLD CUP****Amol Karhadkar**  
MUMBAI

Captain Suryakumar Yadav has stressed that India is fully prepared to face Pakistan in the T20 World Cup preliminary-stage clash on February 15.

But he raised doubts about whether the decision-makers will be able to ensure the game takes place following the Government of Pakistan's directive to the Pakistan



**Let the games begin!** The captains of the 20 teams which will vie for honours in the T20 World Cup. ICC

Cricket Board (PCB) of not taking the field against India.

"Our mindset is pretty

clear. We have not said no (to playing against Pakistan). They have.

"The ICC has given the

fixture. Our flight is booked and we are going there (Colombo)," Suryakumar said during the pre-

tournament captains' media interaction here on Thursday.

"Their (Pakistan's) deci-

sion is not in my control. I wish I could take their decision, but then, it is their call."

Last week, the Pakistan government announced via social media that the Pakistan team will forfeit the group match against India. While the International Cricket Council (ICC) responded through a media release, there has been no official dialogue between the PCB and the ICC regarding the fate of the contest so far.

Asked about his message to the ICC with the fu-

ture of the world's most anticipated cricket fixture hanging in the balance, Suryakumar admitted that he was unsure how much the governing body could intervene.

"I feel it is not an easy job. It is not my call. I am sure they might be working out something as well, but since it has come from the other government or the nation, how can they (the ICC) help?" Suryakumar said.

we are told and the fixtures are ready, we will definitely go ahead."

The India captain reiterated that the team was never hesitant about facing Pakistan in multi-nation tournaments, as has been the norm for over a decade.

"We played them three times in the Asia Cup, we played some good cricket. We won (all the matches) and we were very happy. Similarly, if we get an opportunity in Colombo, we will definitely play," Suryakumar said.

# Suryakumar's merry bunch looks the team to beat

Former champion Pakistan should progress to the Super Eight stage even if it forfeits the marquee game against India; Namibia, Netherlands and USA will hope to punch above their weight



**Superstars:** India's dashing opener Abhishek and Pakistan pace spearhead Afridi are capable of changing the complexion of a game inside the PowerPlay itself. FILE PHOTOS: RITU RAJ KONWAR, K.R. DEEPAK



## It's all down to the 'Indian mentality', feels skipper Suryakumar

**Amol Karhadkar**

MUMBAI

Never has a team entered a men's T20 World Cup – a format as fickle as the weather – as clear favourites as India in 2026. Captain Suryakumar Yadav attributed it to a fundamental shift in approach, describing it as the emergence of the "Indian mentality".

"This is the Indian mentality. We have been playing some good brand of cricket for the last two-three years, but we have changed our thinking," Suryakumar said during the pre-tournament captains' media interaction here on Thursday.

"Earlier, we used to play bilateral (series) differently than the ICC tournaments, but now, be it an ICC event or (the) Asia Cup or even a bilateral (match), we try to play in the same manner."

"This is why, when we went to play the 2024 T20 World Cup, it did not feel



**Doffing his hat:** Suryakumar credits Gambhir for driving the cultural shift within the side. FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

any different. It felt like we have been playing this way for an entire year.

"Even now, the kind of cricket we have been playing for the last year, we will try to play the same way (in the T20 World Cup)."

"And if we play well, the result will also be on our side."

Despite the historical trends – no team having

won a T20 World Cup on home soil and none having successfully defended the title – India arrive with unprecedented momentum.

Their struggles in Test cricket aside, the partnership between head coach Gautam Gambhir and Suryakumar, which has spanned most of the 17-month cycle, has turned India into a dominant force

in the shortest format. Since July 2024, India has lost just six of its 41 T20 Internationals.

Suryakumar did not hesitate in crediting Gambhir for driving the cultural shift within the side.

"It has been a wonderful journey since he (Gambhir) has taken over."

"The main thing is the atmosphere that he has created in the dressing room – that it's a team game. He has infused that personal milestones should be kept aside and the team goals are more important. It's been one year since he has been working on it," he said.

"For example, in the last match in Thiruvananthapuram, Ishant Kishan was in his 90s and he completed his hundred with a six. That is one thing he (Gambhir) is trying in the dressing room, keeping the personal milestones away and focusing on what's the team's goal and then the work towards it."

"The Middle-Eastern country missed the 2024 edition but has made steady progress over the last 18 months under Rajput."

"We have worked very hard, and hopefully we'll

## 'We will try and showcase that the UAE is one of the teams coming up'

**S. Dipak Ragav**

CHENNAI

Nineteen years ago, the inaugural ICC World T20 was a step into the unknown. The success of that event back in 2007 – driven in large part by India's triumph – led to the birth of the IPL, and the subsequent boom of the shortest format, which has reshaped the sport's landscape.

One person who played a key role in India's victory was coach Lalchand Rajput. The former Indian cricketer has since taken on other coaching assignments and is back at the T20 World Cup for the first time after the 2007 edition, as the UAE's head coach.

The Middle-Eastern country missed the 2024 edition but has made steady progress over the last 18 months under Rajput.

"We have worked very hard, and hopefully we'll



**Coaching philosophy:** Rajput believes the key is not to get overawed by the occasion or the opponent. R. RAGU

try and showcase that the UAE is also one of the teams that is coming up now," said Rajput in a chat with *The Hindu*.

The Gulf team, slotted in Group D, will kick off its campaign against New Zealand at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium here before moving to New Delhi for its remaining matches against South Africa, Afghanistan and Canada.

In 2025, the UAE shocked Bangladesh 2-1 in

a three-match T20 series ahead of the Asia Cup, and Rajput felt it showed what the team was capable of.

"It was very important for us because we don't play Test nations often. So, competing with them and showing that we can be as good as they are was huge.

If you look at that, we could have won it even 3-0. That gave us the momentum and the boost. The players now believe themselves, yes, we can do it.

And I think from there on, we just carried forward and we qualified for the World Cup."

Sharing his experience coaching associate countries, the former Mumbai opener stressed that a key aspect he emphasises is not getting overawed by the occasion or the opponent.

In last year's Asia Cup, the UAE pushed Pakistan close in the group-stage game before letting the opportunity slip away. "When you give the big teams an opportunity, they will take it. In that game, we had them at 100 for seven (sic) and let them score 140 (sic). We also batted only 18 overs (sic). These are things we need to improve."

"I think ILT20 has had a big impact on the players. Rubbing shoulders with top players has given them confidence, and they are starting to believe they can do it," said Rajput.

## I have done whatever I could to make a comeback, says Nagal

**DAVIS CUP**

**N. Sudarshan**

BENGALURU

To have your best singles player under a fitness cloud ahead of a crucial Davis Cup tie is never the ideal preparation.

India captain Rohit Rajpal would have been experiencing this tension ever since Sumit Nagal retired from his second-round match at the Nonthaburi Challenger near Bangkok in Thailand little over three weeks ago.

However, at the S.M. Krishna Tennis Stadium here on Thursday, Nagal expressed happiness that his comeback was on track, with the Davis Cup qualifier against the Netherlands starting on Saturday.

"I am feeling better day



**Friendly battle:** Nagal and Dhakshinewar in high spirits during practice. K. MURALI KUMAR

by day," Nagal said after practice.

"For me, the camp started right after Bangkok. I have been working a lot in the last two-three weeks. I don't have any complaints. I have done whatever I could to get ready."

The 28-year-old admitted that there were fears that the muscle tear in his hip could force him out for much longer.

"You don't know how you are going to recover," Nagal elaborated.

"Every day you wake

up, you don't know if you are going to be sore or how much load you can take. The thoughts were there throughout the three weeks. Even yesterday, even today. The first match [after injury] is always like this. But, you name it, I have done it."

The congenial team atmosphere a Davis Cup fixture offers should help calm his nerves and energise him.

"The environment is lovely," the World No. 281 said. "We joke around a lot and we make rookies do a lot of stupid things. Whenever I see my Indian mates, I am with them."

"It is tough at Slams because our schedules are different, the site is so big and everybody is spread out."

"But whenever we get a chance, we are always doing things together."

## Prozorova makes light of an injury to tame Sidorova

**MUMBAI OPEN**

**Tarun Shastry**

MUMBAI

Despite an injury scare that struck at the worst possible moment and the weight of intense humidity, Russia's Tatiana Prozorova produced a stirring display to thump Kristianna Sidorova 6-4, 6-1 in the round-of-16 and move into the quarterfinals of the L&T Mumbai Open 125K Series at the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association courts here on Thursday.

From the outset, Prozorova was in command and dictated play with heavy cross-court forehands, opened the court with the backhand down the line, and consistently disrupted Sidorova's timing. Sidorova never quite found her rhythm, mistiming routine



**Gritty:** Prozorova overcame movement discomfort to advance to the last eight. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

groundstrokes and struggling to settle into rallies as Prozorova mixed depth with subtle variations. With assured net play and firm volleys, Prozorova surged ahead to pocket the opening set 6-4.

Just before the second set began, the contest took an unexpected turn. Prozorova pulled a muscle in

her left thigh and returned to the court heavily taped, her movement visibly restricted. For a fleeting moment, Sidorova sensed an opening as Prozorova conceded a game while testing her leg, relying on slices to stay afloat.

What followed, however, was a striking shift in momentum. Prozorova be-

gan shortening points with bold returns and stepping inside the baseline to strike flat forehands into the corners. She used angled backhands to stretch Sidorova wide, finishing points with crisp volleys and the occasional teasing lob.

Any hope Sidorova harboured faded away as Prozorova reeled off four games on the trot, sealing the second set 6-1 with a flurry of cross-court winners and unreturnable serves to march into the quarterfinals.

**Other results: Singles (round-of-16):** Tian Fangnan (Chn) bt Hanne Vandewinkel (Bel) 2-6, 6-4, 6-4; Lanlana Tararudee (Tha) bt Park So-hyun (Kor) 3-6, 6-3, 6-0; Lili Tagger (Aut) bt Eri Shimizu (Jpn) 6-2, 6-2.

**Doubles (quarterfinals):** Nicole Fossia Huergo (Arg) & Mananchaya Sawangkaew (Tha) bt Rutuja Bhosale & Peangtarn Plipuech (Tha) 4-6, 6-1(9).

## IN BRIEF



## Honoured to carry Olympic flame at Winter Games: Bindra

Olympic gold medallist shooter Abhinav Bindra on Thursday said he is "truly humbled" and "honoured" after carrying the Olympic torch ahead of the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, describing it as a symbol of unity and perseverance. The Winter Olympics begin on Friday at Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo in Italy. "Honoured to carry the Olympic flame at @milanocortina26. A symbol of unity, perseverance, and shared human aspiration," Bindra wrote on 'X'.

## Poojari wins gold in Elite 60kg category

Two-time Commonwealth Games medalist Gururaja Poojari rode on his better clean and jerk show to total 269kg and beat reigning Commonwealth championships gold medallist Ch. Rishikanta Singh by 3kg for the men's Elite 60kg title at the National weightlifting championships in Modinagar on Thursday. Poojari lifted 150kg in clean and jerk, while Rishikanta managed 147kg.

**The results (winners only): Men: Elite: 60kg:** Gururaja Poojari (Kar) snatch 119kg, clean and jerk 150kg, total 269kg; **Junior: 60kg:** Chera Tania (Aru) 110kg, 143kg, 253kg; **Youth: 60kg:** Subrat Naik (Odi) 107kg, 125kg, 232kg; **56kg:** Dharma Jyoti Dewgharia (SSCB) 103kg, 127kg, 230kg.

## LIVE TELECAST

**Ranji Trophy:** JioHotstar, 9.30 a.m.  
**Men's U-19 World Cup (final):** England vs India, Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 1 p.m.  
**Bundesliga:** Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 1 a.m. (Saturday)  
**Serie A:** DAZN, 1.15 a.m. (Saturday)  
**Premier League:** SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 1.30 a.m. (Saturday)  
**LaLiga:** FanCode, 1.30 a.m. (Saturday)



Ready to fire: Jaiswal and Karun will be keen to get going for their respective teams. EMMANUEL YOGINI

## Mumbai takes on Karnataka in a marquee quarterfinal

Home team sweating over the availability of Sarfaraz; visitors will pin hopes on the in-form captain Padikkal as well as the seasoned duo of Rahul and Karun to come good

## RANJI TROPHY

Shayan Acharya  
MUMBAI

**A**s Devdutt Padikkal walked towards the dressing room after a rigorous training session, he was greeted by Yashasvi Jaiswal. The two exchanged pleasantries and were engaged in a long conversation before obliging selfie requests.

And, it was not just them. During Thursday's practice session, players from Mumbai and Karnataka were seen in conversation, often sharing laughter.

However, friendship will take a backseat when the two teams meet in the Ranji Trophy quarterfinals at the MCA-BKC ground, starting Friday.

On the back of a sensational victory against Punjab, a confident Karnataka will pin its hopes on captain Padikkal as well as the seasoned K.L. Rahul and Siddhesh Lad proving his mettle with five centuries, there's enough depth in Mumbai's batting.

With the pitch likely to favour the spinners as the game progresses, it will be a challenge for the Mumbai batters to take on leg-spinner Shreyas Gopal, one of Karnataka's most consistent bowlers.

For Karnataka, too, it's

that he will play," Mumbai captain Shardul Thakur said.

## Depth in batting

If Sarfaraz fails to recover in time, it will be a massive blow for the home team. However, with Jaiswal returning to the squad and Siddhesh Lad proving his mettle with five centuries, there's enough depth in Mumbai's batting.

While it has an enviable batting line-up – featuring India internationals – the bowling unit, too, has enough firepower with the experienced Prasidh Krishna leading the pack, along with Vidwath Kaverappa and V. Vyshak.

about playing to its strength. It has not won the title in more than a decade. Under Padikkal's leadership, the team hopes to play some fearless cricket.

Keerthana will meet Anupama Ramachandran for a place in the final. Anupama overcame Hong Kong's Yee Ting Cheung 32-60, 63(62)-25, 62-26, 31-40, 52-18.

## RANJI QUARTERFINALS

Mumbai vs. Karnataka (Mumbai); Bengal vs. Andhra (Kalyani); Madhya Pradesh vs. J & K (Indore); Jharkhand vs. Uttarakhand (Jamshedpur).

## SNAPSHOTS

## Indian shuttlers lose to Thailand but qualify for quarterfinals

QINGDAO (CHINA): Tanvi Sharma produced a stunning win, but defending champion India suffered a narrow 2-3 loss to Thailand in its second Group Y match of the Badminton Asia Team Championships on Thursday. Despite the defeat, India qualified for the quarterfinals. India finished second in the group behind Thailand.

**The result:** Thailand 3 bt India 2 (Busan Ongbamrungphan lost to Tanvi Sharma 14-21, 21-17, 18-21; Tidaporn Kleebeyesun & Nattamon Laisuan lost to Gayatri Gopi Chand & Treesa Jolly 14-21, 22-20, 11-21; Pitchamol Opatniputh bt Rakshitha Ramraj 21-19, 21-17; Hathaitip Mijad & Napapakorn Tungkasatan bt Tanisha Crasto & Shruti Mishra 19-21, 21-14, 21-15; Pornpicha Choeikeewong bt Malvika Bansod 21-18, 21-14).

**The results: Women: 75kg:** Lovlina Borgohain bt Olha Pylypchuk (Ukr) 5-0, Sanamacha Chanu bt Viktoria Penney (Can) 4-1; **70kg:** Arundhati Choudhary bt Aziza Issina (Kaz) 5-0; **51kg:** Nitu bt Laura Calderon (Esp) RSC in Round 1, Kusum bt Claudia Alcaniz (Esp) 4-1; **48kg:** Manju Rani bt Gloria d'Almeida (Fra) 5-0. **Men: 90kg:** Harsh Choudhary bt Bryan Colwell (Can) 5-0; **80kg:** Ankush bt Yerassyl Zhakpekov (Kaz) 3-2; **70kg:** Hitesh Gulia bt Vincent Santoriello (Can) 5-0, Deepak bt David Edenel Rosalen (Esp) 5-0; **55kg:** Pawan Bartwal bt Thanarat Saengphet (Tha) retired in Round 2, Jadumani Singh bt Siouosh Mukhammdieev (Ukr) 4-1.

## HI names 24-member squad for Pro League

NEW DELHI: A 24-member squad for the upcoming home leg of the FIH Pro league was named on Thursday with several youngsters finding place in the Indian men's hockey team's season opening competition for the year.

The Rourkela leg is scheduled from February 10-15 with Argentina and Belgium being the other teams. While Pawan Malik gets a chance in the goal, defender and drag-flicker Amandeep Lakra has earned a call-up after an impressive outing in the Hockey India League, where he was adjudged the player-of-the-tournament.

**The squad:** Goalkeepers: Suraj Karkera, Pawan; defenders: Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Harmanpreet Singh, Sumit, Sanjay, Nilam Sanjeev Xess, Amandeep Lakra;

**midfielders:** Rajinder Singh, Manmeet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Hardik Singh, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Rosan Kujur;

**forwards:** Abhishek, Sukhejeet Singh, Shilanand Lakra, Selvam Karthi, Mandeep Singh, Arajeet Singh Hundal, Aditya Arjun Lalage.



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# Four-star Kerala demolishes Punjab

Sets up summit clash with Services; Riyas stars with a brace while Ajsal and Viknesh score one apiece; Abhishek's double seals the fate of Railways in the first last-four encounter; final to be played on Sunday



**Putting the game to bed:** Viknesh capitalised on a defensive error to make it 3-0 for Kerala at the stroke of half-time. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## SANTOSH TROPHY

### Sports Bureau SILAPATHAR

Kerala stormed into the final of the 79th Santosh Trophy National football championship by crushing a 10-man Punjab 4-0 in the semifinal at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium here on Thursday.

Seven-time champion Kerala will meet Services in the final on Sunday. Services defeated Railways 2-0 in the first semifinal at the same venue.

Muhammed Ajsal

opened the scoring for Kerala in the 16th minute as he headed in M.M. Arjun's corner-kick from the far post.

**Set-piece does the trick**  
P.T. Muhammed Riyas doubled the lead in the 34th through a set-piece move off another corner-kick taken by Arjun.

Bibin Ajayan ran into the box to receive the short corner and relayed it to an unmarked Riyas who scored from close range.

M. Viknesh capitalised on a defensive error to make it 3-0 at the stroke of half-time.

Punjab was reduced to

# Samrat-Suruchi duo clinches 10m air pistol mixed team silver

### Sports Bureau NEW DELHI

Samrat Rana and Suruchi Singh joined forces to clinch silver in the 10m air pistol mixed team event in the Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range on Thursday.

India extended its domination by taking its gold count to 10 after two days

of the competition.

The host has also bagged five silver medals and one bronze. Uzbekistan is second in the tally with three gold medals.

In the 10m air pistol women's junior event, Rashmika Sahgal and Vanshika Chaudhary finished one-two respectively.

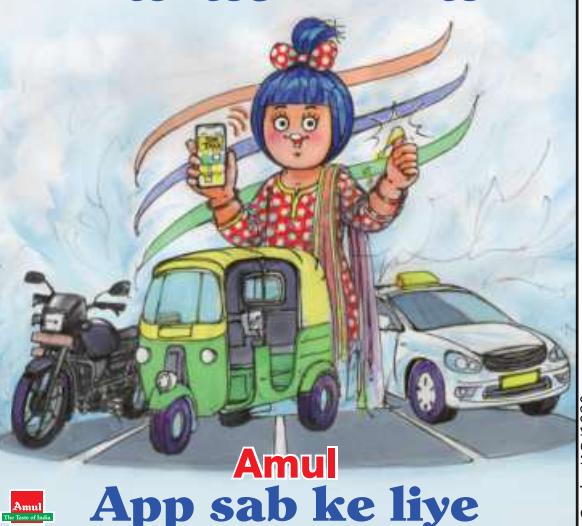
In the corresponding youth category, Priyanshi Purva won gold while Cha-

hek Kohli finished second.

The trio of Rashmika, Vanshika and Agam Grewal won the junior women's air pistol team gold with a combined tally of 1714, 43 points ahead of the silver-winning Kazakhstan team.

Priyanshi, Chahek and Shiksha Saran also won the women's youth air pistol team gold with 1709.

# Bharat ki Taxi



**Amul**  
**App sab ke liye**

dcCunha/AB/1080

## AROUND THE CITY

### Vaz and Suleymenov in the lead

India's International Master Ethan Vaz shared the lead with GM Alisher Suleymenov of Kazakhstan with 2.5 points each at the end of the third round of the first Chola Chess International Grandmaster Norm round-robin chess tournament in Chennai on Thursday.

### The results (third round):

Neuris Delgado Ramirez (Par) 1.5 drew with Harsh Suresh 1.5; Alisher Suleymenov (Kaz) 2.5 bt Girel Joseph (Fra) 1; Boyer Mahel (Fra) 0.5 drew with Mayank Chakraborty 1; Ethan Vaz 2.5 bt Aronyak Ghosh 1.5; Bongaonkar, Akshay (1.5) drew with Audi Ameya 1.5.

### Thumping win for Chettinad Vidhyashram

Chettinad Vidhyashram defeated Vidya Mandir 'B' by 191 runs in the Vidya Mandir-Sportstar-Sanmar under-14 tournament.

**The scores:** St. John's 120/4 in 20 overs (Y. Sanjay Sai 46 n.o., Om Kumar 49) tied with Ramachandra 120 in 20 overs (Sagith 56, C.S. Anirudh Srivatsan 3/18).



**Happy bunch:** The Hindustan International School (Padur) team. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Don Bosco 115 in 20 overs (A. Sanjith 38, K. Danish Karthi 3/15)

bt Heartfulness 94/8 in 20 overs (Aadil Asran 32).

PS SSS 89/6 in 20 overs lost to Vidya Mandir 'A' 90/4 in 12.4 overs (P. Ashwath Narayanan 32 n.o.).

Chettinad Vidhyashram 213/1 in 20 overs (B. Krishnav 92 n.o., N. Madhav 88 n.o.) bt Vidya Mandir 'B' 22 in 12.2 overs (E. Gautham 3/4).

PSBB Millennium 60/7 in 20 overs lost to PSBB (K.K. Nagar) 64/1 in 7.1 overs (Sidharth Yogesh 33 n.o.).

Sir Mutha 59/7 in 20 overs (S.V. Rithik 4/2) lost to PSBB (Nungambakkam) 61/1 in 5.3

overs (T. Siddeshwar 34 n.o.).

### Mugalivakkam CA emerges champion

Mugalivakkam CA defeated WGCA by four wickets in the final of the Villa Associates under-16 cricket tournament.

**The scores:** Final: WGCA 182/4 in 30 overs (Anish 77, Dev Chandrasekhar 58) lost to Mugalivakkam CA 186/6 in 29.1

overs (Gautam Garu 35, Vageeshwaran 49 n.o., M. Kailash 3/40).

**Man-of-the-Match and Player-of-the-Tournament:** Vageeshwaran.

**Special awards:** Best batter: Dev Chandrasekhar (WGCA); Best bowler: Rahul (Adabakkam CA); Best all-rounder: Anish (WGCA).

### Madras Club blanks Cosmopolitan 'A'

Madras Club blanked Cosmopolitan 'A' 3-0 in a 45+ B zone match of the 33rd Sammar-TNTA Chennai City club tennis league.

#### The results:

**45+, A Zone:** MCC 'A' bt Gandhi Nagar 'A' 3-0; Besant Nagar 'A' bt Gandhi Nagar 'A' 3-0.

**B Zone:** Madras Club bt Anna Nagar 3-0; Madras Club bt Cosmopolitan 'A' 3-0; Gandhi Nagar 'B' bt Anna Nagar 3-0.

**C Zone:** MUC bt Ransa 2-1; MUC bt Mylapore 3-0; MUC bt Cosmopolitan 'B' 3-0; Indira Nagar SC bt Anna Nagar K Block Club 'B' 2-1.

**Hindustan International School (Padur) clinches overall title**  
Hindustan International (Padur) won the overall title in the Chairman's Trophy inter-school badminton tournament.

Hindustan International (Karapakkam) was second

while Holy Queen MHSS finished third. M.R. Mohamed Rehan, International badminton player, gave away the prizes.

### Vijay & Uma Jalapathy pair triumphs

D. Vijay and Uma Jalapathy finished first with 77.18 % in the Madras Race Club open bridge tournament.

**Other placings:** 2. R. Krishnan & B. Viswanathan 68.11%; 3. Tamilselvan & Thirunavukarasu 64.93%.

### Mar Gregorios, Jaya Arts in title clash

Mar Gregorios will meet Jaya Arts in the final of the CSK-Tiruvallur DCA inter-collegiate T20 tournament.

**The scores:** Semifinals: Mar Gregorios 152 in 19.3 overs (S. Raghuvalan 25, V. Mathew Richard Jones 54, Mohammed Rayhaan Syed 3/15) bt SRHIER 134 in 19.4 overs (S. Sricharan 40, V. Mathew Richard Jones 4/23).

Hindu College 44 in 15.1 overs (V. Vinothan 3/6, S. Nagaraj 3/9) lost to Jaya Arts 45 for no loss in 4.3 overs (M.B. Pranav 25 n.o.).

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## 'Cannot certify movies that mar social harmony'

CBFC files a counter affidavit before the Madras High Court defending its decision to deny certification to *Lakshmi-Lawrence Kadhal* as it 'portrays one belief system in bad light'

**Mohamed Imranullah S.**  
CHENNAI

When a movie, as a whole, persistently portrays a particular section of society in a derogatory and prejudicial manner and when such narratives are bound to disrupt public order and undermine social harmony, it could be denied certification in toto for public exhibition, the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has contended before the Madras High Court.

Filing a counter affidavit in response to an appeal filed by Youreka Cinema School, which had produced the movie *Lakshmi-Lawrence Kadhal*, CBFC Chennai Regional Officer D. Balamurali said, the board certifies films – including promos and trailers – for public exhibition in theatres and television channels in accordance with the Cinematograph Act, 1952 and Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 2024.

He said that Section 5B(2) of the 1952 Act empowers the Centre to issue such directions as it may think fit, setting out the principles that shall guide the CBFC in sanctioning films



The contents capable of provoking communal disharmony or widespread social unrest cannot be cloaked under the guise of freedom of expression

**D. BALAMURALI**  
CBFC Chennai Regional Officer

**Both the five-member examining committee as well as a nine-member revising committee had unanimously decided the movie was not fit for certification**

for public exhibition.

In exercise of such power, the Centre had issued elaborate guidelines to assist the members of the examining committees and revising committees in arriving at a decision.

**Reasons for refusal**  
The CBFC was duty-bound

to ensure visuals or words contemptuous of racial, religious or other groups or which promote communal, obscurantist, anti-scientific and anti-national attitude were not presented in a movie. It was also the duty of the board to ensure public order does not get endangered because of the screening of a movie for public exhibition.

Accordingly, both the five-member examining committee as well as a nine-member revising committee had unanimously decided *Lakshmi-Lawrence Kadhal* was not fit for certification because "it portrays its interpretation of various belief systems in their adaption of

modern science, rituals based on beliefs, treatment of women and downtrodden and caste-based discrimination and consistently portrays one belief system in bad light and the other one as emancipating".

The counter affidavit also stated that "the refusal of certification is not founded upon any stray or isolated scene or dialogue, but upon the cumulative effect of the film viewed in its entirety. The film, as a whole, persistently portrays a particular section of society in a derogatory and prejudicial manner. The potential for incitement of disharmony and social unrest is not speculative but imminent and real".

Mr. Balamurali went on to state: "Such narratives are bound to disrupt public order and undermine social harmony. The contents capable of provoking communal disharmony or widespread social unrest cannot be cloaked under the guise of freedom of expression."

After the counter affidavit filed by CBFC counsel K.R. Samratt was served upon the producer's counsel M. Santhanaraman, the judge adjourned the hearing to February 11.

### Prepping for summer



**Field work:** A farm worker engaged in spraying pesticide over watermelon crops in Coimbatore district on Thursday. S. SIVA SARAVANAN

### Kerala passes resolution for restoration of MGNREGS

**The Hindu Bureau**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Assembly on Thursday passed a resolution demanding that the Centre restore the MGNREGS framework by withdrawing the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin). "With its introduction, the rights-based approach that was the essence of the existing scheme has vanished," said the resolution presented by Minister M.B. Rajesh.

**FULL REPORT**  
» SOUTH PAGE

## Conservation efforts raise dugong population in Tamil Nadu to 270

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The estimated population of dugongs in Tamil Nadu has been put at 270. A survey undertaken by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), in collaboration with the Forest Department, along the Tamil Nadu coast has found that there are 158 dugongs in Palk Bay and 112 dugongs in the Gulf of Mannar.

"The findings indicate that the dugong population in Tamil Nadu is stable and doing well, says Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary, Environment, Climate Change and Forests Department.

In a social media post, she said that Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar together now represent the largest viable dugong population in India. This is largely



The survey confirmed the presence of mother-calf dugong pairs, providing evidence of active breeding in the region. FILE PHOTO

has established a benchmark and will be scaled up in future for regular monitoring of the dugong population," said J. A. Johnson, Scientist-F, WII, who led the assessment team.

The earlier estimated dugong population in Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar region was about 175 individuals, an estimate drawn from the interview-based survey conducted in 2012 and 2013.

The present numbers, based on aerial survey detection, indicate that the dugong population is doing well, and these two areas remain the stronghold of the dugong population in the country, the report said.

However, the estimates may not fully account for individuals that temporarily move into deeper waters, the report added.

Attributed to the implementation of the Dugong Recovery Programme by WII, supported through CAMPA, along with the proactive and sustained conservation efforts of the Forest Department, including community engagement, to protect dugongs, she said.

Importantly, the confirmed presence of mother-calf pairs provides evi-



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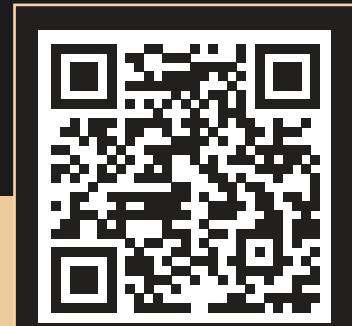
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SCAN TO KNOW MORE

# Tamil Nadu InFocus

THE HINDU

## NUGGETS OF HISTORY

### Hindi was introduced in Madras Presidency schools in 1927

Hindi was introduced in schools in the Madras Presidency in 1927. In line with the G.O. No. 662, issued on April 22, 1927, Hindi was included in the curriculum of Board schools under A and B groups. In the 1938-39 Budget, Premier C. Rajagopalachari announced funds for teaching 'Hindustani' in 125 schools.

### 'Thamizhar Padai' took out a march against Hindi from Tiruchi

On August 1, 1938, 101 Tamil enthusiasts, under the banner of 'Thamizhar Padai', set out on a march from Tiruchi to Madras against Hindi imposition. Among those who took part in the rally was Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar. The marchers walked for 42 days and conducted more than 80 public meetings en route.

### The death of two youngsters fuelled the protest against Hindi

Natarajan, 20, was among those arrested on December 5, 1938 for taking part in the anti-Hindi protest. He died at hospital on January 15, 1939. On February 13, Thalambuthu of Kumbakonam was arrested for taking part in a protest at George Town. He fell ill and died on March 11. The deaths of the two youngsters fuelled the protest.

### A purse of ₹1,001 for as many sent to jail for opposing Hindi

On June 19, 1939, 'Periyar' E.V. Ramasamy spoke at a public meeting at Triplicane in Madras. He was presented with a purse of ₹1,001, representing 1,001 volunteers who had gone to jail for the anti-Hindi agitation. He hoped that ₹10,000 would be collected the next year, meaning the government would send as many persons to jail.

### Compulsory learning of Hindi withdrawn in Madras in 1940

In 1939, the Congress Ministries in the provinces, including the Rajaji Ministry in Madras, resigned against Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's decision to involve India in the Second World War. On February 22, 1940, Madras Governor Lord Erskine halted the compulsory learning of Hindi in schools. (*Compiled by N. Sai Charan*)

# Documents on anti-Hindi agitation wiped out on Bhaktavatsalam's order

On February 24, 1967, a month before losing power to the DMK, the last Congress Chief Minister ordered the Public Department to destroy records on the anti-Hindi agitation that rocked the State. After assuming office, Annadurai sought an explanation from the Chief Secretary and wanted to know whether the papers could be reconstructed

**B. Kolappan**  
N. Sai Charan

**T**he 1967 Assembly election catapulted the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) to power and effectively banished the Congress from ever emerging as a ruling party in Tamil Nadu. Ironically, the one person who appeared to have anticipated the DMK's victory was the last Congress Chief Minister, M. Bhaktavatsalam. A month before losing power to the DMK, Bhaktavatsalam seemed to have prepared for his exit.

On February 24, 1967, he wrote a note to the Public Department, "Records connected with the anti-Hindi imposition agitation need not be kept. This may also apply to records maintained by the police." The following day, the Public Department issued an order, "With reference to the Chief Minister's orders stating that records connected with the anti-Hindi agitation need not be kept, the files listed below are submitted for orders regarding destruction."

The order listed 25 records treated as "secret", including those relating to the arrest and detention of DMK leader M. Karunanidhi at the Borstal School at Palayamkottai, along with reports on his health condition; the detention of Tamil scholar Ilakkuvanar, also known as Avadayappan, Head of the Tamil Department at Thiagarajar College, Madurai; the detention of S.B. Adityan (Si. Pa. Adithanar), founder of *Daily Thanthi*; and the detention of student leader R. Sethu of Madurai Medical College.

The list also included records of detention in North Arcot, Chengalpattu, Coimbatore, Madurai, Kanniyakumari, The Nilgiris, Ramanathapuram, Salem, Thanjavur, Tiruchi, and Tirunelveli districts, as well as Madras city. The documents included writ petitions filed by A. Singaram of Riverbed Fort, Salem, and Joseph Pallipat of Madras city, challenging their detention.

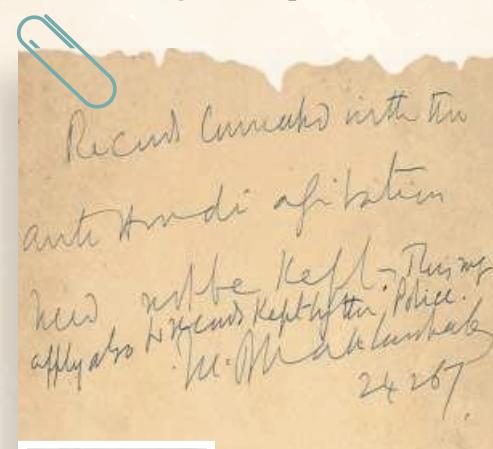
"In accordance with the Chief Minister's orders, these records were then destroyed and we are not able to retrieve them in any manner," said A. Vennila, Assistant Editor at the Tamil Nadu Archives and Historical Research, who spent nearly one-and-a-half years compiling and digitising documents related to the anti-Hindi agitation. This comprehensive inventory of documents tracing the course of the anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu – including government orders and debates in the Madras State (later Tamil Nadu) Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council between 1927 and 1969 – was released by Chief Minister M. K. Stalin on December 22, 2025. Along with a descriptive index, the records are available on the Tamil Nadu Archives website.

#### Signed note

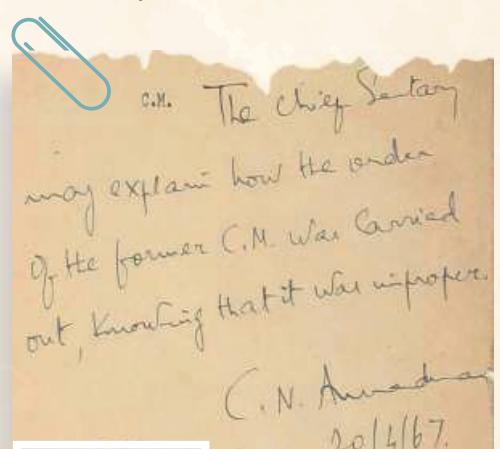
Within days of Bhaktavatsalam's order, events took a historic turn that reshaped the political landscape of Tamil Nadu. In the 1967 election, the DMK came to power for the first time, and C.N. Annadurai assumed office as the Chief Minister. After being informed that documents related to the anti-Hindi agitation had been destroyed, Annadurai, on March 31, 1967, sought an explanation from the Chief Secretary. "From the press statements, I find that the previous Chief Minister [M. Bhaktavatsalam] was advised about the need for the destruction of the files connected with the anti-Hindi agitation. I would like to know the officers who advised the previous Chief Minister about it and whether those files could now be reconstructed," he wrote in a signed note addressed to the Chief Secretary.

In his reply dated April 4, 1967, the Chief Secretary said, "It is clear from the former Chief Minister's orders, and also from the absence of any notes from any officer in that connection, that the orders were those of the former Chief Minister himself and that no officer tendered any advice to him in that connection."

The Chief Secretary further noted that Bhaktavatsalam's instructions regarding the police records had been conveyed orally by the Deputy Secretary (Public) to the police. "It may be presumed, therefore, that the connected records with the police also would have been



On February 24, 1967, Chief Minister M. Bhaktavatsalam wrote a note to the Public Department, ordering the destroying of the records connected with the anti-Hindi imposition agitation.



After being informed that documents related to the anti-Hindi agitations had been destroyed, C.N. Annadurai, on March 31, 1967, sought an explanation from the Chief Secretary.



**Turning point:** College students taking part in the anti-Hindi agitation in Madras in January 1965. The protests were held all over the State. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

destroyed in pursuance of the former Chief Minister's orders," the note said.

On April 20, 1967, Annadurai, in a handwritten communication, wrote, "The Chief Secretary may explain how the order of the former Chief Minister was carried out, knowing that it was improper." After examining the questions raised by the Chief Minister, the Secretary to the Law Department stated in an explanatory note that it was entirely outside the purview of a civil servant to question the order of the former Chief Minister. Any impropriety, if at all, lay at the political level and not at the official level, and there was no illegality or impropriety on the part of the officer who carried out the order, the note said.

The Chief Secretary also maintained that there was no *mala fide* intent on the part of the official who had executed Bhaktavatsalam's directive. Subsequently, the matter was closed. However, the destruction of the records led to a lengthy debate in the Assembly. Responding to a question posed by A.K. Balakrishnan whether there was any time-frame fixed for retaining files before destroying them, Annadurai said that while some files could be retained for use, there were files that could be destroyed at any time, as required by Ministers. When A.K. Subbiah expressed his wish to retrieve the files and place them before the House, the Chief Minister said this was not possible, as they had been destroyed.

#### Activities of big men'

Annadurai did not agree with the suggestion of K.P.S. Mani that the government had forgiven

those who had destroyed the files. "I do not relish the word 'forgiveness'. We can only regret the activities of big men," he said.

In response to DMK member A.V. P. Asaithambi's question whether Ministers had the right to order the destruction of files or whether a committee of legal experts would be constituted to inquire into the matter, the Chief Minister said there was an established practice of retaining routine files for a particular period, as well as destroying secret documents "when the need arose".

Leader of the Opposition P.G. Karuthiruman of the Congress wondered whether it was appropriate to describe the destruction of files as a conspiracy. Annadurai replied that even files related to Congress leaders had been destroyed after Independence, as those who read them later would be embarrassed. "But these files [related to the anti-Hindi agitation] would not have caused any trouble," he said. "Files are related to persons who had the opportunity to form the government after the election. It is fair that those files were retained," he added.

#### Subjected to harassment'

Annadurai said the files should have contained details of the car in which Karunanidhi was taken from Madras to Palayamkottai and what he was given on the way. "They would have had details not disclosed by Karunanidhi to me. They drove away the car without giving him even a cup of coffee. Karunanidhi, who was ailing, was subjected to harassment, and the files were apparently destroyed because, if I had read them,

**The Chief Secretary also maintained that there was no *mala fide* intent on the part of the official who had executed Bhaktavatsalam's directive. Subsequently, the matter was closed**

I would have been saddened," he said.

He also promised to take appropriate action when H.V. Hande, of the Swatantra Party, wanted to know whether the government would table a copy of the entire proceedings relating to the investigation into the missing files. He also wondered whether there was a connection between the delayed announcement of Bhaktavatsalam's election and the destruction of the files.

#### Right to destroy'

Responding to Congress leader K. Vinayagam, who wanted to know whether Annadurai agreed that Bhaktavatsalam had the constitutional and peremptory right to destroy any file he wished, he responded that when certain papers were destroyed, motives were bound to be suspected. "If every Minister is given the constitutional right to destroy every paper, we can have our Secretariat in a 12' x 10' room," he remarked.

He also recalled a chapter on discipline, civil service mentality, and civic rights in *Theory and Practice of Modern Government* by Herman Finer. "The first duty that the civil servant is directed to do is that he should conscientiously discharge his office and all the duties directly pertaining thereto, in accordance with the Constitution and laws, to obey the official orders of his superiors in so far as they are not contradictory to the law, and to behave worthily of the respect accorded to his office," Annadurai said, quoting the Law Department.

After Annadurai pressed the issue, the Chief Secretary issued an order to pursue Mr. Hande's demand for summoning all officers concerned, conduct a detailed inquiry, and ascertain exactly what the contents of the destroyed files had been. The Chief Secretary also agreed to pursue Communist leader N. Sankaraiah's question whether the government would inquire into the incidents and inform the House of the results.

Ms. Vennila said the debates preserved in these records contain many notable views that remain relevant even today. In particular, discussions were held on whether a third language should be introduced in the school curriculum, the necessity of such a requirement, and the psychological pressure such policies might place on students. Lengthy deliberations on these questions took place during the tenure of Avinashilingam Chettiar as the Education Minister. There were also debates on why a South Indian language could not be adopted as the third language in place of Hindi, she said.

A close reading of these records shows the anti-Hindi agitations of the mid-1960s marked an unprecedented student uprising in Tamil Nadu. Government documents indicate that the protests were led primarily by students, as evident from police reports submitted to the higher authorities on demonstrations held in front of colleges, she said.

#### Wealth of valuable information

A total of 649 records related to the anti-Hindi agitation, running to 20,875 pages, have been compiled. They include 18,229 pages comprising 302 Government Orders, 1,831 pages of Madras Legislative Assembly debates, and 815 pages of Madras Legislative Council debates. These records contain a wealth of valuable information, and their compilation and digitisation make them far more accessible to researchers and the public.

"The Tamil Nadu Archives and Historical Research houses more than 40 crore records. We are in the process of segregating these records thematically. One such thematic segregation is the anti-Hindi agitation. I hope this effort will help the younger generation understand this struggle better," said S. Malarvizhi, Commissioner, Tamil Nadu Archives and Historical Research.



## IN BRIEF



## Stalin unveils statue of actor N.S. Krishnan after relocation

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday unveiled the statue of late actor 'Kalaivana' N.S. Krishnan, which was relocated from Gopathi Narayanaswami Chetty Road in T. Nagar to the Kalaivana Arangam premises on Wallajah Road in Chennai. After the actor died in August 1957, his statue was installed on G.N. Chetty Road-Thirumalai Pillai Road junction in January 1969, when C.N. Annadurai was Chief Minister. On the request of the late actor's family members, the statue has been relocated. Ministers K.N. Nehru, E.V. Velu, T.M. Anbarasan, M.P. Saminathan, Ma. Subramanian, and P.K. Sekarababu were among those present.

## Sri Lankan envoy lauds Indian govt., people for cyclone relief

Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka for Southern India Ganeshanathan Geethiswaran on Wednesday appreciated the government and people of India for their support in the relief efforts in his country after Cyclone Ditwah. Addressing a gathering of over 150 people on the occasion of the 78th Independence Day of Sri Lanka, the Deputy High Commissioner, who hoisted the national flag at an event in Chennai, also acknowledged the contributions of the Sri Lankan community and well-wishers in Tamil Nadu in the relief operations. He also referred to the Sri Lankan government's commitment to relief, rehabilitation, and climate-resilient development following Cyclone Ditwah.

## Congress takes out march to condemn Union government for diluting MGNREGA



**Stiff opposition:** TNCC president K. Selvaperunthagai, Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, and other Congress leaders at the march taken out in Chennai on Thursday. R. RAVINDRAN

## The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) on Thursday took out a march at Tambaram in Chennai condemning the BJP-led government at the Centre for diluting the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

The march started near the Kamarajar statue on Bharatha Matha Salai in East Tambaram and passed through Velachery-Tambaram Main Road, Tambaram-Mudichur Road, and concluded at Muthuranga Park in West Tambaram, where the Congress leaders paid respects to a statue of Mahatma Gandhi. TNCC president K. Selvaperunthagai, Congress leader and Deputy Chief Minister of Telan-

gana Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Tamil Nadu Congress Legislative Party leader S. Rajeshkumar, All India Congress Committee secretaries Suraj M.N. Hegde and Nivedith Alva, and Congress MLAs were among those who participated.

Later, while speaking at a meeting, Mr. Selvaperunthagai said Leader of the

Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had expressed concerns about the dilution of MGNREGA, both inside and outside Parliament. In the name of increasing the number of working days under the new scheme (VB-G RAM G), the Centre had increased the financial share of the States. The

TNCC will not stop until the Centre withdraws the new Act, like how it withdrew the three farm laws after consistent protests, Mr. Selvaperunthagai added.

Mr. Vikramarka said the march was organised not for the party but for the agricultural labourers. He said after understanding the sufferings of agricultural labourers and the unemployed, the United Progressive Alliance government brought out the MGNREGA.

"In an attempt to nullify the Act and by removing the name of Mahatma, the BJP-led government at the Centre removed the *atma* of the scheme," he alleged.

Congress workers from Chennai, Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram and Tiruvallur districts participated in the march.

## The holy trinity of cancer care: biochemistry, microbiology, and pathology

Shirley Sundarsingh  
Thuthi Mohan  
R. Packia Nancy

Cancer originates at the genetic micro-molecular level within a cell – resulting in a cascade of subtle biochemical and cellular abnormalities that escape internal patrol – and eventually manifests as a detectable disease. Onco-biochemistry involves quantifying tumour markers, enzymes, hormones and metabolites in blood and body fluids for diagnosis, prognosis and monitoring treatment response or resistance.

Clinical biochemists monitor the chemical signature of cancer and the body's systemic response to treatment. They determine the baseline biochemical parameters in a cancer patient and any reversal of these chemical signals as a result of cancer treatment.

Tumour markers such

as prostate specific antigen (PSA), cancer antigen-125 (CA-125) and carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA) can flag prostate, ovarian and colon cancers even before symptoms appear. Enzyme tests such as lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) and Beta2M give an idea of the overall cancer burden. Protein electrophoresis, a test that separates blood proteins, can reveal a distinct "M-spike" that helps diagnose multiple myeloma. Subsequently, the down-trending of these values reveals whether treatment is working, before a radiological scan can capture the changes.

Advanced biochemical techniques such as serum-free light chain assays allow the treating oncologist to detect even tiny amounts of remaining cancer cells that could trigger a relapse. Measuring therapeutic drug levels in blood allows precise and safe dosing. Baseline and pe-

riodic liver function tests and kidney function blood tests reveal the trend of systemic response. Clinical biochemists are the first to spot cancer related life-threatening complications such as tumour lysis syndrome and hypercalcemia of malignancy. In the high-risk environment of a bone marrow transplant, biochemistry provides the "dashboard" for recovery by monitoring rejection and electrolyte homeostasis.

## Microbiology's role

Approximately 20% of cancers are caused by microbes: viruses and bacteria. Viruses including the human papillomavirus, hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, Epstein-Barr virus, Kaposi's sarcoma-associated herpesvirus and Human T-lymphotropic Virus-1 all cause cancer. Bacteria such as Helicobacter pylori are associated with stomach cancer. Early detection of these microbes and treatment of the infection caused may help in prevention.

Additionally, cancer treatment weakens the immunity of patients and renders them susceptible to life-threatening opportunistic infections. Microbiologists use advanced detection techniques such as BACTALERT 3D/240 (blood microbe culture system), MALDI TOF (matrix-assisted laser desorption ionisation time-of-flight) for rapid and accurate

detection of the culprit microbes and to identify the specific antimicrobial agents (drugs) needed to treat the infection. Early detection, therefore, supports rational antibiotic use, de-escalation of antibiotic therapy and antibiotic stewardship.

## How pathology works

"Is it cancer or not?" That's what a pathologist, examining biopsies under the microscope, determines. Modern cancer pathologists (oncopathologists)

are able to detect root cause changes at the molecular level. They not only confirm the diagnosis of cancer but also provide highly accurate characterisation of the type of cancer based on cytology, histomorphology, karyotyping, immunohistochemistry, flow cytometry, fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH), polymerase chain reaction and next generation sequencing. Oncopathologists provide a comprehensive final diagnosis of cancer by integrating the morpho-molecular subtype and grade of cancer with its stage, by clinical-radiological correlation.

Molecular profiling of cancers has become the cornerstone for the practice of personalised cancer medicine. With the emergence, and subsequent drop in costs of cutting-edge technologies such as whole genome sequencing, and the availability of AI tools to analyse the huge

amounts of data generated, oncopathologists can diagnose and predict the emergence of human cancers from their inception through various stages of development and spread.

Oncopathologists also play a major role in cancer screening and prevention through identification of precancerous lesions in Pap smears, endometrial biopsies of the uterus, colon polyps and the study of other precancerous oral and skin lesions. They provide real-time, intraoperative consultations (termed 'frozen section') to operating surgeon and guide the surgical boundaries of tumour excision to ensure complete tumour removal.

They play a pivotal role in monitoring the response of a patient to cancer treatment too. Not only do they diagnose minimal residual disease and help confirm remission, they also enable treating clinicians to plan further treatment type and

duration by detecting early relapse (recurrence) of cancer, while also helping detect the emergence of drug resistance mechanisms and suggesting alternative treatment strategies.

Biochemistry, microbiology and pathology are the eyes that see the unseen world of cancer care. They quietly do the heavy lifting behind the scenes, from early detection, safe personalised treatment, to monitoring of long-term survival and hope.

(Dr. Shirley Sundarsingh is head, department of oncopathology, Cancer Institute (WIA) drshirleysundarsingh@gmail.com; Dr. Thuthi Mohan is head, department of clinical biochemistry Cancer Institute (WIA) drthuthimohan@cancerinstitutewia.org; Dr. R. Packia Nancy is head, department of microbiology, Cancer Institute (WIA) p.nancy@cancerinstitutewia.org)

# Jayalalithaa's residence *Veda Nilayam* will be auctioned if tax dues not paid: I-T Dept.

The department makes the submission before HC in response to a writ petition filed by J. Deepa, the late Chief Minister's niece, challenging the demand for income tax and wealth tax arrears

**Mohamed Imranullah S.**  
CHENNAI

Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's Poos Garden residence *Veda Nilayam* in Chennai will be brought to auction if her legal heirs do not settle her income tax as well as wealth tax dues to the tune of ₹13.69 crore with interest, the Income Tax Department has told the Madras High Court.

Appearing before Justice C. Saravanan, who was seized of a writ petition filed by Jayalalithaa's niece J. Deepa against the demand raised by the I-T Department, its senior standing counsel A.P. Srinivas said *Veda Nilayam* was attached during the lifetime of Jayalalithaa.

He said the former Chief Minister had to pay arrears of income tax for different assessment years beginning from 1991-92 to 2006-07 and of wealth tax for the assessment years between 1992-93 to 2015-16. He said the I-T Department was entitled to recover the arrears with interest.

Since Jayalalithaa had



**Family inheritance:** Following Jayalalithaa's death in 2016, the High Court declared her niece J. Deepa and nephew J. Deepak as the legal heirs on May 27, 2020. R. RAGU

died on December 5, 2016 and the High Court had on May 27, 2020 declared her niece J. Deepa and nephew J. Deepak to be the legal heirs, the I-T Department decided to recover the arrears from them and sent intimations on July 13, 2025 and August 4, 2025.

Though Ms. Deepa had approached the High Court challenging the August 4, 2025 communication, Mr. Deepak wrote to the department, through his authorised representative, on August 11, 2025 and sought an extension of time to pay his share of ₹6.75 crore, Mr. Srinivas said.

Thereafter, he wrote yet another letter on October 14, 2025 and sought to permission to pay the outstanding amount in instalments. The I-T Department accepted his request and permitted him to pay ₹6.75 crore in six equated monthly instalments between October 2025 and March 2026.

However, Mr. Deepak paid ₹1.12 crore on October 15, 2025 and November 15, 2025 and of that amount, ₹62.50 lakh was paid by mentioning his PAN number instead of the PAN number of Jayalalithaa. Despite several reminders, he has not corrected it in the challan, the standing counsel complained.

**After taking note of the submissions, the judge adjourned the hearing on the writ petition to February 18**

15, 2025 and November 15, 2025 and of that amount, ₹62.50 lakh was paid by mentioning his PAN number instead of the PAN number of Jayalalithaa. Despite several reminders, he has not corrected it in the challan, the standing counsel complained.

"The attachment of the property (*Veda Nilayam*) was done during the life time of the assessee Late J. Jayalalithaa. If the arrears of taxes are not paid by the person who are having interests in the properties of the late Jayalalithaa, then the department will proceed against the property by bringing it to auction as per the procedure contemplated under the Income Tax Act," he told the judge.

After taking note of the submissions, the judge adjourned the hearing on the writ petition filed by Ms. Deepa to February 18.

# After closure of theft case, Ajith Kumar's mother demands arrest of complainant

**The Hindu Bureau**  
SIVAGANGA

complaint, the Tirupuvanam police had picked up Ajith Kumar the following day for 'interrogation', and he later died owing to third degree torture.

Ms. Malathi said, "The police had beaten my son to death for no fault of his. I repeatedly asked the Inspector, and he promised my son would be let off by 6 p.m., but I was only informed that he was no more." From day one, the family members had insisted that Ajith Kumar was innocent. "It should be revealed which officers backed the complainant and pressured the Sivaganga District Police to probe her allegation. The CBI should summon them for a probe," she added.

Ms. Malathi said the accused policemen, now remanded in judicial custody, should not be enlarged on bail, as she feared they would tamper with evidence and threaten witnesses. The punishment for those involved in this should be severe enough that such a crime is never repeated, and the law of the land should protect the victim's kin, the family members said and thanked the judiciary for its close monitoring of the progress of the case.

**'CBI probe satisfactory'**

Addressing journalists in Tirupuvanam, Ms. Malathi, along with her younger son Naveen Kumar and advocates Ganesh Kumar and Karthik Raja, expressed satisfaction over the probe conducted by the CBI into her son's custodial death.

She said the authorities should arrest Nikitha, as the probe had suggested that the latter's allegation that Ajith Kumar had stolen her jewellery was false. Ajith Kumar was employed as a security guard at the Madapuram temple, which the complainant and her mother Sivakami had visited last June. On her oral



dition of these microbes and treatment of the infection caused may help in prevention.

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detection of the culprit microbes and to identify the specific antimicrobial agents (drugs) needed to treat the infection. Early detection, therefore, supports rational antibiotic use, de-escalation of antibiotic therapy and antibiotic stewardship.

Modern cancer pathologists (oncopathologists)

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SC upholds  
Telangana HC  
decision  
against free  
land to IAMC

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has refused to intervene in a Telangana High Court judgment which set aside the free-of-cost allotment of land to the International Arbitration & Mediation Centre (IAMC), an institution whose deed was authorized by their Chief Justice of India in 2021.

A Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta agreed with the High Court that gratuitous distribution of natural resources was both "unsustainable and contrary to the procedure".

Dismissing the special leave petitions filed by the IAMC against the High Court decision of June 2025, the Supreme Court simply said in a short order "we are not inclined to interfere with the impugned judgment(s) and order(s) of the High Court".

The Telangana government had argued in the High Court that the IAMC was a public charitable trust created to promote institutional arbitration in India.

**Public trust**  
"Matters involving allotment and distribution of state largesse cannot be done free of cost. Governments shall ensure that they are adequately compensated for parting with natural resources vested in them and held by them in public trust," a Division Bench of the High Court had concluded.

# Kerala Assembly resolution seeks MGNREGS restoration

The resolution states that the rights-based approach of the MGNREGS has vanished under the new VB-G RAM G; the State will also have to incur an additional burden of ₹3,500 crore



The resolution passed by Kerala Assembly on Thursday says that the VB-G RAM G places a major financial burden on the States.

The Kerala Assembly on Thursday passed a resolution demanding that the Union government restore the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) framework by withdrawing the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G).

"VB-G RAM G entails severe financial burden on the States. With its introduction, the rights-based approach that was the essence of the existing (MGNREG) scheme has

vanished," said the resolution presented by Minister for Local Self-Government M.B. Rajesh. While the Centre retains the power to decide the share of the States, the latter are held fully responsible for the additional burdens arising from the scheme, the resolution

payment of wages, it said. While the Centre retains the power to decide the share of the States, the latter are held fully responsible for the additional burdens arising from the scheme, the resolution

said. Under VB-G RAM G, the Centre would set a 'normative allocation,' 40% of which would be borne by the States. The complete responsibility of all working days beyond this allocation has to be borne by the States. It is estimated that Kerala would incur an additional burden of ₹3,500 crore on account of this new condition, the resolution said.

The resolution was passed amid Opposition protests in the House over the Sabarimala gold theft issue.

In Kerala, 40.45 lakh families are part of the MGNREGS, the resolution said.

## Laddu 'adulteration' case: A.P. govt. sets up one-man panel to 'fix accountability'

G.V.R. Subba Rao  
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has launched a sharp political and moral offensive against the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) over the alleged adulteration of the Tirumala laddu prasadam, terming it a "grave betrayal of devotees' faith" and asserting that no investigative agency has given a clean chit to the previous regime.

Declaring zero tolerance

on matters linked to religious sanctity, the Chief Minister warned that intimidation, misinformation, or political pressure would not deter the government from fixing accountability.

Addressing the media after a meeting of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) leader Thursday, Mr. Naidu announced the constitution of a one-man committee to examine the findings of the investigative agencies, and fix accountability.

The sanctity of the pra-



N. Chandrababu Naidu

sadam was compromised during the YSRCP's tenure, he said.

Mr. Naidu alleged that a

2022 warning by the Cen-

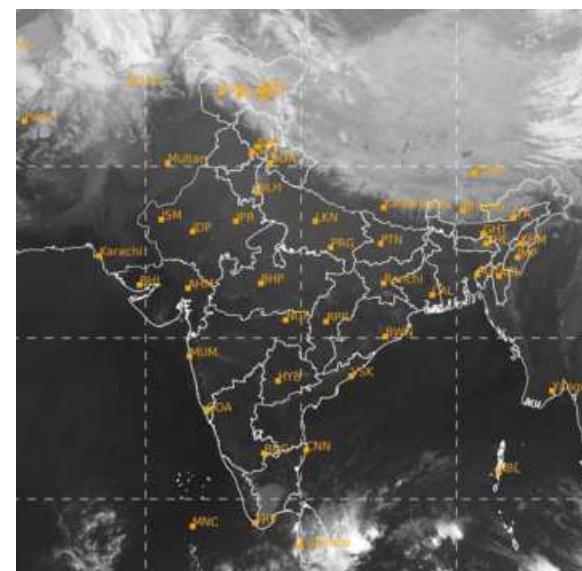
tral Food Technological Research Institute regarding possible adulteration of ghee used in laddu preparation was deliberately suppressed by the previous government, allowing the malpractice to continue unchecked.

"The State government has decided to constitute a one-man committee to examine all reports, identify lapses, fix responsibility, and recommend further action, including legal follow-up if required," he said.

said

## 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 Friday:** Dense fog likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh

| CITY        | RAIN | MAX  | MIN  | CITY              | RAIN | MAX  | MIN  |
|-------------|------|------|------|-------------------|------|------|------|
| Agartala    | —    | 28.4 | 13.2 | Kozhikode         | —    | 34.2 | 24.0 |
| Ahmedabad   | —    | 30.2 | 18.6 | Kurnool           | —    | 33.6 | 19.4 |
| Atizawl     | —    | 28.0 | 11.4 | Lucknow           | —    | 23.3 | 9.5  |
| Allahabad   | —    | 24.0 | 10.4 | Madurai           | —    | 32.0 | 23.1 |
| Bengaluru   | —    | 29.8 | 15.7 | Mangalore         | —    | 34.0 | 21.3 |
| Bhopal      | —    | 25.4 | 13.0 | Mumbai            | —    | 35.1 | 20.5 |
| Bhubaneswar | —    | 31.7 | 20.0 | Mysuru            | —    | 31.4 | 16.0 |
| Chandigarh  | —    | 23.1 | 7.2  | New Delhi         | —    | 23.9 | 10.2 |
| Chennai     | —    | 31.1 | 21.0 | Patna             | —    | 24.8 | 14.1 |
| Dehradun    | —    | 25.9 | 9.0  | Port Blair        | —    | 31.0 | 25.8 |
| Gangtok     | —    | 18.6 | 7.5  | Puducherry        | —    | 29.7 | 20.6 |
| Goa         | —    | 35.4 | 22.5 | Pune              | —    | 32.2 | 18.5 |
| Guwahati    | —    | 28.5 | 17.5 | Raipur            | —    | 30.7 | 18.4 |
| Hubbballi   | —    | 31.0 | 16.0 | Ranchi            | —    | 26.2 | 13.0 |
| Hyderabad   | —    | 29.0 | 18.6 | Shillong          | —    | 18.4 | 8.0  |
| Imphal      | —    | 24.9 | 8.6  | Shimla            | —    | 17.4 | 6.0  |
| Jaipur      | —    | 25.1 | 12.2 | Srinagar          | —    | 11.2 | 0.4  |
| Kochi       | —    | 31.4 | 20.2 | Tiruvananthapuram | —    | 34.7 | 23.2 |
| Kohima      | —    | 18.7 | 8.8  | Tiruchi           | —    | 29.1 | 21.4 |
| Kolkata     | —    | 28.0 | 15.8 | Vijayawada        | —    | 30.6 | 19.7 |
| Kolkata     | —    | 28.0 | 15.8 | Visakhapatnam     | —    | 31.0 | 20.7 |

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

| CITIES        | SO <sub>2</sub> | NO <sub>2</sub> | CO  | PM <sub>2.5</sub> | PM <sub>10</sub> | CODE |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----|-------------------|------------------|------|
| Ahmedabad     | .81             | .70             | 34  | .72               | .160             | ■    |
| Bengaluru     | .6              | .31             | 17  | .150              | .122             | ■    |
| Chennai       | .9              | .13             | 51  | .75               | .96              | ■    |
| Hyderabad     | .5              | .10             | 61  | .134              | .137             | ■    |
| Kolkata       | 10              | .138            | 40  | .205              | .184             | ■    |
| Lucknow       | .9              | .52             | 70  | .114              | .155             | ■    |
| Pune          | .73             | .38             | 251 | .184              | .143             | ■    |
| Visakhapatnam | .6              | .52             | 19  | .160              | .143             | ■    |

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Ballabgarh, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 302 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 26

**Air Quality Code:** ■ Poor   ■ Moderate   ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>:** 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 statues and monuments.  
**NO<sub>2</sub>:** 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<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** 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

Hazy morning



Serene sight: People kayaking in a misty lake during sunrise at Mugabala on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Thursday. J. ALLEN EGENUSE

## IN BRIEF



### Unnikrishnan Potti granted bail, released from prison

A local court on Thursday granted statutory bail to Unnikrishnan Potti, prime accused in the Sabarimala gold theft case, following which he was released from prison. Mr. Potti secured the relief in the second case pertaining to the theft of gold from the door frames of the sanctum sanctorum. The bail was granted as the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case failed to file a chargesheet within 90 days of his arrest, making him eligible for statutory bail. He had earlier been granted bail in the case related to the theft of gold from the Dwarapalaka idols. PTI

### Kerala Police seize large cache of explosives from a lorry

The Kerala Police on Wednesday night seized a large cache of explosives from a lorry on National Highway 544 near the Government Medical College in Palakkad. Around 4,000 gelatin sticks and 17 detonators were recovered from the vehicle, which was intercepted on the service road at 10 p.m. following a tip-off. The explosives were found concealed in cardboard boxes hidden beneath a large consignment of watermelons loaded in the lorry. The driver, Senthil Kumar, 47, a native of Dharapuram district in Tamil Nadu, was taken into custody.

### PG doctor dies in A.P. under 'mysterious circumstances'

A doctor in her final-year post-graduation in anaesthesia at the Government Medical College, Vijayawada, died under mysterious circumstances. She collapsed in her room in the early hours of Thursday and died while undergoing treatment at the Government General Hospital, according to the police. Machavaram Circle Inspector D.V. Ramana said the doctor had complained of stomach pain around 1 a.m. and her colleagues gave her medicine for pain relief. A probe is underway.

### Vizhinjam port sets new operational benchmarks in Jan.

The Hindu Bureau  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Vizhinjam International Seaport, developed and operated by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) with the Kerala government, has consolidated its position as one of India's fastest-growing container transhipment hubs. In January 2026, Vizhinjam recorded its highest-ever monthly container throughput of 1,23,092 Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs).

The port has also moved up to the 83rd position worldwide among container ports by handling volume.

tones in January underlining both its execution capability and relevance in global shipping networks.

During the month, the port handled 62 vessels, the maximum processed there in a single month since operations began, and achieved its highest Gross Crane Rate (GCR) of 30.12 container lifts an hour. Together, these point to a sharp improvement in productivity at the port that began commercial operations a year ago.

The port has also moved up to the 83rd position worldwide among container ports by handling volume.

### TDB aims at tackling pollution in Pampa river ahead of next Sabarimala season

Hiran Unnikrishnan  
PATHANAMTHITTA

Stung by criticism over the continuing pollution of the Pampa river, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) is gearing up for a crackdown on the practice of pilgrims discarding clothes in the river.

The campaign will be rolled out in April across all south Indian States using a multi-pronged strategy involving press conferences, social media blitzes, newspaper and TV coverage, and FM radio alerts.

The details of the campaign will be finalised at a meeting on Friday, originally being convened to evaluate the just-concluded

five languages aiming to put a stop to the ritual by the next season.

**Chemical residue**  
An official from the Kerala State Pollution Control Board highlighted the hidden dangers of dumping clothes, particularly synthetic ones, into the Pampa. "These garments release microfibres, dyes, and chemical residues. Since the Pampa is the life-line of at least two central Kerala districts, this contamination quickly enters the food chain," the official said. He added that the ecological stakes are even higher because of the river's proximity to the Periyar Tiger Reserve.

board plans to deploy volunteers along the riverbanks alongside sanitation staff to ensure enforcement.

The board will also highlight the issue in its upcoming Sabarimala pilgrimage guide, to be published in

the coming days.

The board will also highlight the issue in its upcoming Sabarimala pilgrimage guide, to be published in

the coming days.

## IN BRIEF



## Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles posts ₹3,483 cr. loss

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles on Thursday reported a consolidated net loss of ₹3,483 crore for the third quarter ended December 2025, impacted significantly by the cyber incident at its British arm, Jaguar Land Rover. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹5,485 crore in the corresponding quarter of the last fiscal. Consolidated total revenue from operations stood at ₹70,108 crore compared with ₹94,472 crore in the year-ago period, it added.

## Govt. says 2,645 posts vacant at AAI, 3 aviation regulators

A total of 2,645 positions are lying vacant at the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and three aviation regulators DGCA, BCAS and AERA, the government said on Thursday. In a written reply to Lok Sabha, MoS for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said adequate steps are taken from time to time to fill up vacancies under the ministry, including its attached offices and regulatory bodies. At the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, there are 787 vacancies, largely due to the creation of 441 additional posts as part of the restructuring undertaken during 2022-2024. PTI

## TRAI issues telecom services interconnection regulations

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Thursday issued the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) (Seventh Amendment) Regulations, 2026. The salient features include clearly defined timelines for audits, wherein distributors have to conduct audit and submit audit report to broadcasters by September 30 every year; audit to be done on financial year basis in place of calendar year; and presence of broadcasters' representatives during audit to ensure transparency and credibility.

## LIC Q3 net climbs 17% to ₹12,958 crore on premium

## The Hindu Bureau



HYDERABAD

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) reported standalone net profit for the December quarter increased more than 17% year-on-year to ₹12,958.22 crore.

The higher net profit came on 17.5% increase in the net premium income to ₹1,25,613.36 crore (₹1,06,891.48 crore). Total income increased almost 16% to ₹2,33,983.79 crore.

Consumers and firms in the life insurance industry have responded positively to the various initiatives of the government, especially

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) logo.

to GST 2.0, CEO and MD R. Doraiswamy said, referring to the GST exemption since September 22, from 18% earlier, on individual life insurance policies.

To queries on govern-

## India, GCC nations sign terms of reference for FTA

Appropriate that we enter a robust trading arrangement for greater free flow of goods and services, and predictability, stability to policy: Goyal

**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**  
NEW DELHI

Representatives of India and the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on Thursday signed the Terms of Reference for negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA). The GCC countries are together India's largest merchandise trade partners, with total merchandise trade exceeding that done with even the EU and the U.S.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) were signed by India's chief negotiator for the FTA, Additional Secretary Ajay Bhadoo, and his counterpart representing the Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Raja Al Marzouki. The signing of the ToR is a necessary precursor for the start of formal negotiations. The GCC countries



The GCC countries are together India's largest merchandise trade partners.

are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

"It is most appropriate that we now enter into a much stronger and robust trading arrangement, which will enable a greater free flow of goods and services, bring predictability and stability to policy, help encourage greater degree of investments and take our bilateral relations between the six nation GCC

group and India to greater heights," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who presided over the signing, said in his speech.

## Bilateral benefit

Mr. Goyal pointed out that the two sides could significantly benefit from each other, with India's workforce both within the GCC countries as well as in India standing to gain from the eventual agreement.

"The GCC countries can help us with further diversification and growth of our energy sources, opportunities for our youth, and massive amounts of investments that different countries have already committed at different points of time, which will further get an impetus with a free trade agreement between India and the GCC nations," he added.

## India-U.S. trade deal provides macro predictability: Nasscom

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

The India-U.S. trade deal provided much-needed macro predictability at a time when technology, talent and trust are central to global competitiveness, said Nasscom President Rajesh Nambiar. "Indian technology companies are already delivering measurable outcomes for the U.S. economy – high-quality jobs, regional investment and innovation at scale," he said at a Nasscom U.S. CEO Forum meeting held in Washington DC, shortly after the announcement of the trade deal.

Energy security also emerged as a strategic priority, with the U.S. scaling AI-critical energy capacity and India integrating green and nuclear energy to support next-generation data centres, the forum noted.

According to the forum, Indian technology companies are increasingly contributing to AI-driven energy optimisation, grid analytics, and digital in-

**Indian tech firms are increasingly contributing to AI-driven energy optimisation**

frastructure, reinforcing the resilience of the U.S. innovation ecosystem.

The meeting held at Capitol Hill, brought together leading Indian technology business leaders and senior U.S. policymakers to advance a shared agenda focused on enhancing innovation, AI, trusted supply chains, workforce development and local job creation across the U.S., Nasscom said in a statement on Thursday.

Meanwhile, in another statement, Nasscom said AI models and tools would continue to drive exponential innovation and rapid adoption. "However, concerns that such tools will significantly disrupt or eliminate the technology services sector where India has a strong global presence are misplaced," the apex trade body said.

## MARKETS

## MARKET WATCH

|           | THURSDAY | % CHANGE |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| Sensex    | 83,314   | -0.60    |
| US Dollar | 90.34    | 0.14     |
| Gold      | 1,60,600 | -2.72    |
| Brent oil | 67.44    | 0.00     |

## NIFTY 50

|                       | PRICE    | CHANGE |
|-----------------------|----------|--------|
| Adani Enter.          | 2236.60  | 8.40   |
| Adani Ports           | 1570.20  | 2.30   |
| Apollo Hosp.          | 7122.00  | 6.00   |
| Asian Paints          | 2432.10  | -20.60 |
| Axis Bank             | 1330.60  | -8.10  |
| Bajaj Auto            | 9647.00  | 8.00   |
| Bajaj Finance         | 2000.10  | -19.50 |
| Bajaj Finance         | 964.75   | 1.45   |
| Bharat Elec.          | 432.90   | -6.30  |
| Bharti Airtel         | 1992.40  | -33.40 |
| Cipla                 | 1333.30  | 6.60   |
| Coal India            | 431.85   | -3.05  |
| D Reddys Lab          | 1244.90  | 4.70   |
| Hindustan Unilever    | 40.20    | DE*    |
| Eicher Motors         | 7209.50  | -68.00 |
| Etemal Ltd.           | 2863.90  | -7.30  |
| Grasim Ind            | 2863.90  | 19.00  |
| HCL Tech              | 1610.00  | -11.80 |
| HFDC Bank             | 949.70   | -3.40  |
| HDFC Life             | 720.70   | -1.80  |
| Hindalco              | 935.45   | -29.50 |
| Hindustan Unilever    | 2354.40  | -16.60 |
| ICICI Bank            | 1396.50  | -11.90 |
| IntGlobeAvt           | 4932.20  | -28.50 |
| Infosys               | 1520.20  | -15.60 |
| ITC                   | 310.20   | -3.65  |
| Jio Financial Servic- | 269.95   | 1.95   |
| es Ltd.               | 1239.80  | 11.60  |
| Kotak Bank            | 408.75   | -3.60  |
| L&T                   | 4063.30  | -23.80 |
| M&M                   | 3572.00  | -2.00  |
| Maruti Suzuki         | 1505.00  | -12.00 |
| Max Healthcare        | 1040.80  | 15.35  |
| NestleIndia           | 1303.50  | 0.30   |
| NTPC                  | 367.00   | -0.25  |
| ONGC                  | 269.20   | 2.25   |
| Powergrid Corp        | 289.35   | 0.05   |
| Reliance Ind          | 1443.40  | -13.40 |
| SBI Life              | 2017.80  | -23.90 |
| State Bank            | 1073.50  | 5.30   |
| Shriram Finance       | 992.00   | -6.80  |
| Sun Pharma            | 1702.60  | -1.80  |
| TataConsumerProduc-   | 1155.90  | 2.90   |
| t                     | 197.76   | 2.36   |
| TCS                   | 2991.50  | -7.60  |
| Tech Mahindra         | 1646.20  | 0.90   |
| Titan                 | 4097.60  | -46.40 |
| Tata Motors PV        | 374.15   | -1.30  |
| Trent Ltd.            | 4131.30  | 118.70 |
| UltraTech Cement      | 12773.00 | -33.00 |
| Wipro                 | 233.39   | 0.05   |

DE: Demerged Entity

## Panacea Biotech's GMP certificates revoked

The National Centre for Public Health and Pharmacy, Hungary (NCPHP) has revoked the good manufacturing practice (GMP) certificates it had issued to Panacea Biotech Pharma's (PBPL) facility in Baddi, Himachal Pradesh.

## RIL buys 2 mn barrels of Venezuelan oil

**Reuters**  
NEW DELHI/SINGAPORE

India's Reliance Industries has bought 2 million barrels of Venezuelan oil from trader Vitol, trade sources said on Thursday, the first purchase by the company from the South American nation in nearly a year.

Reliance did not respond to a *Reuters* email seeking comment.

## IndianOil Q3 profit rises fourfold amid lower crude oil prices

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

State-owned refiner IndianOil's profit in the December-ended quarter accelerated more than four times on a year-on-year (YoY) basis fuelled by a favourable lower crude oil price regime.

The refiner's net profit, on a standalone basis, more than quadrupled to ₹12,125.86 crore from the comparable period last year.

Gross refining margin in the ongoing financial year until the end of December 2025 more than doubled from the comparable pe-

riod last year to \$8.41 for a barrel. Standalone revenue rose 6.62% on a year-on-year basis to ₹2.32 lakh crore in the reporting quarter.

Domestic sales increased approximately 5% on a year-on-year basis to 26.015 million metric tonnes (MMT).

|  |  |   |                                      |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| The Managing Director on behalf of<br><b>TITDC TAMIL NADU TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED</b><br>Notice inviting Bids for the work as detailed in table below in |  |   |                                      |
| "SINGLE BID AND TWO BID SYSTEM" (LUMPSUM CONTRACT) e-Tender Notice Reference No.0317/Engg/Proj/2026 Dt. 04.02.2026   |  |   |                                      |
| Sl. No   | Name of work   | Earnest Money Deposit(Rs.)  | Tender Last Date/Tender Opening Date |
| SINGLE BID SYSTEM  |  |   |                                      |
| i  | Development of Tourist Infrastructures at Shervaroy Hills, Yercaud in Salem District               | Rs. 3.35,000/-  | 18.02.2026 - 18.02.2026              |
| ii   | Development of Tourism amenities at Kaverey Hills, Salem District                                  | Rs. 1.47,000/-  | 18.02.2026 - 18.02.2026              |
| iii  | Development of Tourism basic amenities at Mamukkudi Dam in Kalakunji Hills, Kallakunji District    | Rs. 2.00,000/-  | 18.02.2026 - 18.02.2026              |
| iv   | Development of Tourism basic amenities at Comuli Dam in Kalakunji Hills, Kallakunji District       | Rs. 3.46,000/-  | 18.02.2026 - 18.02.2026              |
| v  | Setting up of Adventure and Eco- Camping Site at Alayam Beach, Ramanathapuram District             | Rs. 1.43,000/-  | 18.02.2026 - 18.02.2026              |
| TWO BID SYSTEM   |  |   |                                      |
| w  | Development of Tourist Infrastructures in Yelagiri of Tirupattur District.                         | Rs.8,67,000/-   | 19.02.2026 - 19.02.2026              |
| x  | Development tender document  | Through Online https://tenders.titdc.org.in/  |                                      |
| y  | Date and time for submission of Bid documents along with EMD upto 3:00 PM on mentioned date above. |   |                                      |
| z  | Opening of bids will be on 3:30 PM on mentioned date above.  |   |                                      |
| 4  | Address for Communications   | The Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, No.2, Wallajah Road, Town Complex, Chennai Tamil Nadu - 600 002, India Website: www.titdconline.com Phone: 044-2533 3555 |                                      |

MANAGING DIRECTOR

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>National Institute of Electronics &amp; Information Technology, Chennai</b><br>MeitY, Govt. of India  |  |
| Vacancies for Multiple Position (Purely Contract Basis)  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Project Engineer (Data Science) - 01 No. • Training Coordinator - 01 No.</li> <li>Project Engineer (Data Science) - 01 No. • Project Associate (Training) - 01 No.</li> <li>Project Engineer (VLSI) - 01 No. • Senior Administrative Assistant - 02 Nos.</li> <li>Project Engineer (3DPM) - 01 No. • Senior Accounts Assistant - 01 No.</li> <li>Project Engineer (RPA) - 01 No. • MTS - 01 No.</li> </ul> |  |
| Online Interview will be held on 23.02.2026  |  |
| For further details, please visit: <a href="https://rect.nielitchennai.edu.in">https://rect.nielitchennai.edu.in</a>   |  |
| E-mail : chennai@nielit.gov.in Ph : +91 9445880125   |  |
| Adv.No.01/04/2025/Recruitment/07   |  |
| Director i/c   |  |

## No. 04 /SSB Dated. 05.02.2026

## TENDER CALL NOTICE

Sealed Cover Tenders are hereby invited from the reputed Registered Firms/Companies/Agencies for Work related to "Generation of Admit Cards, Printing and Supplying of OMR Answer Sheets, its Scanning & Processing of various Results of various Recruitment Examination" to the State Selection Board, Higher Education Department, Bhubaneswar-751009 within 06.02.2026 to 05.03.2026 (5 P.M.).

The authority reserves the right to cancel or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reasons thereof. The details of tender papers along with terms and conditions can be obtained from [www.ssbodisha.ac](http://www.ssbodisha.ac.in)

**HAVANA**

**Power grid failure leaves hundreds of thousands in darkness in Cuba**



A power grid failure in eastern Cuba plunged three entire provinces into darkness on Wednesday, utility officials said, leaving hundreds of thousands of people without electricity. The state-owned Union Electrica de Cuba said a fault at a substation in Holguin caused an electrical system disconnect that impacted the four provinces. AFP

**BAKU**

**Baku court hands life, long terms to Karabakh separatist leaders**



Azerbaijan's military court on Thursday sentenced former Karabakh separatist leaders to life or 20-year prison terms for war crimes after regaining the region in 2023. Ex-president Araik Harutyunyan got life imprisonment; Arkady Ghukasyan and Bako Sahakyan received 20 years. Armenia condemned the verdicts. AFP

**JOS**

**Nigeria President deploys army after gunmen killed 162 people**



Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu deployed an army battalion to a troubled state after gunmen killed as many as 162 people in one of the country's deadliest attacks. The attack late Tuesday in Kwara State came after the military carried out operations in the area against what it called "terrorist elements". AFP

**LAHORE**

**Imran's sons accuse Pak. govt. of refusing visa to meet their father**



Suleiman Khan and Kasim Khan, sons of Pakistan's incarcerated former Prime Minister Imran Khan, have accused the Shehbaz Sharif government of "deliberately" refusing visas to them, saying democracy in the country is "hollow" and basic human rights are being "crushed". Mr. Khan's sons are living in London. PTI

# Nuclear diplomacy set to resume in Muscat as U.S., Iran stay far apart

Tehran says the format of the talks will mirror previous rounds held before the Israeli attacks in June 2025; U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio says the dialogue should include the range of Iran's ballistic missiles and its support for militant groups

**Stanly Johny**

After weeks of uncertainty and military tensions in the Persian Gulf, Iran confirmed on Thursday that it would hold nuclear talks with the U.S. in the Omani capital, Muscat, on Friday. However, statements from both sides indicated that wide gaps remain, starting with disagreements over the very format of the talks.

"Nuclear talks with the United States are scheduled to be held in Muscat at about 10 am Friday. I'm grateful to our Omani brothers for making all necessary arrangements," Iran's Foreign Minister Ab-



**Miles away:** People walk past an anti-U.S. mural on a street in Tehran, Iran, on Thursday. Reuters

bas Araghchi wrote in a social media post. The White House had said on Tuesday that Steve Witkoff, a special envoy of President Donald Trump, would meet Ira-

nian officials later this week. According to Iranian state media, Mr. Araghchi would lead the delegation, which would also include Majid Takht-Ravanchi,

Iran's former Permanent Representative to the UN, and Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi.

"The format of the talks will mirror previous rounds held before the unlawful U.S.-Israeli war on Iran last June, which derailed the diplomatic process," said a report in the state-owned Press TV.

Mr. Araghchi and Mr. Witkoff had held five rounds of talks last year. Israel attacked Iran on June 13, just two days ahead of the scheduled sixth round of talks.

While Iran insists that talks should focus solely on its "peaceful nuclear programme", the U.S. wants

the framework to also include Iran's ballistic missile production and its support for various militia groups in the region.

"If the Iranians want to meet, we're ready," U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Wednesday at the State Department.

"[T]hey will have to include certain things, and that includes the range of their ballistic missiles... their sponsorship of terrorist organisations across the region... the nuclear programme... the treatment of their own people," said Mr. Rubio, contradicting the Iranian claim that the talks would be only on the nuclear programme.

# Pak. concludes offensive against militants; 216 killed

**Reuters**  
KARACHI

Pakistan's military said on Thursday that it had concluded a week-long security operation against separatists in Balochistan, killing 216 militants in targeted offensives across the troubled southwestern province.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest and poorest province, was brought to a virtual standstill on Saturday when the separatist Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) stormed schools, banks, markets and security installations across the region in one of their largest operations ever.

**Largest attack**

The military said 22 security personnel and 36 civilians were killed in the at-



Residents look at a damaged bank on the outskirts of Quetta on February 1 after an attack by Baloch separatists. AFP

tacks. The BLA's coordinated strikes in over a dozen locations began after the military launched its "intelligence driven" Radd Al-Fitna 1 (countering chaos) operation, which the army said began on January 29.

"Through meticulous planning, actionable intelligence, and seamless joint

execution Pakistan's security forces and law enforcement agencies with support of intelligence agencies under Operation Radd-ul-Fitna-1 responded with precision and resolve," the military said in a statement, adding that 216 militants had been killed since the operation began.

# The end of New START and a new era of nuclear rivalry

**NEWS ANALYSIS****Vasudevan Mukunth**

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) officially expired on February 5, marking the end of the last remaining bilateral agreement constraining the nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and Russia. The New START treaty emerged from a period of diplomatic reset between Washington and Moscow in the late 2000s.

After entering into force on February 5, 2011, New START set up verifiable limits on the strategic offensive arms of both nations, including capping the number of deployed warheads to 1,550, and required both parties to reach these limits within seven years and maintain them thereafter. It also allowed 18 on-site inspections a year, mandated data exchange, and set up a bilateral commission to resolve issues.

New START was constantly beleaguered. Russia often argued that U.S. missile defense systems undermined the strategic balance, suggesting that if one side could neutralise the other's retaliatory strike, the 'mutually assured destruction' dynamic would be broken. The U.S. expressed concerns over conventional prompt global strike capabilities, where precise conventional warheads are placed on ballistic missiles, systems that New START counted under its nuclear limits.

Later Russia also unveiled several novel strategic systems, including the Sarmat heavy ICBM and the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle. While



The treaty was originally set to expire in 2021. AP

the U.S. successfully argued that these should be counted under New START, other systems like the nuclear-powered underwater drone Poseidon and nuclear-powered cruise missile Burevestnik remained outside the treaty's technical definitions.

**No binding limits**  
The treaty was originally set to expire in 2021. Just days before the deadline, the Biden administration and the Kremlin agreed to a one-time, five-year extension, moving the expiration date to February 5, 2026. But in February 2023, after the conflict in Ukraine escalated and undermined bilateral relations, President Vladimir Putin said he was suspending Russia's participation in New START because, Moscow said, the U.S. was seeking a "strategic defeat" of Russia and that western aid to Ukraine made on-site inspections in Russia impossible. The U.S. soon followed.

Today, for the first time since 1972, there are no legally binding limits on the number of strategic nuclear weapons the U.S. and Russia can deploy. The formal channels to verify the locations and status of nuclear forces have ceased to exist, forcing intelligence agencies to rely entirely on satellite imagery and other

## U.K. sanctions RSF, Sudanese army leaders over conflict

**Reuters**

Britain sanctioned six individuals suspected of committing atrocities in Sudan's war or of fuelling the conflict through the supply of mercenaries and military equipment, the government said on Thursday.

The measures targeted senior commanders in both the Sudanese paramilitary group, Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and the Sudanese Armed Forces, the government said.

The conflict has displaced millions and caused a vast humanitarian crisis since it broke out in April 2023.

## UN human rights agency in 'survival mode': chief

**Agence France-Presse**  
GENEVA

The UN human rights chief said on Thursday his agency was "in survival mode" due to funding shortfalls, as he launched a \$400 million appeal to tackle global rights crises in 2026.

Volker Turk warned countries that at a time when global human rights are under significant assault, his office was facing dire funding shortages hampering its life-saving work.

The UN human rights office lost around 300 out of 2,000 staff last year and had to end or scale back its work in 17 countries.

**WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION COMPANY LIMITED**  
(A Government of West Bengal Enterprise)  
WBSETCL  
Registered Office: Vidut Bhawan, Block-D, Sector-4, Bidhannagar, Kolkata-700 091  
CIN: U40101WB2007GCC113474 • web: www.wbsetcl.in  
**NIT No.: CE(P)/WBSETCL/STST/25-26/37** Date: 06.02.2026  
E-Tender is invited from eligible bidders having experience in doing similar nature of work for supply of 10 nos. 33/0.415 KV 315 KVA Station Service Transformers and 15 nos. 33/0.415 KV 100 KVA Station Service Transformers. Bid documents can be downloaded from 06.02.2026, 10:00 A.M., and bids shall be submitted up to 04:00 P.M., 04.03.2026.  
Visit the following websites - www.wbtenders.gov.in, www.wbsetcl.in for details.

ICA-12996(3)/2026

**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, RNT MEDICAL COLLEGE & CONTROLLER ASSOCIATED GROUP OF HOSPITALS, UDIAPUR (Raj.)**  
No. RNT/Pur/IF/16/(e-Tendering Proc)/2025-26/190 Dated: 27.01.2026  
Notice Inviting Bid No. 32/2025-26 (e-Tender)

Bids for Medical Equipments / Goods are invited from interested bidders upto Date :- 16.02.2026 Time :- 01:30 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajaasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppr.raj.nic.in>) of the state, Estimated Cost -1027.50 Lac

UBN :-  
MCU2526GLOB00427, MCU2526GLOB00428, MCU2526GLOB00429, MCU2526GLOB00430, MCU2526GLOB00431, MCU2526GLOB00432, MCU2526GLOB00433, MCU2526GLOB00434, MCU2526GLOB00435, MCU2526GLOB00436, MCU2526GLOB00437, MCU2526GLOB00438, MCU2526GLOB00439, MCU2526GLOB00440, MCU2526GLOB00441, MCU2526GLOB00442, MCU2526GLOB00443, MCU2526GLOB00444, MCU2526GLOB00445, MCU2526GLOB00446, MCU2526GLOB00447, MCU2526GLOB00448, MCU2526GLOB00449, MCU2526GLOB00450, MCU2526GLOB00451, MCU2526GLOB00452, MCU2526GLOB00453, MCU2526GLOB00454, MCU2526GLOB00455, MCU2526GLOB00456, MCU2526GLOB00457, MCU2526GLOB00458, MCU2526GLOB00459, MCU2526GLOB00460, MCU2526GLOB00461, MCU2526GLOB00462, MCU2526GLOB00463, MCU2526GLOB00464, MCU2526GLOB00465, MCU2526GLOB00466, MCU2526GLOB00467, MCU2526GLOB00468, MCU2526GLOB00469, MCU2526GLOB00470, MCU2526GLOB00471, MCU2526GLOB00472, MCU2526GLOB00473, MCU2526GLOB00474, MCU2526GLOB00475, MCU2526GLOB00476, MCU2526GLOB00477, MCU2526GLOB00478, MCU2526GLOB00479, MCU2526GLOB00480, MCU2526GLOB00481, MCU2526GLOB00482, MCU2526GLOB00483, MCU2526GLOB00484, MCU2526GLOB00485, MCU2526GLOB00486, MCU2526GLOB00487, MCU2526GLOB00488, MCU2526GLOB00489, MCU2526GLOB00490, MCU2526GLOB00491, MCU2526GLOB00492, MCU2526GLOB00493, MCU2526GLOB00494, MCU2526GLOB00495, MCU2526GLOB00496, MCU2526GLOB00497, MCU2526GLOB00498, MCU2526GLOB00499, MCU2526GLOB00500, MCU2526GLOB00501, MCU2526GLOB00502, MCU2526GLOB00503, MCU2526GLOB00504, MCU2526GLOB00505, MCU2526GLOB00506, MCU2526GLOB00507, MCU2526GLOB00508, MCU2526GLOB00509, MCU2526GLOB00510, MCU2526GLOB00511, MCU2526GLOB00512, MCU2526GLOB00513, MCU2526GLOB00514, MCU2526GLOB00515, MCU2526GLOB00516, MCU2526GLOB00517, MCU2526GLOB00518, MCU2526GLOB00519, MCU2526GLOB00520, MCU2526GLOB00521, MCU2526GLOB00522, MCU2526GLOB00523, MCU2526GLOB00524, MCU2526GLOB00525, MCU2526GLOB00526, MCU2526GLOB00527, MCU2526GLOB00528, MCU2526GLOB00529, MCU2526GLOB00530, MCU2526GLOB00531, MCU2526GLOB00532, MCU2526GLOB00533, MCU2526GLOB00534, MCU2526GLOB00535, MCU2526GLOB00536, MCU2526GLOB00537, MCU2526GLOB00538, MCU2526GLOB00539, MCU2526GLOB00540, MCU2526GLOB00541, MCU2526GLOB00542, MCU2526GLOB00543, MCU2526GLOB00544, MCU2526GLOB00545, MCU2526GLOB00546, MCU2526GLOB00547, MCU2526GLOB00548, MCU2526GLOB00549, MCU2526GLOB00550, MCU2526GLOB00551, MCU2526GLOB00552, MCU2526GLOB00553, MCU2526GLOB00554, MCU2526GLOB00555, MCU2526GLOB00556, MCU2526GLOB00557, MCU2526GLOB00558, MCU2526GLOB00559, MCU2526GLOB00560, MCU2526GLOB00561, MCU2526GLOB00562, MCU2526GLOB00563, MCU2526GLOB00564, MCU2526GLOB00565, MCU2526GLOB00566, MCU2526GLOB00567, MCU2526GLOB00568, MCU2526GLOB00569, MCU2526GLOB00570, MCU2526GLOB00571, MCU2526GLOB00572, MCU2526GLOB00573, MCU2526GLOB00574, MCU2526GLOB00575, MCU2526GLOB00576, MCU2526GLOB00577, MCU2526GLOB00578, MCU2526GLOB00579, MCU2526GLOB00580, MCU2526GLOB00581, MCU2526GLOB00582, MCU2526GLOB00583, MCU2526GLOB00584, MCU2526GLOB00585, MCU2526GLOB00586, MCU2526GLOB00587, MCU2526GLOB00588, MCU2526GLOB00589, MCU2526GLOB00590, MCU2526GLOB00591, MCU2526GLOB00592, MCU2526GLOB00593, MCU2526GLOB00594, MCU2526GLOB00595, MCU2526GLOB00596, MCU2526GLOB00597, MCU2526GLOB00598, MCU2526GLOB00599, MCU2526GLOB00600, MCU2526GLOB00601, MCU2526GLOB00602, MCU2526GLOB00603, MCU2526

**NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY**

**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
Dy. Chief Engineer (Construction)-III, North-Western Railway, Jodhpur through for and on behalf of the President of India Invites e-tenders (Open Tender-Two packet system), for the following work: **Tender No.: T.N.O.JU/Const.III/T-03R-2025-26-PSS, Name of the work with its location: Project Supervision Services (PSS) of various works like Earthwork, Minor/Major/Important Bridges, Blanketing, ballasting, Station Buildings, Platforms, FOB's, Subway, Platform Shelters, Other Buildings, S&T Structures, Staff and Passenger Amenity, all P.W. Way linking works and any other ancillary works of from New Merta City to Ras stations (51.40 km) and Bye Pass at Merta Road station (4.50 km) New Line Project on Jodhpur Division of North-Western Railway. Approx. cost of work: Rs. 9.58,113,326.82. Earnest Money to be deposited: Rs. 6,29,100.00. Pre-Bid Conference date: 07.02.2026 at 15.00 Hrs. Tender Closing date/time: 05.03.2026 upto 15.00 hrs. Detail of particular, where e-tender can be seen & filled up: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Official email address: dyce3ju@gmail.com, DIPR/73-P/26 Follow us at INWRailways NWRailways**

**CENTRAL RAILWAY****SIGNALLING WORKS**

Divisional Railway Manager (S&T), 1st Floor, Parcel Office Building, above P.F. No. 14 & 15, Central Railway, Mumbai CST 400 001, for and on behalf of the President of India Invites Open tenders from the reputed contractors. **Tender Notice No. CR-BB-SNT-South-2026-10.** **Name of work:** Signalling work in connection with the work of "CSMT-KYN: Augmentation of Existing RCC Box" at CSMT, Dadar, VVH, DI, THK, VK in Mumbai Division. **Approximate Cost:** ₹ 2.39 Crore, **EMD:** ₹ 269500/-, **Validity:** 60 days, **Completion period:** 12 months. **Date of Opening:** 27.02.2026. This tender complies with Public Procurement Policy (Make in India) Order 2017, dated 15.06.2017. Complete details of tenders are available at Central Railway, Official website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). The complete tender documents can be downloaded from the website. The complete details of tenders area also available in the "Notice Board" of the Divisional Railway Manager (S&T)'s Office, Mumbai CST.

Travel safely, Avoid footboard travelling

**JHARIA REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, DHANBAD****e-Procurement Notice**

Tender Reference No: JRDA/CIVIL/25-26/46/157

Date: 03.02.2026

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Name of Work   | Upgradation of 9 blocks for Hostel of proposed Mega Skill Center Trainee   |
| 2. Estimated Cost   | Rs. 5,48,56,453.00   |
| 3. EMD  | Rs. 5,48,600.00  |
| 4. Tender Document Cost                                     | Rs. 10,000.00  |
| 5. Time of Completion                                       | 06 months  |
| 6. Date/Time from which bid is available for online bidding | 07.02.2026 at 03:00 PM   |
| 7. Last Date/Time for on-line submission of bids            | 28.02.2026 at 05:00 PM   |
| 8. Date and Time of Bid Opening                             | 02.03.2026 at 11:30 AM   |
| 9. Name and Address of Officer inviting tender              | Head of Department (Civil), JRDA, Dhanbad Hatia More, Golf Ground Road, Hirapur, Dhanbad - 826001 Jharkhand, India Email: <a href="mailto:infojrda.dhn@gmail.com">infojrda.dhn@gmail.com</a> |

Note: 1. Only e-tenders will be accepted.

2. Further details can be seen on website – [https://jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in)

Sd/- Head of Department (Civil), PR 372360 Rural Development (25-26)\_D JRDA, Dhanbad

**THE HINDU**

Air Surcharge as applicable:

New Delhi - Rs. 15/-;

Port Blair - Rs. 20/-

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY****E-TENDER NOTICE**

No. 58 of 2025-26 (Open)-Engg/DDU

On line (through e-tendering) for the following work is invited by DRM/Engg/DDU for and on behalf of the President of India from experienced and financially as well as technically sound contractors including those enlisted with the Railway, CPWD, BSNL, MES, PWD and other public sector undertakings:- (1) Name of work with its location: **Tender No. 02-DDU-SR DENC-25-26**, Track Survey by GEDO/GPS for tamping through ALC & Recording track geometry per Km under DDU Division.

(2) Advertised Value: Rs. 21942000.00

(3) Earnest Money: Rs. 259700.00

(4) Closing Date &amp; time for submission of e-tender : 26.02.2026, Up-to 12:00 hrs.

(5) Website particulars of e-tendering : [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Divisional Railway Manager, E.C.R.

Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Division

PR/1749/DDU/ENGG/T/25-26/28

ज्ञारखण्ड सरकार  
स्वास्थ्य, चिकित्सा शिक्षा एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, ज्ञारखण्ड, राँची  
ज्ञारखण्ड स्टेट आरोग्य सोसाईटी

**नियुक्ति हेतु दावा आपत्ति की सूचना**

ज्ञारखण्ड स्टेट आरोग्य सोसाईटी (ज्ञासास) स्वास्थ्य, चिकित्सा शिक्षा एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, ज्ञारखण्ड, के अंतर्गत नियुक्ति सोसाईटी है। ज्ञारखण्ड स्टेट आरोग्य सोसाईटी द्वारा संचालित आयुष्मान भारत मुख्यमंत्री जन आरोग्य योजना के लिए नियन्त्रित कुल 04 रिक्त पदों पर संविदा के आधार पर नियुक्ति हेतु दिनांक 28.12.2024 एवं 29.12.2024 को विज्ञापन प्रकाशित किया गया था।

| क्र०सं० | पदनाम   | वेतनमान    | पदों की संख्या | आवश्यकता पद     |
|---------|---|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1.      | वरिष्ठ परामर्शी<br>(मैडिकल मैनेजमेंट एण्ड क्वालिटी) | 1,05,000/- | 01             | UR              |
| 2.      | परियोजना प्रमुख (अंपरसेन)                           | 1,30,000/- | 01             | UR              |
| 3.      | कलेम मैनेजर   | 1,05,000/- | 02             | UR(1)<br>ST (1) |

उक्त पदों पर अभियार्थियों से प्राप्त आवेदनों के दस्तावेजों में कठिपय त्रुटियाँ पाई गयी।

अतः उपरोक्त के आलोक में त्रुटि निराकरण हेतु जैप आईटीओ के पोर्टल <https://recruitment.jharkhand.gov.in> पर त्रुटि निराकरण हेतु दिनांक 06.02.2026 से 20.02.2026 का अतिरिक्त समय दिया जा रहा है। त्रुटि संबंधित सभी जानकारी जैप आईटीओ के पोर्टल पर उपलब्ध है।

\* नोट- नये आवेदन स्वीकृत नहीं किया जाएगा, तबापरात वयस्ति अभ्यार्थीयों की अंतिम सुवृत्ती Walk in interview के लिए प्रकाशित की जाएगी। दावा आपत्ति हेतु [Email\\_Id-ed-abpmjay@jharkhandmail.gov.in](mailto:Email_Id-ed-abpmjay@jharkhandmail.gov.in), पता-द्वितीय तला, स्वास्थ्य निदेशालय भवन, आरोग्यी०८८० परिसर, नामकुम, राँची-८३४०१० एवं दूरभाष-७४७९२५२७५ पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।

कार्यकारी सिद्धेशक, ज्ञासास।

PR 372325 (Health Med Edu and Family Welfare) 25-26 (D)

**TIRUPPUR CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**

Notice for Inviting E-Tender

Roc.No.E1/5846/2025 Date:04.02.2026

1. E-tenders are invited from the eligible bidders for Supply, Delivery, Erection, Commissioning and Testing of Shredder machine with conveyor, weigh bridge, Magnetic separator and hydraulic bailing press with chain conveyor and auto-tied (5TPH) with control panel under 15 CFC (Tied &amp; Untied Grant) 2025-26.

2. Total Project Cost **Rs.384.18 Lakhs.**3. The details of the tender shall be obtained from web portal [https://ift.tenders.gov.in](http://ift.tenders.gov.in)4. The tender documents shall be downloaded from **06.02.2026 to 20.02.2026** through the portal [https://ift.tenders.gov.in](http://ift.tenders.gov.in)5. Pre Bid Meeting will be Held on **12.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M** at concerned Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation Office.6. The Last date for downloading the tender document and the last date for uploading/ submission of filled up tender document is upto **3.00 PM on 20.02.2026**.7. The received tenders will be opened at **3.30 PM on 20.02.2026** at the Office of Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation, Municipal Office Road, Tiruppur - 641604.

8. The value of each works and the details of Earnest Money Deposit and the Eligibility of bidders are given in the concern work tender document.

Commissioner,  
Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT ROAD DIVISION, DUMKA****3<sup>RD</sup> CORRIGENDUM DETAILS OF NIT****TENDER REFERENCE No.- RCD/DUMKA/26**

PR 371802 Road (25-26)\_D

NAME OF THE WORK- Widening, Strengthening &amp; Reconstruction of Road from Karmatand (PWD Road) to Bhoglandih (PWD Road) (Total Length-7.775 Km) under Road Division Dumka for the year 2025-26.

**CORRIGENDUM DETAIL OF NIT**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 4 | Date of Publication of Tender on Website – 11.02.2026 10:30 AM in place of 03.02.2026 10:30 AM         |
| 5 | Last date/Time for receipt of bids 09.03.2025 Up to 12.00 Noon in place of 25.02.2026 Up to 12.00 Noon |
| 6 | Date of opening of Tender – 10.03.2026 at 12.30 PM in place of 26.02.2026 at 12.30 PM                  |

Other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

Executive Engineer  
Road Construction Department,  
Road Division, Dumka

PR 372310 Road (25-26)D

Delivery Mode : Speed Post / Dasti

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA  
EXTRA-ORDINARY APPELLATE JURISDICTION****Petition for Special Leave to Appeal (Civil) No. 18482 OF 2023**

WITH PRAYER FOR INTERIM RELIEF

CHANDRA @ CHANDRAVATHI VERSUS ...Respondent

To,

1. PADMAVATHI W/o Seenappa, R/t Binnamangala, Old Madras Road, District-Bangalore, Karnataka 560002

2. DS NAGARAJ S/o DV Sesharam, R/t No.3, 1st Floor Kaveri Apartments 2nd Block, 2nd Main Kalkeri Main Road, Ramamurthy Nagar Bengaluru 560016, District-Bangalore, Karnataka

3. K MAHENDRAN, S/o M Krishna Rai, R/t No.852, 11th Cross 1st Stage, 3rd Block Brindavan Nagar, HBR Layout Bengaluru South Taluk Presently Bengaluru East Taluk Bengaluru District, District-Bangalore, Karnataka

4. RAMACHANDRA, R/t Halehalli Village, Halehalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk Presently Bengaluru East Taluk Bengaluru District, District-Bangalore, Karnataka

5. NEENAVERA, R/t No.12, Survey No.33, Sal Enclave, Halehalli Main Road Behind Hebron Bengaluru 560049, District-Bangalore, Karnataka

6. LAKSHMINNAMMA S/o Venkatakrishna, R/t No.38, Bilishivali Doddagubbi Post, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk, Bengaluru 560001, District-Bangalore, Karnataka

7. T PRASANNA S/o Thulasiram, R/t No.50, 16th Cross Jaihindra Nagar, M S Nagar Bengaluru 560033, District-Bangalore, Karnataka

8. KRAVICHANDRAN S/o S S Kasiappan, R/t No.11, 201 Cross, Egipura Main Road, Vivekanagar Post, Bengaluru 560047, District-Bangalore, Karnataka

9. BME TRUST Represented by its President KR Panikkar and Secretary Sivakumar Rajagopalan, Represented by its President K R Panikkar and Honorary Secretary Sri K R Rajagopalan at 1/2 Krishna Reddy Colony Bonall Layout Bengaluru 560007, District-Bangalore, Karnataka

10. M ANANDAKUMAR S/o Late K Muniswamappa, Residing at No.21/8, Ramakrishna Mutt Road Hasurus, Bengaluru 560008, District-Bangalore, Karnataka

11. GOVINDAJAR, R/t Hanchalli Village Bengaluru South Taluk District-Bangalore, Karnataka

12. CN SRINIVASAN R/t No.18, 10th East Cross Road, Gangadhar Nagar, Vellore 632006, North Arcot District Tamil Nadu State, District, Tamil Nadu.

13. RANI @ Halehalli Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, District-Bangalore, Karnataka

14. VRAMAKRISHNA S/o Krishnath V, R/t No.F-



# I wanted a new challenge and a new opportunity to make an impact in a new league

The Irish shot-stopper, who rates Tamil Nadu Dragons teammate Prince Deep highly, talks about the evolution of goalkeeping, the value of experience and enjoying the pressure moments

## INTERVIEW

### David Harte

#### K. Keerthivasan

Ireland's 36-year-old goalkeeper David Harte was a pillar of strength for the Tamil Nadu Dragons in the 2025-26 Hockey India League (HIL), producing a series of outstanding saves during regulation time as well as in shoot-outs.

A vastly experienced campaigner with over 240 international caps, Harte has featured in domestic leagues in Ireland, the Netherlands, India and Germany, bringing a wealth of knowledge to every team he represents. Speaking to *The Hindu*, the Irish goalkeeper, who announced his international retirement on Thursday, reflected on his move to a German club this season, his experiences playing in "incredible India," and the importance of sharing his expertise with younger players.

"I wanted a new challenge, a new opportunity to make an impact on a new group and in a new league – to travel around Germany, play different clubs, and experience different playing styles," Harte said. Comparing HIL with the Malaysian league, where he previously played, Harte noted similarities in structure. "I would compare HIL's structure and set-up a little closer to the league in Malaysia, which is played during the winter breaks. I played there for the University of Kuala Lumpur for three seasons. The HIL and the Malaysian league are shorter, with matches coming closer together, whereas the domestic leagues I played in Ireland, the Netherlands and Germany are longer," he explained. Excerpts

**It was your fifth HIL. Very few have played five HIL editions before you. As a senior goalkeeper of Tamil Nadu Dragons and one who has played for long in India, how was the experience?**

It was fabulous. As a senior player in the team, it's also about trying to recognise the position and the role you have within a group. Can you have an impact on that group and can you have a positive presence within the team? You can bring experience of

having played in five HILs? Can you show that to the junior players who are coming through? Can I do that with young and promising goalkeeper Prince Deep Singh as my deputy here as well. I will try and help to develop him to become one of the best goalkeepers of the Indian National team.

When I calculated all months and weeks of competitions in the Hockey India League, with tournaments representing Ireland, like the World Cup and the World League, I think I've spent maybe close to a year and a half of my life in total in incredible India. It's a country that I can't keep away from.

#### Any player from Tamil Nadu Dragons who impressed you this season?

Prince Deep as a goalkeeper has made impressive strides and being the quality person who he is, he open to helping the group, helping the team. He's been one to watch out for. Forward Uttam Singh really impressed with dedication, his drive, and his want to be better as a player and he's also a fabulous human being. All those things combined make it a brilliant package deal.

#### You have played in leagues in Ireland, The

Netherlands, and now in Germany. In what way HIL differs from the other leagues?

I would compare HIL's structure and set-up probably a little bit closer to the league in Malaysia, which is played during the winter breaks. I played there for the University of Kuala Lumpur for three seasons. One of them was with my roommate Sander De Wijn, who is now with us at TN Dragons. I think the HIL and Malaysian league are just shorter, matches come a little bit closer together whereas the domestic leagues that I played in Ireland and in the Netherlands, and also the one in Germany, all start in September, maybe through to November. Then, a winter break, you'll start up again in March, you'll finish in the playoffs hopefully sometime in May-June.

#### How are you able to maintain peak reflexes and agility while playing at the highest level?

You have to put in a lot of time and a lot of dedication to your work. You have to have a supporting family, a very supporting wife, like in my case.

And let's be honest, if you speak to anyone else also approaching the age, I think Vincent Vanasch, Belgian goalkeeper playing for JSW Soorma HC in HIL, he will say it does get a bit tougher as the years go on. But if you still have the same kind of fire burning inside you and the same motivation and goal sets, then that's what drives you and gives you energy in the mornings and late evenings when you're on the turf. And that's currently the

same situation for me.

#### What has experience at the highest level taught you?

As you age, you have a little bit more trust and belief in yourself. So, basically what you can do is you can spend time on helping and coaching others. And that's certainly what I try and aim to do, guide the players around me. It doesn't matter if it's a young junior international with zero caps or the likes of Sander or Amit Rohidas with over 200 international games and Olympic medals. That's what you do at the back as a goalkeeper. You try to be a pillar of strength for them as a goalkeeper, and it doesn't matter if you're playing in the Dutch league or elsewhere.

#### Why did you quit SV Kampong, a top division Dutch club after 13 long years?

I have recently joined a German club, HTC Ullenhurst Mülheim. The choice behind it was family. My eldest daughter was going to primary school. It was time potentially to be more focused towards family. As I said, after 13 years, it was time to return home to our homeland. My wife is from Belfast, a city in Northern Ireland. Our eldest daughter was starting her schooling at the beginning of this year in a primary school. And my wife in particular was eager to get home to family and be closer to friends. And I said, that was no problem. I knew I wasn't done with hockey yet. So, a German club reached out and ended up signing me with Moritz Ludwig, a teammate from the Hockey India League last season. I wanted a new challenge, a new opportunity to make an impact on a new group and in a new league, travel around Germany, play in different clubs, play with different styles of teammates.

#### How has the shift to the German club been?

It has been quite hectic. I train locally on Tuesday with the local Irish team. I then fly on a Thursday and stay until Sunday with my German club, Ullenhurst Mülheim. Yes, one particular reason was that it was a shorter competition. And less time away from family and less travelling.

German league started in the first week of September and will finish in May-June. It's very intense, though. That way, I could combine my role and my life as a father back here to help out my wife and be with my two

daughters.

#### How do you mentor young goalkeepers, both in Ireland and in leagues in Germany, Dutch and India?

I just recall like many goalkeepers that have been before me who have passed on a lot of information and knowledge and have helped me big time in my career. And that's something I would try to do for the younger goalkeepers moving forward. It's also a great way to have a good impact on them and to connect at a deeper level, because not everybody really understands what it's like until you're actually there standing under the crossbar and experiencing the pressure of being a goalkeeper.

#### How much has the role of goalkeepers evolved since your early days?

I think it's like logically with anything that goes, you just become a little bit more experienced, perhaps, maybe a bit more of a common figure. And I think also with that, you just become a lot more trusting and comfortable with yourself as a person and individual. And that really helps a lot to be able to try and nurture and develop other goalkeepers and players around you. You try to instill confidence in them as well.

#### How do you manage pressure situations during shootouts at high-stake tournaments?

I think you believe in the training that you've done and the experiences that you have been through and seeing the opportunity that you have to make a difference. You see it as a positive rather than a pressure moment. Like I've always said, as a goalkeeper, you might have an opportunity to be the hero where I often think the pressure was usually on the taker. They perhaps only have that one opportunity and those eight seconds to make a difference.

#### Which one remains your most memorable tournament?

Personally, it was my last tournament, the Paris Olympics in 2024. It was just the five incredibly tough games, but probably the most consistent matches that I had ever played at that level. And the most relaxed and the best feeling I had. And having my two daughters with my wife and family in the stands watching are moments I'll cherish forever and certainly never forget.



# HEALTH

# Infertility in India: bringing mental health to the forefront of condition

Mental health is not a peripheral concern in fertility care, it is a central determinant of reproductive health; until it is treated as an integral component of care for all genders, gap between what science knows and what society believes will widen; stigma should be replaced with science, silence with dialogue, and blame with compassion

Rashikha Ra. Iyer

**I**s womanhood synonymous with motherhood? This question has lingered in the Indian social imagination for generations. The country's fertility landscape remains firmly anchored in a patriarchal narrative, where a woman's worth, identity, and social legitimacy are overwhelmingly tied to her ability to bear children.

Despite the biological fact that conception requires both a man and a woman, the moral burden of infertility is placed almost exclusively on women. Women without children are openly discouraged from attending weddings, baby showers, or religious ceremonies. Such exclusions deepen feelings of shame, isolation, embarrassment, identity fragmentation, and perceived moral failure.

Infertility, though a medical condition like any other, is frequently subjected to moral scrutiny. Even when medical evaluations clearly identify male-factor issues – such as low sperm counts or unexplained infertility – the cultural script continues to place blame squarely on women. This persistent assumption reinforces a deeply entrenched gender bias that distorts both responsibility and compassion.

#### Men's mental health

What often goes unacknowledged in these conversations is that male infertility itself is deeply intertwined with mental health, and that psychological distress can directly impair sperm quality. This is well-established in contemporary reproductive science. A 2024 original research article in *Frontiers in Endocrinology* found that depression is significantly associated with decreased semen quality, including reduced sperm concentration and motility (Zhang et al., 2024). This means that the very men who are culturally insulated from blame may themselves be experiencing psychological states that biologically diminish fertility potential.

Further evidence comes from a 2025 open-access study in *Reproductive Biology and Endocrinology*, which demonstrates that depression, anxiety, and stress impair sperm quality through dysregulation of the mitochondrial PDK-PDC axis, a pathway essential for healthy sperm metabolism (Wang et al., 2025). This mechanistic insight reinforces that mental health is not merely an emotional overlay, but a physiological determinant of reproductive function.

Ironically, the very patriarchal norms that so swiftly assign fault to women also conspire to keep men silent about their own psychological distress. This enforced quietude does more than perpetuate stigma – it may be actively undermining fertility itself. Observations from clinical reviews indicate that chronic psychological stress triggers activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, driving up cortisol levels and destabilising the hormonal milieu essential for healthy spermatogenesis.

What emerges from this body of research is a striking paradox: while women absorb the social, emotional, and reputational costs of infertility, men's unaddressed mental health burdens may be biologically fuelling the very condition for which women are castigated.



Research shows that heightened anxiety and depressive symptoms are associated with lower success rates in procedures such as IVF. The monthly cycle of hope, hyper-vigilance, and disappointment compound this stress, creating a physiological environment that is less conducive to conception. GETTY IMAGES

#### Infertility, though a medical condition like any other, is subjected to moral scrutiny. If the silence around men's mental health obscures its biological consequences, the landscape for women is even more fraught

Acknowledging this dual reality is not merely a matter of fairness or empathy – it is central to improving reproductive outcomes.

If the silence around men's mental health obscures its biological consequences, the emotional landscape for women is even more fraught – and the science here is equally unambiguous. Mental health challenges do not merely accompany infertility; they can actively impair reproductive function. A landmark study in *Human Reproduction* found that women experiencing high levels of psychological stress had significantly lower probabilities of conception during each menstrual cycle, with elevated salivary alpha-amylase – a biomarker of stress – correlating with reduced fecundability (Lynch et al., 2014). In other words, stress is not just a by-product of infertility; it can be a precursor.

Findings from a number of studies underscore that emotional distress is not simply "in the mind" – it is inscribed in the endocrine system.

Taken together, the evidence paints a sobering picture: women are not only socially penalised for infertility but may also be physiologically disadvantaged by the very emotional burdens that stigma imposes. It is a cruel feedback loop – one in which social pressure becomes a biological impediment, and biology becomes further ammunition for social blame. Recognising this interplay is essential. Mental health is not a peripheral concern in fertility care, it is a central determinant of reproductive health. Until emotional well-being is treated with the same seriousness as hormonal assays and ultrasound scans,

the gap between what science knows and what society believes will continue to widen, to the detriment of the very people seeking to build families. The consequences of this emotional burden extend even further when couples enter the realm of infertility treatment. Assisted reproductive technologies are often portrayed as purely biomedical solutions, yet their success is intimately tied to psychological wellbeing. Chronic stress fuelled by stigma, family pressure, financial strain, and the relentless expectation to conceive – can disrupt hormonal regulation, impair ovulation, and interfere with the body's responsiveness to treatment protocols.

#### Pressures of treatment

Research consistently shows that heightened anxiety and depressive symptoms are associated with lower success rates in procedures such as IVF. The monthly cycle of hope, hyper-vigilance, and disappointment compound this stress, creating a physiological environment that is less conducive to conception.

The pressures of infertility treatment also reshape the most intimate dimensions of a couple's relationship. What is ordinarily an expression of desire, connection, or spontaneity can become tightly choreographed around ovulation windows, clinic schedules, and medical directives. Many couples describe sex during treatment as increasingly mechanical – an obligation rather than an act of intimacy.

This can erode relational closeness. Over time, the emotional strain can dampen libido, heighten anxiety, and create a sense of detachment between partners. Ironically, the very effort to conceive can undermine the relational and psychological conditions that support healthy sexual functioning.

Recognising this dynamic is crucial. Fertility treatment is not only a medical journey but a relational one. Without compassionate support that acknowledges the toll on intimacy,

couples may find themselves navigating not only the challenges of infertility but also the quiet erosion of the connection that once anchored their partnership.

#### The path forward

India stands at a crossroads. The science is clear, the human cost undeniable, and yet our cultural narratives remain stubbornly unchanged.

The first step forward is cultural honesty. We must finally sever the idea that womanhood is validated through motherhood. As long as society treats fertility as a measure of virtue, women will continue to pay with their dignity, their mental health, and in many cases, their biological chances of conceiving. Equally urgent is the need to bring men into the centre of the conversation. The data shows that male mental health directly affects fertility, yet patriarchal norms keep men silent, unexamined, and emotionally unsupported.

Clinics, too, must evolve. Mental health support cannot remain a decorative add-on to reproductive care. It must be embedded into every stage of assessment and treatment. Screening for anxiety, depression, and relational strain should be as routine as semen analysis or hormone testing. When emotional wellbeing is treated as essential, outcomes improve – not just medically, but humanely. Finally, couples need support that protects their relationships from the corrosive pressures of treatment. Infertility should not be allowed to hollow out intimacy or turn partnership into performance.

The way forward is not complicated – it is simply long overdue. We must replace stigma with science, silence with dialogue, and blame with compassion. Only then can fertility care in India move from being a site of quiet suffering to one of dignity, equity, and genuine healing.

(Rashikha Ra. Iyer is a multidisciplinary clinician working in the U.K., specialising in the delivery of clinical interventions in forensic settings. Rashikha.Raiyer@outlook.com)

## THE GIST

▼ Despite the biological fact that conception requires both a man and a woman, the moral burden of infertility is placed almost exclusively on women. Even when medical evaluations clearly identify male-factor issues – such as low sperm counts or unexplained infertility – the cultural script continues to place blame squarely on women

▼ Mental health challenges do not merely accompany infertility; they can actively impair reproductive function. Findings from a number of studies underscore that emotional distress is not simply "in the mind" – it is inscribed in the endocrine system

▼ Mental health support cannot remain a decorative add-on to reproductive care. It must be embedded into every stage of assessment and treatment. Screening for anxiety, depression, and relational strain should be as routine as semen analysis or hormone testing

+

+

## THE HEALTH QUIZ

Despite centuries of research, the brain continues to remain the most mysterious of organs in the human body. Here is a quiz testing your knowledge about the important organ and how to care for it?

Zubeda Hamid

#### QUESTION 1

What is the human brain primarily made of? This comprises about 60% of the brain, with the remaining 40% being protein, carbohydrates, salt and water.

#### QUESTION 2

We all know about grey matter and white matter in the central nervous system. In your spinal cord, which matter is on the outside, and which is inside?

#### QUESTION 3

Is the following statement true or false? Walnuts are good for brain health and can also help improve memory.

#### QUESTION 4

Which daily hygiene ritual that many of us skip is believed to reduce the risk of stroke?

#### QUESTION 5

Looking after which of your organs, besides the brain, is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of dementia?

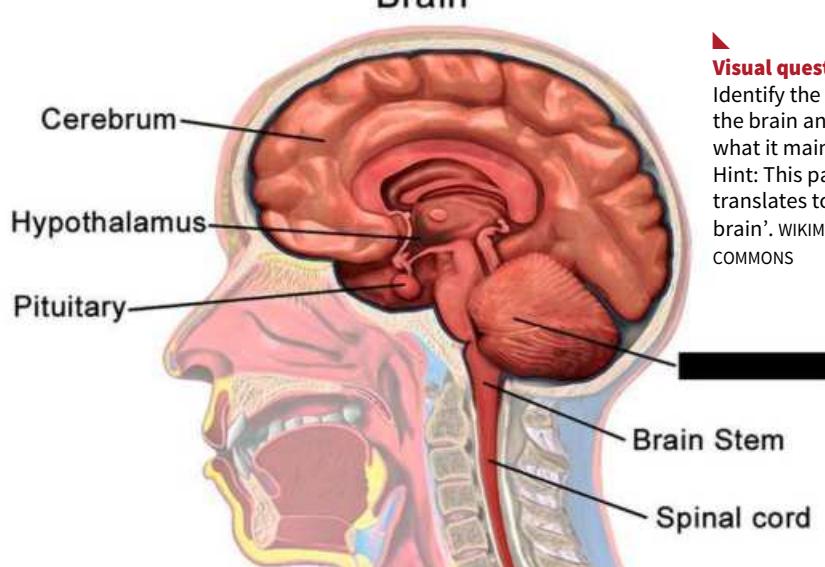
#### QUESTION 6

Take a guess as to how many neurons the brain is believed to have: a) Over 100 billion b) Between 40 and 50 billion c) Between 80 and 90 billion

#### QUESTION 7

Is the following statement true or false? The brain's ability to change stops with age.

## Brain



#### Visual question:

Identify the part of the brain and state what it mainly does. Hint: This part literally translates to 'little brain'. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

#### Answers to previous edition's quiz:

1. Which virus is most often the culprit behind your common cold? Ans: Rhinovirus

2. After a viral infection, some people contract \_\_\_\_\_, a condition in which the airways of the lungs get inflamed. Ans: Acute bronchitis

3. Paracetamol is commonly used as a fever reliever and to manage symptoms of winter infections. What is the safe dosage for adults in a 24-hour period?

Ans: Adults can take two 500mg tablets, 4 times in 24 hours. You must wait at least 4 hours between doses

4. True or False: Cold air kills viruses. Ans: False

5. Pneumonia is a common winter infections. Which part of the lungs does it affect? Ans: Air sacs or alveoli

6. The influenza virus causes the flu, and people often contract it in winter. Influenza viruses A, B and C are the common viruses

Please send in your answers to health@thehindu.co.in

behind the flu. Is the flu contagious? Ans: Yes

7. RSV is a common virus, usually mild, causing cold-like symptoms. Immunity from contracting this infection does not last, so people can get it more than once. What is the full form of RSV? Ans: Respiratory syncytial virus

8. Which vitamin is more useful to help prevent winter illnesses? Ans: Vitamin D

Visual: Black pepper, commonly used as a home remedy to soothe symptoms of stuffy noses and sore throats. What is the active compound in it that helps, called? Ans: Piperine

Winners: C. Saravanan | Tamal Biswas | Manda Venkata Apparao

# Text & Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

**Ukrainian soldiers killed in the Russian invasion of Ukraine**

**55,000** The number of

Ukrainian soldiers killed on the battlefield as a result of the country's war with Russia is estimated at 55,000, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Wednesday. He added that on top of that casualty figure was a "large number of people" considered officially missing. REUTERS

**Number of deaths in the U.S. from wildfire smoke from 2006-20**

**24,100** A paper, in the journal

*Science Advances*, found that from 2006 to 2020, long-term exposure to tiny particulates from wildfire smoke contributed to an average of 24,100 deaths a year in the lower 48 states. Long-term exposure can lead to a range of chronic and deadly health issues. AP

**India's payment to UN Regular Budget for 2026**

**35.18** In dollar million. India has paid \$35.18 million to the UN Regular Budget for 2026, joining the "honour roll" of 47 Member states who have paid their regular budget dues in full to the world body on time. The UN Committee on Contributions said that 47 Member states have paid their regular budget assessments in full. PTI

**Number of Indian based orgs' websites seized by U.S.**

**200** U.S. federal authorities have seized more than 200 website domains tied to an India-based transnational criminal organisation having illegal online pharmacies. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration field offices throughout the country also conducted multiple operations leading to the arrest of four individuals, it said in a statement. PTI

**Public grievances received against the Centre and State**

**22** in lakh. These public grievances against Union Ministries/departments and State/Union territories governments were received during 2024-25 through a dedicated CGPRAMS portal. The government has undertaken a comprehensive set of measures to reduce grievance pendency. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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## DISCOMs and the road ahead

DISCOMs show improvement in performance, recording a positive turnaround marked by reduced AT&C losses, a narrowed ACS-ARR gap and improved financial discipline; however, many utilities continue to rely on tariff subsidies and loss takeovers by State governments, underscoring the scope for further improvement

### EXPLAINER

**T. Ramakrishnan**

**B**etter days seem to be ahead for the country's electricity sector, especially power distribution utilities, including power departments, commonly known as DISCOMs.

For long, DISCOMs, now numbering 72 across the country (44 State-owned, 16 private-sector entities, and 12 power departments), had presented a grim picture with never-declining line losses, also called Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses, and the consequent widening gap between the Average Cost of Supply (ACS) and the Average Revenue Realised (ARR). Between 2020-21 and 2024-25, accumulated losses rose from ₹5.5 lakh crore to ₹6.47 lakh crore, with outstanding debt increasing to ₹7.26 lakh crore. Non-cost-reflective tariffs and delayed payment of State subsidies were among the factors that contributed to this state of affairs.

#### A legacy of losses

As far as India is concerned, DISCOMs and losses have become synonymous, forcing specialists to use the prefix "minus" whenever a power utility's ARR exceeds its ACS. One may argue that loss-making is a legacy matter, as these power utilities – in their previous 'avatar', State Electricity Boards (SEBs), formed under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948 – were mostly in the red. But what was overlooked, even then and now, was that Section 59 of the law had originally required SEBs to make a profit of three or more per cent, as specified by State governments.

#### Signs of a turnaround

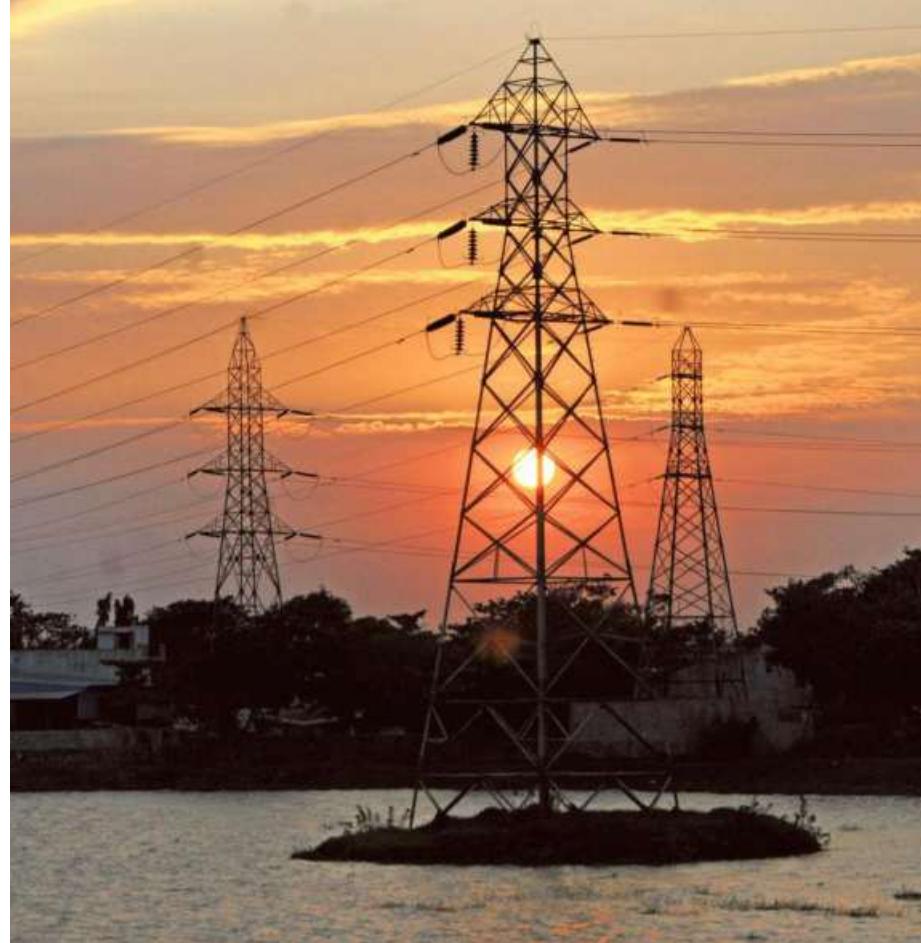
Even though many DISCOMs are struggling to cope with chronic issues, several others have begun improving their performance perceptibly in the wake of steps taken by various stakeholders, including those of the Union government. A Survey revealed that DISCOMs recorded a positive Profit After Tax (PAT) of ₹ 2,701 crore in the financial year 2024-25, marking "a decisive turnaround" from a loss of ₹67,962 crore in 2013-14. This improvement was accompanied by a reduction in AT&C losses from 22.62% to 15.04% during the years in question. Further, the ACS-ARR gap (on an accrual basis) came down from 78 paise per unit (kilowatt-hour) to 0.06 paise per unit, signalling much improved cost recovery.

In mid-January, the Union government also made public the performance details of DISCOMs for the financial year that ended March 31, 2025. Claiming credit for the financial turnaround, the government attributed it to several measures, including the implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), amendments to the Electricity Rules, and the introduction of the Late Payment Surcharge Rules.

The RDSS's objective is to improve the quality and reliability of power through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector, with the release of funds linked to the execution of necessary measures. The effective implementation of the Rules has helped utilities arrest the mounting surcharges on legacy dues, as it allows DISCOMs to clear their dues through a maximum of 48 equated monthly instalments (EMIs).

#### Discipline and debt reduction

Prior to the Rules coming into force,



**Call for change:** Political will, combined with public-spirited bureaucracy, can easily transform the face of DISCOMs into that of viable and consumer-friendly entities. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

#### On the grid

The table presents an assessment of select States based on key operational and financial parameters, including AT&C losses, accumulated surplus or deficit, and the ACS-ARR gap for 2023-24 and 2024-25

| State            | AT&C loss (in %) |              | Accumulated Surplus / -Deficit (₹ in crore) |                 | ACS-ARR gap* (₹ per kilo watt per hour or unit) (-deficit) |             |
|------------------|------------------|--------------|---|-----------------|--|-------------|
|                  | 2023-24          | 2024-25      | 2023-24                                     | 2024-25         | 2023-24  | 2024-25     |
| Assam            | 14.03            | 15.44        | -1,324                                      | -1,028          | 0.22   | 0.26        |
| Manipur          | 13.41            | 12.90        | -295  | -290            | 0.45   | 0.20        |
| Bihar            | 20.32            | 15.51        | -18,529                                     | -16,526         | 0.18   | 0.41        |
| Uttar Pradesh    |                  |              |   |                 |  |             |
| State sector     | 16.39            | 19.54        | -90,039                                     | -1,00,858       | -0.55  | -0.73       |
| Private sector   | 7.75             | 8.48         | 1,426                                       | 1,561           | 0.57   | 0.15        |
| Punjab           | 10.96            | 19.21        | -9,620                                      | -3,404          | 0.20   | 0.30        |
| Rajasthan        | 22.13            | 15.18        | -91,565                                     | -90,303         | -0.31  | 0.04        |
| Gujarat          |                  |              |   |                 |  |             |
| State sector     | 8.97             | 8.25         | 5,165                                       | 7,355           | 0.58   | 0.40        |
| Private sector   | 3.92             | 3.63         | 2,823                                       | 3,892           | -0.14  | 0.42        |
| Maharashtra      |                  |              |   |                 |  |             |
| State sector     | 23.86            | 17.69        | -36,226                                     | -35,671         | -0.28  | -0.56       |
| Private sector   | 5.39             | 4.99         | 474   | 1,245           | 0.99   | 2.04        |
| Madhya Pradesh   | 22.89            | 22.76        | -69,506                                     | -71,394         | -0.18  | 0.04        |
| Chhattisgarh     | 15.88            | 14.25        | -10,016                                     | -10,423         | 0.20   | 0.19        |
| Jharkhand        | 30.51            | 28.19        | -18,512                                     | -20,512         | -1.66  | -0.95       |
| West Bengal      |                  |              |   |                 |  |             |
| State sector     | 17.13            | 17.17        | 158   | 174             | -0.17  | -0.03       |
| Private sector   | 4.64             | 4.77         | 197   | 205             | -0.13  | 0.30        |
| Odisha**         | 19.59            | 17.81        | 824   | 1,263           | -0.10  | -0.18       |
| Telangana        | 19.01            | 19.84        | -67,276                                     | -69,741         | -0.75  | -0.27       |
| Karnataka        | 11.89            | 11.92        | -26,109                                     | -34,980         | -1.08  | -0.69       |
| Kerala           | 7.44             | 6.61         | -37,543                                     | -38,648         | -0.42  | -0.17       |
| Andhra Pradesh   | 12.05            | 7.87         | -29,210                                     | -29,420         | -0.34  | 0.15        |
| Tamil Nadu       | 11.39            | 10.96        | -1,66,944                                   | -1,19,153       | -0.11  | 0.18        |
| <b>ALL INDIA</b> | <b>15.97</b>     | <b>15.04</b> | <b>6,91,416</b>                             | <b>6,47,210</b> | <b>0.20</b>  | <b>0.06</b> |

\*AT&C - Aggregate Technical and Commercial \*ACS - Average Cost of Supply | ARR - Average Revenue Realised, which covers tariff subsidy received basis but without regulatory income and UDAY grant | \*\*where all the discoms belong to the private sector

Source: 14th Annual Integrated Rating & Ranking of Power Distribution Utilities, Power Finance Corporation

delays and non-payments by DISCOMs had made it difficult for generators to pay for the fuel, which had to be prepaid, to continue generation, apart from having to pay the Railways in advance for the rakes.

When the Rules came into force on June 3, 2022, outstanding legacy dues totalled ₹1,39,947 crore. Since then, utilities in 13 States and Union Territories paid ₹1,31,942 crore till December 2025 through

**Even though many DISCOMs are struggling to cope with chronic issues, several others have begun improving their performance**

39 EMIs, prepayments, and reconciliations. In January 2026, the dues went down further to ₹ 4,927 crore, with DISCOMs largely paying their current dues on time, reflecting a marked improvement in sectoral financial discipline.

Yet, not everything is rosy. Many DISCOMs, if not most, have been able to achieve the turnaround, essentially due to tariff subsidies received from and the takeover of losses by their respective governments. For instance, in the case of Tamil Nadu, during 2024-25, the Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDC), the successor to the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO), received ₹15,772 crore as tariff subsidy and ₹16,107 crore towards the takeover of losses. In fact, the utility recorded a profit (after tax) of ₹2,073 crore only after receiving the State government's largesse. But for the takeover of losses, TNPDC had registered a loss of ₹4,034 crore, according to the findings of the 14th Integrated Rating Exercise conducted by the Power Finance Corporation Limited (PFC) under a framework approved by the Union Ministry of Power. The findings were released in late January 2026.

Take the case of Rajasthan: Jodhpur Vidyalikaran Nigam Limited (JDVN), which, according to PFC's assessment, improved its showing during 2024-25 compared to the past. This utility recorded a profit of ₹92 crore, but this was after the receipt of ₹11,625 crore towards tariff subsidy and ₹ 2,540 crore towards loss takeover.

Besides, even the present position of DISCOMs enjoying revenue surplus appears to be transient, because when the utilities may have to effect pay revision for employees in a few years, the probability of them slipping back to square one – revenue deficit – is quite high.

#### The way forward

Still, the emphasis on government support, which is nothing new, is not to be viewed as taking away the credit for DISCOMs for enhanced performance. However, there is still scope for further improvement. At present, feeder segregation works, taken up in States such as Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra with large rural or agricultural consumer bases separating feeders for agricultural use from non-agricultural use, should be extended to other States such as Tamil Nadu, where an unmetered power supply to the farm sector has been the norm. Only then will there be data, closer to the real picture, regarding the quantum of power supplied to agriculturists.

As Niti Aayog noted in its August 2021 study on the distribution sector, DISCOMs should be proactive in promoting the use of solar pumps in agriculture, a move that would lead to a significant decrease in power procurement costs. The political executive must resist the temptation to offer free electricity universally to domestic consumers or any other category, as economically stronger sections of society invariably benefit disproportionately by any such measure. Political will, combined with public-spirited bureaucracy, can easily transform the face of DISCOMs into that of viable and consumer-friendly entities.

### THE GIST

DISCOMs record a decisive turnaround, with reduced AT&C losses, a sharply narrowed ACS-ARR gap and improved cost recovery following reforms and rule changes.

Financial discipline improves, as legacy dues decline, current payments are largely made on time and mounting surcharges are arrested through structured instalments.

Government support remains central, with tariff subsidies and loss takeovers underpinning profits, even as scope for further improvement persists through feeder segregation and efficiency measures.

## CACHE



With relatively minor modifications, lithium-ion production lines can be adapted to manufacture sodium-ion cells. This dramatically lowers the capital barrier to adoption and allows manufacturers to hedge against raw material supply risks.

The primary process difference lies in moisture sensitivity during cell stack preparation. Sodium-ion batteries require more stringent vacuum drying conditions, as residual moisture can have a greater negative impact on performance. While lithium-ion cells can tolerate drying at relatively mild vacuum levels, sodium-ion cells require deeper vacuum conditions, which may marginally increase energy consumption and manufacturing costs. However, as the industry progresses toward dry electrode coating and advanced manufacturing techniques, these challenges are expected to diminish.

Sodium-ion batteries offer a structurally different material pathway compared to lithium-ion systems. Sodium is derived from abundantly available resources such as soda ash, which are far more plentiful and geographically diversified than lithium. Several sodium-ion chemistries eliminate the need for critical minerals.

In addition, sodium-ion batteries use aluminium as the current collector for both electrodes. Aluminium is cheaper, lighter, and more widely available than copper, resulting in cost savings and weight advantages. These material choices significantly reduce exposure to global commodity price volatility and enhance supply chain resilience, a critical consideration for a country like India.

# Rethinking battery strategy in India: the case for sodium-ion technology

India's dependence on lithium-ion batteries exposes structural constraints linked to critical minerals, import dependence, and supply security; sodium-ion batteries emerge as a safer alternative with lower material risk, compatible with existing infrastructure, and the potential to strengthen energy security

**Jaideep Saraswat**  
**Nikhil Mall**

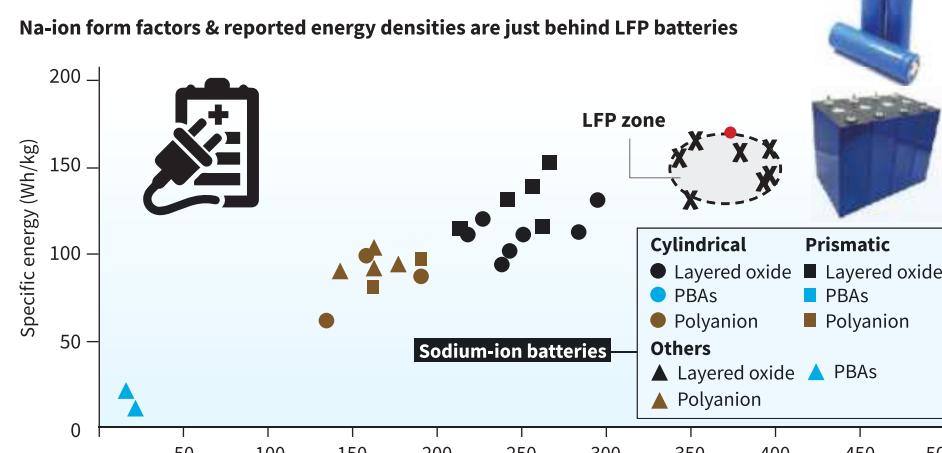
**B**atteries have become deeply embedded in modern life. From laptops, mobile phones, wearable devices such as smartwatches and wireless earphones, to power tools, electric vehicles (EVs), and large-scale battery energy storage systems, batteries now underpin both personal convenience and critical infrastructure. A newer trend is also emerging, with batteries being integrated directly into household appliances. These developments collectively point to a future saturated with batteries, making energy storage a foundational pillar of economic growth, energy security, and the clean energy transition.

**Dominant, not a perfect solution**  
Among the various battery chemistries that have existed or are still in use, lithium-ion batteries have emerged as the dominant global technology. This dominance is largely driven by their high energy density, low self-discharge rates, and long cycle life. Sustained global focus on lithium-ion technology over the past two decades has resulted in steady improvements in performance, manufacturing efficiency, and large-scale capacity build-out. By 2024, global lithium-ion manufacturing capacity had reached nearly 2.5 times annual demand, further accelerating cost reductions through economies of scale. As a result, costs have fallen dramatically, from nearly \$1,100 per kWh in the early 2010s to about \$108 per kWh in 2025.

However, the success of lithium-ion batteries masks several structural challenges. These batteries are highly resource-intensive and depend on critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, and graphite. The availability of these materials is unevenly distributed across a handful of countries, while refining and processing capacities are even more geographically concentrated. This creates vulnerabilities related to supply security, price volatility, and geopolitical risk. As global demand for batteries accelerates, these constraints are likely to intensify, reinforcing the need for alternative technologies that can support a more resilient and equitable energy transition.

**Ambitions and structural constraints**  
The Government of India has made sustained efforts to build domestic battery manufacturing capacity, most notably through the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cells

## Within reach



The specific energy density of a battery indicates the amount of electrical energy it can store per unit of its own mass, measured in Watt-hours per kilogram (Wh/kg), determining how light a battery can be for a given potential. The volumetric energy density of a battery refers to the amount of energy it can store per unit volume, measured in Watt-hours per litre (Wh/L), defining how compact a battery is. Ideally, both should be high. We notice that commercially available layered oxide sodium-ion batteries of different shapes have better specific energy density and volumetric energy density than their sodium-ion counterparts built of polyanionic compounds and Prussian blue analogues (PBAs). However, they have lower specific energy density and volumetric energy density than lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries, indicated as (x). Data from the Volta Foundation's Annual Battery Report 2024

launched in 2021. Under this scheme, around 40 GWh of manufacturing capacity has been allocated so far. While this represents meaningful progress, deployment remains at an early stage, with just over 1 GWh commissioned to date and additional capacities expected to come online gradually.

More critically, India's upstream ecosystem, from raw material availability and mineral processing to cathode and anode active material production and separator manufacturing, remains underdeveloped. Domestic reserves of lithium are limited and yet to be proven commercially viable, while processing infrastructure is still nascent. Consequently, import dependence for lithium-ion batteries is likely to persist for a considerable period. This reality underscores the importance of parallel investments in alternative battery technologies that can reduce material risk and strengthen long-term energy security. Sodium-ion batteries (SIBs) represent one such technology, offering significant promise for India in the medium to long term.

**Energy density: sodium vs lithium**  
From a fundamental perspective, sodium-ion batteries exhibit lower specific energy (Wh/kg) than lithium-ion batteries, largely

because sodium has a higher atomic mass than lithium, which intuitively leads to more mass per unit of stored energy. However, this performance gap is often overstated. In practice, it can be significantly narrowed if the mass of other cell components in sodium-ion batteries is reduced, thereby compensating for the higher mass of sodium itself. Moreover, among commercially available sodium-ion chemistries, layered transition-metal oxide cathodes already deliver higher specific energy than polyanionic compounds and Prussian blue analogues, underscoring the growing competitiveness of sodium-ion technology.

Importantly, layered oxide sodium-ion batteries are now approaching the specific energy of lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries, as illustrated in Figure 1. Although their volumetric energy density (Wh/L) still trails that of LFP, ongoing materials and cell-level optimisations are expected to substantially narrow this gap and potentially lead to meaningful overlap. It is also important to emphasise that this comparison is based on commercially available products, whereas laboratory-scale and pilot-level research results suggest even greater performance potential. By contrast, comparisons with high-energy lithium nickel manganese cobalt (NMC) chemistries are less

**EV manufacturers should be encouraged through procurement policies, pilot programmes, and regulatory nudges to type-test and approve vehicle platforms using sodium-ion batteries alongside lithium-ion options. This approval strategy would allow rapid substitution in response to supply disruptions or cost fluctuations**

instructive, as NMC batteries occupy a distinct performance space and entail separate trade-offs related to safety and reliance on critical minerals.

## Safety first

Safety is one of the most compelling advantages of sodium-ion batteries. Studies, including those conducted by the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, have shown that sodium-ion cells exhibit significantly lower peak temperature rise during thermal runaway events compared to lithium-ion cells. This intrinsic safety advantage extends well beyond cell performance into storage, handling, and transportation.

Lithium-ion batteries are classified as "Dangerous Goods" by national and international transport authorities, necessitating strict packaging, handling, and transportation requirements. They are typically shipped at a state of charge not exceeding 30%, which increases logistical complexity and cost. These restrictions stem from the use of copper current collectors on the anode side, which can dissolve at low voltages and redeposit on the cathode, increasing the risk of internal short circuits.

Sodium-ion batteries do not suffer from these limitations. They use aluminium current collectors on both the anode and cathode sides, as sodium does not form unstable alloys with aluminium. As a result, sodium-ion cells can be safely stored and transported at zero volts without degradation or safety risks. Prolonged storage at zero volts has been shown not to compromise cycling stability. This feature offers significant benefits across the value chain, including safer handling, lower transportation costs, and greater flexibility in manufacturing and installation.

## Manufacturing ready

Another critical advantage of sodium-ion batteries is their compatibility with existing lithium-ion manufacturing infrastructure.

## Why sodium-ion matters

Taken together, these attributes suggest that sodium-ion batteries are not merely an experimental technology but a commercially viable and strategically important solution. Cost projections indicate that sodium-ion batteries could undercut lithium-ion batteries by 2035. As of 2025, around 70 GWh of sodium-ion manufacturing capacity is already operational globally, with expectations of scaling to nearly 400 GWh by 2030. This rapid expansion highlights the urgency for India to engage early and decisively with this technology.

## Policy, regulatory, and ecosystem recommendations for India

To ensure sodium-ion batteries become a meaningful part of India's energy storage landscape, a coordinated policy and regulatory approach is essential. Public support for upstream battery infrastructure, such as cathode, anode, electrolyte, and separator manufacturing, should explicitly include sodium-ion chemistries rather than remaining narrowly focused on lithium-ion systems. Future incentive programs, including revisions to the PLI framework, should encourage flexibility, ensuring that new battery plants are designed to accommodate both lithium-ion and sodium-ion production with minimal retrofitting from the very beginning. From a regulatory standpoint, standards, safety codes, and certification pathways must be updated to explicitly include sodium-ion batteries, enabling faster commercialisation and deployment.

EV manufacturers should be encouraged through procurement policies, pilot programmes, and regulatory nudges to type-test and approve vehicle platforms using sodium-ion batteries alongside lithium-ion options. This dual-approval strategy would allow rapid substitution in response to supply disruptions or cost fluctuations.

Finally, targeted public funding for R&D, demonstration projects, and early deployments, particularly in grid storage, two- and three-wheeler EVs, and stationary applications, can help build market confidence.

By aligning industrial policy, regulation, and market incentives, India can foster a fair, resilient, and future-ready battery ecosystem in which sodium-ion batteries play a central role.

*Jaideep Saraswat leads the Electric Mobility vertical at Vasudha Foundation where he focuses on addressing key barriers to EV adoption and advancing sustainable mobility solutions; Nikhil Mall is also part of the Electric Mobility vertical contributing to research, stakeholder engagement, and initiatives that promote the transition to clean transportation*

## THE DAILY QUIZ

Here is a quiz on some influential figures and key events that happened today

**Sindhu Nagaraj**

**QUESTION 1**  
Elizabeth II ascended the throne of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland this day, following the death of her father, King George VI. She became the longest-reigning monarch in British history in 2015. In which year did she ascend the throne?

**QUESTION 2**

The President of the U.S. was born on this day in 1911. In his

first term as President, he began implementing a policy involving economic deregulation and cuts in both taxes and government spending. Name him.

**QUESTION 3**  
This Jamaican singer was born on this day in 1981. Considered one of the pioneers of reggae, he fused elements of reggae, ska, and rocksteady, and was renowned for his distinctive vocal and songwriting style. Identify him.

**QUESTION 4**  
Eva Braun was born on this day



**Visual Question:**  
Identify this French filmmaker who was born on this day. He is widely regarded as one of the founders of an art movement in France. What was it? WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

in 1912. She was the wife of which famous political figure from history?

**QUESTION 5**

This Hungarian-American socialite and actor was born on February 6, 1917. Her most famous film was Moulin Rouge. Who was she?

**Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:** 1. On February 5, 1958, the U.S. Air Force lost a hydrogen bomb named 'Tybee' and never recovered it. What is the U.S. military's term for such events?

**Ans: Broken Arrow incidents**

2. In 1968, a U.S. B-52 aircraft carrying four thermonuclear bombs crashed onto the sea ice off the coast of \_\_\_\_\_. **Ans: Greenland**

Please send in your answers to [dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in](mailto:dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in)

## Word of the day

### Specious:

plausible but false

### Synonyms:

deceptive, incorrect, ambiguous

### Usage:

What seemed like solid evidence turned out to be specious.

### Pronunciation:

[newsth.live/speciouspro](http://newsth.live/speciouspro)

### International Phonetic Alphabet:

/spi:əs/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) with the subject 'Text & Context'