



செ.மு.நூ.கி / 127 / வரவேகம் / 2026

கிள்லத்தரசிகளின் உழைப்பை
அங்கீரிக்க கலைஞர் மகளிர் உரிமைத் திட்டம்...
1 கோடியே 30 இலட்சத்து 69 ஆயிரத்து
831 பெண்களுக்கு மாதந்தோறும் ஆயிரம் ரூபாய்...
தமிழ்நாட்டின் வளர்ச்சியில் யைனத்தில் ஒருவகையும் மின்தங்க விடமாட்டோம்!



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FULL COVERAGE » PAGE 13

Stalin slams Centre for 'dismantling' MGNREGA

C. Palanivel Rajan
SIVAGANGA

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Saturday accused the BJP-led Union government of "betraying" rural workers and attempting to erase the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi by replacing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with a new scheme.

Inaugurating the Government Law College at Karaikudi in Sivaganga, he signalled a fierce political and legal battle against the Centre's policy, which he called a "deceptive ploy".

Mr. Stalin accused the Union government of intentionally removing Mahatma Gandhi's name from the scheme and replacing the demand-based 'right to work' scheme with a system based on discretionary allocation.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Sunetra Pawar sworn in as Deputy CM of Maharashtra

Wife of late NCP leader Ajit Pawar becomes first woman to hold the post in the State, set to handle 3 portfolios; family not consulted, talks for reunification were in the final stage, says Sharad Pawar

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

A day after the conclusion of the three-day State mourning for late Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar, who died in an air crash in Baramati on January 28, his wife Sunetra Pawar was sworn in as the Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra at a brief ceremony in Mumbai on Saturday evening. She is the first woman to occupy the post in the State.

The swearing-in, which lasted barely a few minutes, took place amid intense political activity in Baramati and Mumbai, with several leaders questioning the need for the hurried decision. Ms. Pawar will oversee three portfolios – Excise, Minority Affairs, and Sports and Youth Welfare.



Sunetra Pawar greets Eknath Shinde, Deputy CM from the Shiv Sena, during the swearing-in on Saturday. EMMANUEL YOGINI

Earlier in the day, NCP (SP) leader Sharad Pawar held a press conference in Baramati, saying the Pawar family had neither been consulted nor informed about the swearing-in. He clarified that there was no proposal from the NCP for a merger at this stage.

Naming senior leaders Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare, he suggested that the

decision about Ms. Pawar appeared to have been taken independently by them.

Mr. Pawar added that talks with Ajit Pawar about reunification were in the final stage before his death, and that the announcement was to be made soon. "It was Dada's wish [that the two parties should reunite]. It should be fulfilled;

it is our wish," Mr. Pawar said, describing the death of Ajit Pawar as a tremendous loss. NCP (SP) sources said that Jayant Patil and Rohit Pawar were expected to be given ministerial berths in the government.

Party's choice
In Mumbai, the NCP called a meeting of all legislators at Vidhan Bhavan on Saturday afternoon. In all, 45 of the 48 legislature party members attended the meeting and chose Ms. Pawar as the group leader. The decision was made after the proposal by Cabinet Minister Chhagan Bhujbal, supported by five Cabinet colleagues, including Dilip Walse-Patil, Hasan Mushrif, and Narhari Zhirwal.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
OUT OF THE SHADOWS
» PAGE 17

NEARBY



DMK may offer 6 Assembly seats, 1 RS seat to DMDK

CHENNAI
Leaders of the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu have said the party is prepared to provide six Assembly seats and one Rajya Sabha seat to the DMDK ahead of the coming polls. » PAGE 8

Secondary grade teachers end equal pay protest

CHENNAI
Secondary grade teachers decided to end their protest on Saturday, after School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi assured them of a decision based on a committee's report. » PAGE 8

CLASSIFIEDS » PAGE 19, 20, 21
MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES
DOWNTOWN » 8 PAGES
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City police rule out sexual assault on Bihar woman in Taramani triple murder case

Munitha Kumari, from Bihar, was murdered along with her husband and their son allegedly by 3 men; her post-mortem report indicated no signs of rape or sexual assault, according to police

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

Based on the post-mortem report, the Greater Chennai Police ruled out sexual assault on Bihar woman Munitha Kumari, who was murdered along with her husband and their two-year-old son by three men from Bihar in Taramani last week.

After a three-day search, the police on Friday recovered the body of the 20-year-old woman from the Perungudi dump yard. The woman was allegedly murdered, along with her husband and their son, on January 24.

Left near a showroom
The case came to light on January 26, when passers-by noticed blood oozing from a gunny bag left near a two-wheeler showroom on Indira Nagar's First Avenue in Adyar and alerted the police.

In the bag, the police found the body of an unidentified man, who was later identified as Gaurav Kumar, a native of Sheikhupura district in Bihar. He had come to Chennai with



The bodies of the deceased were packed in gunny bags and dumped at different locations in the city. The child's body was recovered from the Buckingham Canal near Madhya Kailash. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Stressing that there were no signs of sexual assault, doctors said the woman died of injuries inflicted with an iron rod

his family in search of employment.

Investigations revealed that Gaurav had been staying on the Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) campus in Taramani, after being promised a job by

Sathyender alias Santhosh Kumar, 30, a day watchman at the institute. The police said that on January 24, an altercation broke out when the men were consuming alcohol, following which, Gaurav, his wife, and the child were allegedly assaulted and killed by Santhosh, Lalit Yadav, 40, and Vikash Kumar, 24.

In decomposed state

The bodies were reportedly packed in gunny bags and dumped at different

locations in the city. Earlier, the child's body was recovered from the Buckingham Canal near Madhya Kailash. The woman's body was recovered from the Perungudi dump in a decomposed state and sent to Government Royappetah Hospital for post-mortem.

Police sources said the post-mortem, conducted by a team of doctors, indicated no signs of rape or sexual assault. The doctors said the woman died of injuries inflicted with an iron rod.

60-year-old woman treated for rare tumour

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

A 60-year-old woman with a rare pancreatic tumour, 'insuloma', was successfully treated using advanced technology at a private hospital in the city.

The woman had low blood sugar and frequent episodes of loss of consciousness. Specialised blood tests and targeted endoscopic ultrasound helped locate the tumour, a press release from Kauvery Hospital, Vadapalani, said.

As the tumour measured 1.3 cm and was at the neck of the pancreas, the surgical team used a robotic-assisted approach with robotic intraoperative ultrasound to remove it. The surgery was successful and her blood sugar began to normalise.

P. Basumani, senior consultant and director, Institute of Digestive Sciences, Kauvery Hospital, said, "Specialised blood tests combined with focused endoscopic ultrasound evaluation helped us identify the tumour."

Part of Rajiv Gandhi Salai shut over sewer line repairs

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

A portion of Rajiv Gandhi Salai near the Indira Nagar U-Turn flyover has been cordoned off since Saturday morning after officials noticed a sunken sewage line.



The repairs are expected to be completed by Sunday.

Sources in the Highways Department said that their patrol vehicle noticed an undulation on the road on Friday night. On Saturday morning when the road

was dug, a leak in the sewer line was detected due to the sinking of the pipe. "Efforts must be made to replace the line," he added.

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RISE 18:43	SET 06:49	
TUESDAY, FEB. 03		
RISE 06:35	SET 18:11	
RISE 19:38	SET 07:35	

Chennai Weather	max	min
Thiruvallur	30	16
Chennai Airport	30	20
Chennai City	30	22

Chennai Airport Today
30°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be slightly warm. Night also will be pleasant. Mostly dry weather to persist.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
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Online Booking Starts from 10/02/2026 to 31/03/2026

Navalpattu ADS Trichy	Valavanthankottai ADS, Trichy	Plots	Plots
Total units : 194 (₹1L- 18L) Sizes: 419 - 3487 sq. ft.	Total units : 213 (₹9L- 40L) Sizes: 763 - 3077 sq. ft.	FCFS	Scan for Details

Online Booking Starts from 11/02/2026 to 31/03/2026

Harur SMT Dharmapuri	ADS Phase-III Edapaddi, Salem	S&S Phase-I Navalpattu, Trichy	Plots
Total units : 94 (₹3L- 25L) Sizes: 621 - 1776 sq. ft.	Total units : 135 (₹5L- 69L) Sizes: 388 - 3446 sq. ft.	Total units : 194 (₹1L- 6L) Sizes: 344 - 969 sq. ft.	Plots

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Total units : 14 (₹72L- 88L) Sizes: 883 - 1067 sq. ft.	Total units : 38 (₹77L- 1.20Cr) Sizes: 856 - 1321 sq. ft.	Total units : 6 (₹66L- 72L) Sizes: 896 - 960 sq. ft.	Total units : 6 (₹17L- 18L) Sizes: 444 - 468 sq. ft.

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IN BRIEF



Residents hold walkathon to stress protection of lakes

Residents and members of the Environment Awareness and Protection Association participated in a walkathon on Saturday to raise awareness of the need to protect the Sembakkam and Namangalam lakes. M. Ravi, secretary, Sri Sarvamangala Nagar Residents' Association, said members of various residents' associations in Chitlapakkam took part in the 3-km walkathon. Elected representatives have assured the residents that efforts are being made to cover the areas with an underground sewer network to prevent the pollution of the lakes.

Piped water supply to be hit in five zones of city today

Residents of five zones in the city will not receive piped water supply for 28 hours from the morning of February 1 as Metrowater will take up repairs to a major pipeline on Arcot Road in Porur. Areas, including Mylapore, K.K. Nagar, Ramapuram, Manapakkam, Mugilavakkam, Saidapet, West Mambalam, and Kotturpuram, falling under the Teynampet, Kodambakkam, Valasaravakkam, Alandur, and Adyar zones will be affected between 6 a.m. on February 1 and 10 a.m. on February 2. However, street supply will be maintained and residents may book mobile water supply for their immediate needs.

Palaniswami criticises govt. over violence against women

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Saturday criticised the DMK government for separate incidents of alleged gang rape of two women in the city. Mr. Palaniswami blamed the police for not acting against offenders, for which, he contended, that those in power were responsible.

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1) Construction of New building for Fire and Rescue Services Station at KOTTUR in Thiruvananthapuram District	₹378.06 + GST @ 18%
2) Special repair works to Cell Block 1,2,3 & 4 & entire works of each buildings damaged floors, Cement Plastering and Painting at PUDUKKOTTA DISTRICT JAIL Campus in Pudukkottai District	₹61.69 + GST @ 18%
3) Special repair works to Cell Block 5,6,7 & old age Prisoners Block entire works of each buildings damaged floors, Cement Plastering and Painting at PUDUKKOTTA DISTRICT JAIL Campus in Pudukkottai District	₹45.18 + GST @ 18%

1) For Tender document, visit <https://tntenders.gov.in>
2) Date and Time for downloading and submitting the tender documents : 04.02.2026 from 12.00 Noon to 11.02.2026 upto 06.00 PM
3) Date and time of opening of the e-tender : 13.02.2026 at 11.15 A.M
4) Detailed Tender Notice available in the website www.tnphc.com & www.tnphc.gov.in

DIPR/599/TENDER/2026 **Superintending Engineer,South Circle, TNPHC Ltd**

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No:DULT-TECH/57/2025

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT) invites separate E-bids from qualified consultancies for the services of preparation of Karnataka State Regional Urbanization Plan 2047 for Karnataka. The last date for the receipt of e-bid on the KPPP portal for the tender is 03.03.2026, 5.30pm. The bidders may download the tender documents from <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> web portal. Tender Number is as follows: DULT/2025-26/SE0044

Sd/- Special Officer
Directorate of Urban Land Transport
Urban Development Department

DIPR/CP/5349/Shirdi Sai/2025-26

BANGALORE UNIVERSITY
Jnanabharathi Campus, Bengaluru – 56

No: EX-II/Ph.D. Entrance-Non Entrance/2026 **Date: 31.01.2026**

PRESS RELEASE

Bangalore University invites Application for admission to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) programme 2026 in the prescribed form from the eligible candidates are required to appear for Entrance Test and those who are exempted from taking Entrance Test have to submit their duly filled application. To download Application Form and other details regarding fees, vacancy, procedure for admission etc., candidates shall visit the university website www.bangaloreuniversity.karnataka.gov.in.

a) Online Application Forms Available on the Website : 02.02.2026
b) Last date to apply without fine : 28.02.2026
c) Last date to apply with fine : Rs. 200/- : 07.03.2026
d) Last date to submit hard Copy of Application (to respective Departments) : 11.03.2026.

The Filled Application Form along with proof of fee paid and enclosures shall be sent online and one copy of the filled in Application Form with related documents shall also be sent to the Chairperson/Director, (Concerned Department) Jnanabharathi Campus, Bangalore University, Bengaluru-560 056 on or before 11.03.2026 at 5.00 p.m. by hand/by speed post/courier. Application shall be downloaded only from the website and they will not be provided in the office.

DIPR/CP/5352/Zen/2025-26 **Sd/- REGISTRAR (EVALUATION)**

City sees frequent clashes between dog feeders and residents wary of canines

Animal welfare activists say spaces earmarked by GCC to feed stray dogs are inadequate; a police officer cites high workload due to public pressure and lack of clarity over animal welfare laws

R. Sivaraman
CHENNAI

Frequent clashes are being reported in the city between dog feeders and residents who are wary of community dogs. Feeders often face complaints, harassment, and, in some cases, physical intimidation from neighbours.

Although the Greater Chennai Corporation has earmarked areas for feeding street dogs in each zone, activists say these spaces are inadequate. Recent incidents point to a growing pattern of tension, driven largely by lack of clarity in enforcement and differing views within communities.

Last November, in Avadi, Shanthi, 76, was attacked by Balumurugan, 48, a teacher, when she was feeding stray dogs. When a neighbour rushed to her rescue, he also pushed her to the ground.

Videos of the incident had sparked public outrage.

In November, an Animal Welfare Board officer was confronted by residents of VGN Nagar in Ambattur when he visited the area over a complaint alleging cruelty on stray dogs.

On August 26, a video went viral, showing a policeman threatening legal action against a woman as



Scientific method: Activists say animal birth control is the most effective way to manage the population of stray dogs. FILE PHOTO

she was feeding stray dogs in Thiruvanmiyur Beach. The policeman reportedly faced disciplinary action.

The police are caught between conflicting versions of complaints, limited awareness of animal welfare laws, and rising public pressure, forcing officers to respond without clear guidance.

A senior police officer said, "This places an additional burden on the police, leading to inconsistent response on the ground and, at times, actions that inadvertently escalate tensions. As a result, personnel face increased workload and legal uncertainty while attempting to maintain law and order. We receive numerous calls from the public about the street dog menace and public feeding."

Many residents oppose dog feeding on the streets,

citing several issues. Aruna, secretary of the Kottur Garden Residents Association, said, "Even when we call Corporation dog catchers, they go directly to the dog lovers and say they cannot catch the sterilised dogs. Dogs bark throughout the night, and people are unable to sleep. We do not want to harm animals, but humans are being affected as well. Authorities should relocate street dogs to a separate place and strictly impose fines on pet owners for violations."

S. Vijaykumar, vice-president of the Madipakkam Kubera Nagar Residents Welfare Association, said, "Some even feed coloured biryani, which may be harmful to the dogs' health. Sometimes the dogs do not eat it. Such leftover food attracts mosquitoes and rodents, and no one clears the waste."

Animal welfare activists argued that citizens who lawfully feed dogs are being harassed and threatened.

Arun Prasanna of People For Cattle in India called for better interpretation of dog-bite data. "The figures being cited do not differentiate between pet dogs and community dogs. Using such data to justify hostility towards community dogs or their feeders is scientifically unsound and administratively irresponsible," he said.

A. Saravanan, an activist, from Okkiyam Thorai-pakkam, said that feeders often face resistance in areas such as Anna Nagar, Porur, and Iyyapanthangal due to misunderstandings, and coexistence is possible through community engagement.

"Volunteers must create awareness on how to respond when dogs approach and maintain communication with residents through local groups," he said, adding that food, smell, and witnessing road accidents are common triggers for canine aggression.

Emphasising animal birth control as the most effective population management method, he said, "Removing an entire species from the streets cannot be the solution."

(With inputs from R. Aishwaryaa)

Warmer days likely this month after surplus rain, cool weather in January

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

January ended on a surplus note in Tamil Nadu as the month was interspersed with multiple rain spells amid the delayed withdrawal of Northeast monsoon.

The Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) has forecast that light rainfall may occur in the coastal and Western Ghats districts until February 6. RMC officials said an upper-air cyclonic circulation moving over the Bay of Bengal is likely to bring mild rainfall to the coastal and Western Ghats districts over the next six days. While there is a possibility of fog conditions in northern districts, such as Krishnagiri, Ranipet, and Tiruvallur, until February 4, districts like Erode, Namakkal, and Karur may experience mist cover.



In January, many parts of the State experienced cool weather.

said the State experienced three rainfall spells, interspersed with dry days, in January that lifted the month's total rainfall. The rainfall was due to easterly wave activity and two upper-air cyclonic circulations.

Residents of various places like Chennai also experienced chill weather on many days of January. For instance, Nungambakkam recorded a temperature below 20 degrees Celsius on January 18, and Meenambakkam recorded temperatures below 20 degrees Celsius on three days. There have been years in the past when the minimum temperature dinned lower than this in January.

Ms. Amudha said that though weather observations showed near-normal temperatures, many people felt chilly. This is due to the difference in measurements taken under a protected environment and those directly exposed to the open environment.

tah - S. Kavichelvan. 7.00pm - Jayamangala Krishnamani - Pappu Gnanadev - Karukurichi N. Mohanaram - Adambakkam K. Sankar. All are welcome.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Mega Budget Meeting - "Analysis of Union Budget 2026" Organised by ALL INDIA TAX PAYERS' ASSOCIATION (AITPA) on MONDAY, 2nd February 2026 at 5pm at RANI SEETHAI HALL, 603 Anna Salai, Chennai. Chief Guests: Dr. D. SUDHAKARA RAO, IRS, Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, Chennai; CA. G. RAMASWAMY, Past President, AITPA & Regional Council Member, SIRC of ICAI (2025-2029); Dr. CA. CMA. V. MURALI, Central Council Member & Chairman IFRS Committee, ICMAI and Former Central Council Member, ICAI; Dr. CA. CMA. DIVYA ABHISHEK, Chairperson SIRC of ICMAI (2023-2024) & Chairperson FICCI FLO (2024-2025). NO DELEGATE FEE. All are welcome. Convenor: Audit Dr. CA. CMA. V. MURALI Mob: 9841040010.

SRI PARTHASATHRY SWAMI SABHA (Regd.) Ph: 9944014842/9444358882 40th Anniversary Celebrations of Sri Parvani Sangeeta Sabha dedicated to Saint Thyagaraja. Today 4pm at Raga Sudha Hall: Dhulipala Sai Deekshithar - Vocal with Shree Lakshmin Bhakt & Nachiar Nagaraj. 6.15pm Kamala Deepthi - Vocal with Shraddha Ravindran, Malladi Sri Aravind & D.V. Venkatasubramanian. Series Sponsored by Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. Sponsors: State Bank of India, Sri Rajalakshmi Foundation, Union Bank of India. All are welcome.

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British Council's physical library in Chennai turns its last page

A communication from British Council Chennai says the facility will close on February 15; library services will however continue in an enhanced digital format; the Council will also be shifting to a new space after vacating current address

Liffy Thomas

British Council Library (BCL) is shrinking its physical presence in the city, in fact almost obliterating it, to pay undivided attention to expanding its digital reach. That should not raise eyebrows in the city as the move mirrors the trend across Indian metros.

In Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, and Pune, the BCL shut down its physical libraries in 2020 and went fully digital. Currently, its physical libraries are restricted to its Kolkata and Delhi centres.

In related development, the British Council Chennai (BCC) facility, tucked away behind Devaneya Pavanan District Central Li-



Pages to pixel: The email communication says that it has 16,000 members currently accessing its digital resources. FILE PHOTO

brary on Anna Salai, is set to see a change of address.

The BCC had started preparing its members for these changes. An email communication titled "An important update on Chennai library membership services" notes that its digital-only model will come into effect on March 31, 2026, and members will

have access to the physical library until February 15, 2026. Members are being asked to return their books on or before this date.

Reportedly, this digital transformation mirrors the reading preferences of members. The email communication notes that it has 16,000 members currently accessing its digital

resources. The communication also outlines the online features the library is offering.

The BCC will also be vacating its current Chennai premises when the lease comes to an end in March 2026. "Our Chennai operations will move temporarily to an online mode till we relocate to a more appropriate space, in keeping with our future operating needs," says the note.

It adds, "Please note that while our library will no longer offer a physical service in Chennai, the British Council is not closing in Chennai. Our work in Chennai and Tamil Nadu will continue through digital delivery, partnerships, and flexible operating models."

A senior official from the Directorate of Public

Libraries confirmed that the area currently occupied by BCC belongs to Local Library Authority and they have been asked to vacate it.

Readers disappointed
A disappointed reader who wrote to *The Hindu DownTown* said digital services are no substitute for traditional libraries.

Visitors to the recently-concluded Chennai Book Fair at Nandanam were surprised to see the British Council stall selling books at throwaway prices. Expanding membership of its digital library gained a focal point at the fair.

The Hindu did not get any answers to questions about the transition it posed to the British Council's communications team at the head office in Delhi.



Dog gala: A Siberian Husky undergoes training at the All Breeds Championship Dog Show in Chennai. J. JOHAN SATHYADAS

lar retrievers and hounds to rarer entries such as the Rhodesian Ridgeback and Basenji. The show also spotlighted indigenous breeds.

Ramanan Muthusamy, an owner of three Great Danes, said these shows were among the premier events in the country for showcasing dogs.

Ashwin, who has breeds from Tamil Nadu, said it was only after registering with the Greater Chennai Corporation and the Club that he discovered there were over 100 owners of native breeds in the city.

Selvaraj, a resident of the nearby Tamil Nadu Urban Housing Development Board, attended the show with his three-and-a-half-year-old son. "We are unable to keep such dogs at our premises, but my son loves them," he said.

In the competition, a Siberian Husky owned by Abhijit Dutta and Brueva secured the 'Best in Show' award. An Afghan Hound owned by Praveen Kumar was named the second best.

The grand finale and prize distribution are scheduled for Sunday.

Madras Canine Club hosts 150th championship dog show in city

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Madras Canine Club (MCC) commenced its two-day All Breeds Championship Dog Show on Saturday.

The event features a comprehensive programme including obedience trials and three distinct specialty shows: the Indian Breed National Specialty, the Dobermann National Specialty, and the 19th Great Dane Specialty Show.

An international panel of judges were empanelled – Andi Hudono from Indonesia, Petru Muntean from Romania, Stefan Mitrevski from Macedonia, John Bryson from Australia, and Gerard Jipping and Tatjana Urek Jipping from the Netherlands. Also, the obedience trials are being judged by Manjunath M.R. from India.

Over 40 different breeds from across India participated, ranging from popular

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(Under Provision to Rule 8(6) & 9(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement Rules))
Sale of immovable properties mortgaged to the Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No.54 of 2002) whereas, the Authorized Officer of Indian Overseas Bank has taken possession of the following properties pursuant to the notice issued under Section 13(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 in the following loan account with right to sell the same on 'AS IS WHERE IS BASIS' and 'AS IS WHAT IS BASIS' for realization of Bank's dues plus interest & costs as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power sale of the said properties. The sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform by the service provider M/S PSB Alliance Baanknet and URL <https://baanknet.com>.

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Name & Address of Mortgagors/Guarantors

(1) Mr. Harish Kumar (Legal heir of Deceased Guarantor/Mortgagor Mr. R. Ananda Sivaji) s/o Mr. Ananda Sivaji, R/o H No. 1/190, Siddharth's House, VGP Layout, VGP Lane, 1st Criss Cross street, Pallavakkam, Chennai - 42 (2) Mrs. Naveena (Legal heir of Deceased Guarantor/ Mortgagor Mr. R. Ananda Sivaji) D/o Mr. Ananda Sivaji, D/o H No. 1/190, Siddharth's House, VGP Layout, VGP Lane, 1st Criss Cross street, Pallavakkam, Chennai - 42 (3) Mrs. Aishwarya (Legal heir of Deceased Guarantor /Mortgagor Mr. R. Ananda Sivaji) D/o Mr. R. Ananda Sivaji, R/o H No. 1/190, Siddharth's House, VGP Layout, VGP Lane, 1st Criss Cross street, Pallavakkam, Chennai - 42

Outstanding Dues : Rs.5,54,15,227.17 as on 31.12.2025 + undebited interest + incidental charges with further interest & costs

Description of the immovable property

All the part and parcel of the Land measuring to an extent of 53.09 Cents (after the Government acquiring 2.91 Cents or 1269 Sq.ft of land in T.S.No: 119/2 out of 56 Cents of land for Mount Madipakkam Road widening purposes), situated at Door Nos: 68 and 68-A, Medavakkam Main Road, Bharath Nagar, Madipakkam, Chennai - 600 091, comprised in Survey Nos: 267, 267/9 and 267/9B, T.S.No: 119/1 in Block No: 22, Ward-H of Keelakkattalai Village, previously in Tambaram Taluk, then Alandur Taluk, and Pallavaram Taluk, now merged to Tambaram City Municipal Corporation (Chennai South), standing in the name of Mr. Ananda Sivaji and the land is bounded on the:

North : Property belongs to Mrs. Eswari Ammal , **South :** Property belongs to Mrs. Sarawathi Ammal (Presently Arul Raj Timber Depot), **East :** Medavakkam Main Road , **West :** Property belongs to Mr. Arjunan

For more details please scan the QR code →

Along with the building constructed thereon having built-up area of G.F 6640 Sq.ft, F.F 5460 Sq.ft, and S.F 250 Sq.ft or there abouts and situated within the Registration District of Chennai South and the Sub-Registration District of Pallavaram.

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Inspection of Properties : **03.02.2026 to 19-02-2026** between 10 AM to 5 PM Submission of online application for bid with EMD : **03.02.2026 to 19-02-2026** before 5 pm

Date and time of e-auction: **20.02.2026** between 11AM to 4 PM. with auto extention of 10 minutes each till sale is completed at the platform of M/S PSB ALLIANCE Baanknet portal and URL <https://baanknet.com> .

* Bank's dues have priority over the statutory dues

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KUNDRATHUR: NO.67, THIRUNAGESWARAM VILLAGE, (NEAR MADURAI PANDIYAN HOTEL) PH: 8939913222 / 8939914222

RAJAPALAYAM: PH: 8939913222 / 8939914222

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GUDEVANCHERY: GST ROAD, PH: 8939913222 / 8939914222

MANALI: KAMARAJ SALAI, PH: 8939913222 / 8939914222

POOMALI: VELAVAN NAGAR, OPP TO POLICE STATION, PH: 9962093333 / 9962093333

PALAVARAM: AMMAL MAIN ROAD, PH: 8925866556 / 8925866557 | POONAMALLEE: PH: 8939913222 / 8939914222

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Store Locator



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Specification No.	Tender Inviting Authority	Name of the Work
149	SE / M-II / NCTPS -2	NCTPS II M III AHP Dn PDFAC System Supply Erection dismantling of deteriorated corroded 200 NB

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

DIPR/639/Tender/2026

A promotional banner for 'KALAA UTSAVAM' featuring a yellow brushstroke background. The title 'KALAA UTSAVAM' is in large white letters. Below it are sections for 'CRAFTS | TEXTILES | HOMEDECOR', 'JEWELLERY | FOOD', and exhibition details ('CERC CAMPUS EXHIBITION GROUND', 'kalakshetra Road, Thiruvanmiyur, Chennai 600041'). It includes dates ('30th JAN to 8th FEB 2026'), time ('11 am to 9 pm'), contact information ('9566055040 / 7904989326'), and social media links ('Follow us on /faboo_events'). The banner is framed by various images of traditional Indian crafts and artifacts.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

ADVERTISEMENT OF TENDER

Batch No - 44/25 Dated-30.01.2026

For and on behalf of the President of India, the Principal Chief Materials Manager, East Central Railway invites e-tenders for supply of the following items:

Sl. No : 1, Tender No. : 03253652B, Brief Description: Ring Acithan 2300H, **Quantity:** 250 Nos, **Due Date :** 23.02.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00

Sl. No : 2, Tender No. : 07256035-RgC, Brief Description: RGC tender for various types of Rail Screw to drg No. T-1035, T-10675 & T-4153, **Quantity:** Rail Screw As per tender Schedule, **Due Date :** 23.02.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00

Sl. No : 3, Tender No. : 11251045, Brief Description: Multi grade engine lube oil, 15W40, **Quantity:** 63500.333 Ltr, **Due Date :** 23.02.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00

Sl. No : 4, Tender No. : 04253852, Brief Description: Brake Caliper unit leverage ratio 2.48 for LHB Power car Coaches, **Quantity:** 91Nos, **Due Date :** 19.02.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00

Sl. No : 5, Tender No. : 03250118, Brief Description: Axle box assly complete with Roller Bearing for WAG-7 loco, **Quantity:** 7 Set, **Due Date :** 23.02.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00

Sl. No : 6, Tender No. : 03254599, Brief Description: Set of Roller bearing NEI for WAG7 consisting following items, **Quantity:** 155 Set, **Due Date :** 23.02.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00

Sl. No : 7, Tender No. : 07256002RgC-ISEJ, Brief Description: Running Contract for Improved Switch Expansion Joints, **Quantity:** 265 Set, **Due Date :** 23.02.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00

Note: All the above-mentioned tenders are e-tenders and all tenderers are requested to submit their bids on-line through the IREPS website at www.ireps.gov.in.

All corrigendum to above-mentioned tenders shall also be published online in IREPS website only. For more details regarding the above-mentioned tenders and other supply tenders please visit IREPS website.

Assistant Materials Manager (E)
E.C. Railway, Hajipur

PR/1721/HQ/STORE/T/25-26/60

REGIONAL DEPUTY REGISTRAR (HOUSING) SALEM CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY PROPERTIES FOR SALE		
e-TENDER NOTICE		
S.No.	Tender Reference	Property Details
1.	ECOBSL/AA377/2026	<p>THE ELAVAMALAI CO-OPERATIVE BUILDING SOCIETY LTD., Owned Property at Erode District, Perundurai Taluk, Mugasipidariyur Village in Kumaran Co operative Nagar Layout Vacant House Plots for Sale.</p> <p>Contact : 9994361990 & 0424-2230788</p>
Tender Document Available		https://tntenders.gov.in
Bid Submission Start Date and Time		01-02-2026 09:00 AM
Bid Submission End Date and Time		16-02-2026 09:00 AM
Bid Opening Date and Time		17-02-2026 10:00 AM
DIPR/130/DISPLAY/2026		DEPUTY REGISTRAR (HOUSING), SALEM


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A Knowledge Conclave by Kerala Tourism & The Hindu Group

DAY 2

10:30 am onwards
Inaugural Address by Shri Pinarayi Vijayan,
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala

Keynote Address by N Ram, Director, The Hindu Group
12:30 pm - 1:20 pm
Vision Kerala for All: Shaping the Future of Kerala Tourism

Suman Billa IAS & CSE

Lunch
2:20 pm - 3:00 pm

Seeing Travel Differently: Navigating the World without Sight

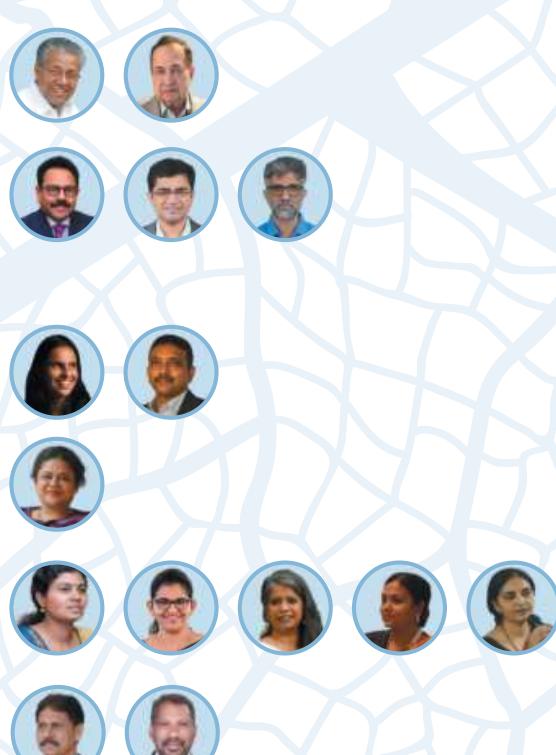
Tiffany Brar in conversation with Vijaya Kumar K C

Accessibility Isn't Charity, It's India's USD 1 Trillion GDP Boost

Presentation by Sminu Jindal

Gender Inclusivity at the Heart of Tourism

Sikha Surendran IAS, Dr Preeja Rajan, Monolita Chatterjee & Soity Banerjee in conversation with Saraswathy Nair



4:50 pm - 5:40 pm

Accessible Hospitality: Rethinking Hotels, Resorts and Public Venues

Ganga Dileep, Jose Dominic & Dileep Kumar P I
in conversation with Saraswathy Nagarajan

5:40 pm - 6:30 pm

Digital and Tech Innovation in Inclusive and Accessible Tourism

Anoop Ambika, Saidarshan Bhagat & Robin Tommy
in conversation with Sameer Basu

6:30 pm - 7:20 pm
International Spotlight: How Leading Countries

Built Accessible Tourism Circuits

Chironjit Ganguly & Priyantha Peiris
in conversation with Varghese K George



February 1, 2026 | Grand Hyatt, Kochi



The logo for Svayam, featuring a stylized red and blue circular design with the word "Svayam" written in a bold, sans-serif font below it.

Scan to watch the event live or log into
<https://newsth11ive.KFALSDT.com>

From Page One

Stalin slams Centre for dismantling MGNREGA

"They could not provide even 50 days of work under the existing law, and now they are promising 125 days of work. It is a trick, pure illusion," he said. Mr. Stalin voiced concern that the new scheme would place 40% of the financial burden on the States. "This is a punishment for Tamil Nadu's success in poverty eradication. Because our State has performed well, the Centre is trying to slash our benefits and force us to pay more. We will not be a silent spectator," he said.

Using the Union government's Economic Survey to reject Governor R.N. Ravi's criticisms, he pointed out that while the Governor had frequently criticised the State's industrial climate, the Centre's report ranked Tamil Nadu first in the manufacturing sector employment and praised its women-centric labour policies. "The Governor should read the reports provided by the Union government before framing his criticism," he said.

'Promises unkept'

Mr. Stalin questioned whether AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami had fulfilled any of the promises he had made in the two previous elections. "They spoke of a coastal road project from Chennai to Kanniyakumari. Did they execute it? They promised an 'aero park' in southern Tamil Nadu... They promised free bus passes for those aged above 58," he said. They promised mobile phones for all ration card-holders, Wi-Fi at public places, and 'Amma two-wheeler repair training centres' in all panchayat unions. Did they even talk of these promises when they were in power, he asked. However, they had now come up with a fresh set of promises.

He dismissed the Opposition's promises as "copies and lies" and contrasted them with the DMK's record of fulfilling 90% of its poll promises, including *Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thogai* and free bus travel for women. "I see the confidence in your faces. That confidence is the foundation for 'Dravidian Model Government 2.0.' We are not just running a government; we are protecting a civilisation," he said.

The Government Law College has been built at Kazhankaval at a cost of ₹100 crore. Spread across 19 acres, the college is designed to accommodate 1,300 students. He also inaugurated new buildings for the Chettinad Agriculture College and Research Institute at Kanadukathan, built at a cost of ₹61.79 crore on a 330-acre campus. The college auditorium was named after Bharat Ratna C. Subramanian, who played a key role in India's Green Revolution, following a request from former Union Minister P. Chidambaram. The Chief Minister also inaugurated a ₹28-crore TIDEL Neo Park at Karaikudi.

Ministers K.N. Nehru, M.R.K. Panneerselvam, K.K.S.R. Ramachandran, Thangam Thennarasu, S. Regupathy, K.R. Periyakaruppan, R.S. Raja Kannappan, Siva V. Meyyanathan, and T.R.B. Rajaa, Mr. Chidambaram, Sivaganga MP Karti Chidambaram, and Sivaganga Collector K. Porkodi were present at the event.

IN BRIEF



Senior BJP leader recovering well after treatment for stroke

Senior BJP leader H. Raja, who suffered a stroke, is now being treated at Apollo Hospitals, Greams Road, according to a bulletin from the hospital on Saturday. The bulletin noted that Mr. Raja has been recovering well with supportive care. He was hurried to the hospital after collapsing on Friday evening while at an event.

'Suspicious angle' in C.J. Roy's death to be probed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru police on Friday registered an Unnatural Death Report (UDR) in connection with the death of businessman and Confident Group founder C.J. Roy, who allegedly shot himself at his office while Income Tax officials were completing raid formalities, even as his family blamed pressure from the raids for the incident.

C.J. Babu, brother of Roy, blamed Income Tax officials for the death. However, T.A. Joseph, managing director of the Confident Group, who lodged the complaint, did not directly blame or implicate the I-T Department, though he mentioned past raids and expressed suspicion, sources said.

The police have registered the UDR, which mandates police probe into suspicious, accidental, or suicidal deaths. Police sources said Roy shot himself by placing a pistol to his chest on Friday. He was taken to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him "brought dead".

Speaking to presspersons, Home Minister G. Parameswara said he had directed the police to conduct an inquiry into the events before and after the incident and examine what prompted Roy to take the extreme step. He said the police would decide whether to summon I-T officials based on the probe.

(For those in distress, counselling is available at Tele MANAS 14416.)

YSRCP leader held, his house attacked over remarks on CM

Police lodge two FIRs against former MLA who had dismissed Naidu's statement that ghee used by TTD for making laddus contained animal fat; TDP says that the comment was a factual disclosure

The Hindu Bureau
GUNTUR

After former MLA Ambati Rambabu made remarks against Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for the statements he made in 2024 regarding ghee used by the TTD, activists of the ruling TDP attacked the former legislator's house on Saturday. He was arrested on Saturday night on the charges of violating the law by creating hurdles for the police.

Mr. Rambabu announced on Friday that he would pull down a flexi banner erected by the TDP at Gorantla highlighting the ghee adulteration issue, while dismissing Mr. Nai-



TDP workers burning the effigy of YSRCP leader Ambati Rambabu in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

du's statements made in late 2024 as baseless and politically motivated.

However, the TDP firmly endorsed Mr. Naidu's statement that the ghee used by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) for making laddus contained animal fat. It said in a press release

that the CM's statement was not merely a political comment but a factual disclosure based on the July 2024 test report of the National Dairy Development Board's (NDDB's) Centre of Analysis & Learning in Livestock and Food (CALF). On Saturday, Mr. Ram-

babu tried to go to the spot where the banner had been erected, but TDP activists stopped his vehicle, leading to heated confrontation. The police intervened, but during the exchange, Mr. Rambabu allegedly made derogatory remarks against Mr. Naidu, angering the activists further. While the police escorted him away, a group of TDP workers later reached his residence at Navabharat Nagar and ransacked it.

The police lodged two FIRs against Mr. Rambabu, one for creating trouble for the on-duty police personnel and another for criticising the CM and "using provocative language" to create law and order issues by encouraging group clashes.

15.91 lakh applications received for Kerala SIR

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A little over 15.91 lakh people have applied so far for enrolment after the start of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral roll in Kerala. The deadline for the claims and objections period ended on January 30 in the State.

The total number included 13.70 lakh applications filed through Form 6 and 2.21 lakh applications through Form 6A, accord-

ing to data released by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (Kerala). Form 6 is for new voters, while Form 6A applies to overseas electors among Indian citizens. Of these, 3.72 lakh Form 6 applications and 32,925 Form 6A applications filed prior to the publication of the draft roll on December 23, 2025.

"All claims, objections, and applications received during this period will be scrutinised and disposed of in accordance with the

prescribed procedures, and approved applications will be incorporated in the final electoral roll to be published on February 21," CEO Rathan U. Kelkar has said.

Citizens can continue to submit applications/forms even after the January 30 deadline.

On Thursday, the CEO's office announced that 12,462 people had been excluded from the rolls. This included people who had passed away during the SIR.

enumeration phase, individuals who had relinquished Indian citizenship and those who had shifted to other States or constituencies.

Meanwhile, the ruling Left Democratic Front will take out protest marches to the Kerala CEO's office in Thiruvananthapuram and election offices in districts on February 2 seeking correction of the reported anomalies in the voters' list published following the SIR.

Local residents raised concerns over the poor living conditions of contract workers, pointing out that many labour sheds lack basic safety measures.

Kerala to reduce 25% syllabus in schools from next year

The Hindu Bureau
KOLLAM

Kerala General Education Minister V. Sivankutty has announced plans to reduce the academic workload of school students.

"The Curriculum Committee has approved a 25% reduction in the syllabus for various classes without changing the textbook content. This will be implemented from next academic year," said Mr. Sivankutty in Kollam on Saturday, while attending an event organised to hand over a house constructed for the family of Mithun, a

student who died of electrocution from a power line last year.

Mr. Sivankutty added that Kerala is the first State to introduce medical insurance coverage for students from Classes I to XII. "This coverage is provided without collecting any premium contribution from the 43 lakh students in the State. The scheme provides financial assistance of up to ₹3 lakh for fatal injuries and up to ₹20,000 for outpatient treatment," he said. He also said nearly four crore textbooks were distributed on time to school students in Kerala.

Vellathooval Stephen, ex-Naxal from Kerala, dies

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Vellathooval Stephen, one of the stalwarts of the Naxalite movement in Kerala, passed away at his residence in Vadattupura, near Kothamangalam, Kerala on Saturday. He was 86.

One of the founding leaders of the Naxal movement in Kerala, he played an active role in the Thalassery police station attack in 1968, following which he went absconding. In hiding, he remained active in the movement before being arrested in 1971. He turned to evangelism during his 15 years in jail. He published several books including the much-read autobiography *Vellathooval Stephen Athmakatha*.

Guinness record for Chittoor as Naidu gives 5,555 e-cycles

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday said Chittoor has created history by entering the Guinness World Records for achieving the largest mass distribution of electric cycles within 24 hours. The Chief Minister distributed 5,555 e-cycles in the Kuppam Assembly constituency to members of Women's groups. Addressing the beneficiaries, Mr. Naidu said the initiative reflected the State government's emphasis on clean energy-driven transportation and innovation-led development.

7 held as ganja worth ₹9.5 cr. seized at Hyderabad airport

Seven persons, including four international passengers arriving from Bangkok, were arrested after the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence seized 27.15 kg of hydroponic weed valued at around ₹9.5 crore at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad. Acting on intelligence inputs from DRI's Hyderabad and Chennai zonal units, officers intercepted four Indian passengers who landed from Bangkok along with three associates and recovered the contraband from their baggage. All seven were taken into custody and probe is under way.

Cluster of megalithic burials identified in Andhra Pradesh

A distinctive cluster of megalithic burials featuring rare dolmens with deliberately sloping capstones has been identified at Pedda Anupu Chenchu Colony in Palnadu district of Andhra Pradesh, pointing to a locally evolved variant of South India's megalithic tradition in the Lower Krishna Valley. The site, located barely 100 metres from the Chenchu tribal hamlet of Pedda Anupu and about 5 km from the historic Nagarjunakonda complex, was surveyed in detail on November 30, 2025. The researchers urged greater public awareness to protect the site.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE FOR SIGNALLING WORK

Tender No.: 757-ST-CON-R-DCTC-PKG2, Date: 23.01.2026. Work: Signaling and Telecommunication work" (A) Provision of DC track circuit in parallel with MSDAC in station yard (B) (I) Miscellaneous signaling and telecom works for supply/shifting, installation and commissioning of MSDAC for existing 3 lines in new buildings for NI works. (II) Earthing and Bonding arrangements, TAN for digital axle counter, Fire-alarm and detection system in auto hubs, and other works (III) Electronic interlocking works for interlocking of RJD good-shed and FCI connectivity; Indoor and Outdoor works for 4th line connectivity towards Raipur end; in connection with commissioning of 4th line from Bhilai to Bhilai Nagar & Rajnandgaon to Dongargarh of Raipur and Nagpur division in South East Central Railway. Tender Value: ₹ 22,59,27,137/- (₹ Twenty Two Crore Fifty Nine Lakhs Twenty Seven Thousand One hundred Thirty Seven Only). Earnest Money Deposit: ₹ 12,79,600/- (₹ Twelve Lakhs Seventy Nine Thousand Six Hundred Only).

Closing of Tender: Upto 10.45 hours on 13.02.2026.

For further details/eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above work, please contact office of the Dy. CSTE(Con) South East Central Railway, Raipur or refer/download tender document which is available on our website: www.ireps.gov.in.

Dy. Chief Signal Tele. Engg.(Con)
CPR/10/651
f South East Central Railway X@secrel

Four migrant workers found dead in shed in Karnataka

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Four migrant workers from Assam working for a private company were found dead under mysterious circumstances inside a labour shed in Muthsandra village of Hoskote taluk, on the outskirts of Bengaluru, on Saturday.

The deceased have been identified as Jayant Sindhe, 25, Neerendranath, 24, Doctor Tide, 25 and Dhananjay Tide, 20. All four were employed at a soft drinks warehouse and were staying in a labour shed located close to their workplace.

According to the police, the men were reportedly sleeping inside the shed when the incident occurred. Preliminary investigation suggests that the deaths may have been caused due to suffocation.

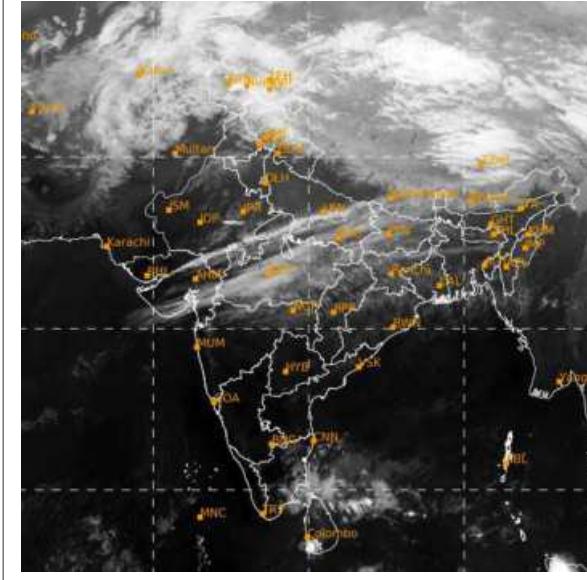
Police said the workers had allegedly cooked food inside the shed on Friday night after closing doors and windows. Investigators suspect that poor ventilation may have led to oxygen depletion or inhalation of toxic fumes, resulting in their deaths.

The police have filed an Unnatural Death Report and a probe is under way to see whether there was negligence on the part of the employer or contractor in providing unsafe accommodation to the workers.

Local residents raised concerns over the poor living conditions of contract workers, pointing out that many labour sheds lack basic safety measures.

WEATHER WATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.45 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Thunderstorm with hailstorm/lightning & gusty winds likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttarakhund, Uttarakhand, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. Dense fog likely at isolated places over Odisha

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	28.2	12.4	12.4	Kozhikode	33.4	24.0	24.0
Ahmedabad	30.8	18.6	18.6	Kurnool	33.0	19.2	19.2
Aizawl	25.8	13.0	13.0	Lucknow	18.7	8.8	8.8
Allahabad	22.7	9.0	9.0	Madurai	33.0	19.4	19.4
Bengaluru	29.4	15.4	15.4	Mangalore	34.3	21.5	21.5
Bhopal	26.6	21.0	21.0	Mumbai	29.5	21.7	21.7
Bhubaneswar	29.6	16.8	16.8	Mysuru	30.2	14.0	14.0
Chandigarh	20.7	7.7	7.7	New Delhi	21.5	6.7	6.7
Chennai	30.3	12.4	12.4	Patna	22.0	12.2	12.2
Port Blair	31.6	18.0	18.0	Puducherry	30.6	25.3	25.3
Dehradun	25.1	12.4	12.4	Pune	31.8	19.9	19.9
Gangtok	15.2	8.4	8.4	Raipur	31.3	17.2	17.2
Guwahati	25.7	12.5	12.5	Ranchi	25.8	12.0	12.0
Hubballi	32.0	16.0	16.0	Shillong	16.5	6.1	6.1
Hyderabad	28.6	18.6	18.6	Shimla	16.6	6.5	6.5
Imphal	25.5	5.8	5.8	Srinagar	10.8	0.1	0.1
Jaipur	23.0	12.7	12.7	Thiruvananthapuram	34.3	22.4	22.4
Kochi	30.8	24.6	24.6	Tiruchi	30.5	18.6	18.6
Kohima	17.4	7.2	7.2	Vijayawada	29.5	20.2	20.2
Kolkatta	26.7	16.6	16.6	Visakhapatnam	29.8	21.5	21.5

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Rainfalls in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	111	108	51	182	176	4.00 p.m., Bhavdi
Bengaluru	6	21	38	119	179	Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 349 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 31
Chennai	9	18	—	81	131	
Delhi	10	226	89	389	386	
Hyderabad	5	12	72	114	128	
Kolkata	20	41	35	190	159	

From Page One

Sunetra Pawar sworn in as Maharashtra Dy. CM



In this screenshot from a video dated January 17, 2026, Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar during a meeting held at Baramati on potential reunification of their parties. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah congratulated Ms. Pawar following the swearing-in. "I am confident she will work tirelessly for the welfare of the people of the state and fulfil the vision of the late Ajitdada Pawar," Mr. Modi posted on social media.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Patel and Mr. Tatkare met Ms. Pawar at Devgiri, joined by a few other NCP leaders. None responded to queries about the proposed reunification of NCP and NCP (SP).

'Merger was to be announced on Feb. 12'
Mr. Pawar said earlier in Baramati that reunification talks between Ajit Pawar and NCP (SP) leaders had been going on for the last six months but were halted due to Ajit Pawar's accident. When asked if he was open to joining hands with the BJP he said, "What is the relation of the BJP? In the talks we had (between Ajit Pawar and NCP (SP) leaders), there was no discussion about it." The statements are significant against the backdrop of the differences within the NCP and between the NCP and the NCP (SP), over the issue.

After Ajit Pawar's sudden demise, several leaders from the NCP factions demanded reunification. "Both Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare want to change things here and decide everything hurriedly to keep Pawar Saheb out of it," a senior NCP leader told *The Hindu*, requesting anonymity.

An NCP (SP) leader asked why the oath-taking ceremony was held when the entire State was still mourning over Ajit Pawar's death.

Sources close to the Pawar family said that they were glad that they were neither a part of the process nor were they invited to the event. NCP (SP) leader Jayant Patil claimed that his party leaders had met Ajit Pawar several times, and had planned to announce the merger on February 12.

Taking forward the comprehensive plan to end Gaza conflict a shared priority: Jaishankar

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

Ending the violence in the Gaza Strip is a "shared priority" for the world, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Saturday, welcoming representatives and Ministers at the second India-Arab Foreign Ministers' meeting.

Delivering the inaugural address at the meeting, which came ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's expected visit to Israel later this month, Mr. Jaishankar expressed India's support for ending the violence in Gaza as well as in other regions such as Sudan, Libya and Lebanon.

"Taking forward the comprehensive plan to end the Gaza conflict is today a widely shared priority. Va-



Narendra Modi, centre, with the Foreign Ministers and delegations of the Arab League, in New Delhi. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, left, and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval are seen. PTI

rious countries have made policy declarations on peace plan, individually or collectively. This is the larger context in which we deliberate on the region's challenges and prospects," said Mr. Jaishankar. He also mentioned the attempts at peace building in Gaza during the October 2025

Sharm-el-Sheikh Peace

Summit, which was followed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2803 that supported the idea of a 'transitional administration' and authorised the setting up of an International Stabilisation Force (ISF) for ending the conflict that has killed at least

72,000 Palestinians. India started 2026 by engaging major powers in the Arab world in security and foreign policy dialogue. On January 19, New Delhi hosted UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. It was followed by a meeting in Riyadh between Indian

and Saudi Arabian officials on security matters. India's presence in conflict-hit Yemen has also witnessed some improvement as India opened a facility in Yemen's Aden last October. The conflict in Yemen also found mention in Mr. Jaishankar's speech, where the threat posed by the Houthi is to international shipping was indirectly mentioned as an "additional implication" of the conflict in Yemen.

Mr. Jaishankar said multiple conflicts in the Arab world stretching from Libya to Sudan to Gaza "impacts us all, and India as a proximate region".

The second India-Arab Foreign Ministers' meeting was attended by a number of foreign ministers and representatives from the Arab world.

PDP prevented from protesting against shawl seller's assault

The Hindu Bureau

SRINAGAR

The Opposition People's Democratic Party's (PDP) protest march over the thrashing of Kashmiris outside J&K, PDP leaders assembled at the party headquarters in Srinagar. However, PDP leaders said the security forces disallowed them to step outside the office premises.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti reacted sharply to the police action. "When a young Kashmiri shawl seller is almost beaten to death in Uttarakhand, no one comes to his rescue. But when the PDP attempts a peaceful protest, the entire police machinery is unleashed to crush the march," Ms. Mufti said.

She said Kashmiris were caged within J&K and thrashed when they step out to earn a living. "Where are Kashmiris supposed to go from here? Are they even allowed to exist in New India?" she added.

Odisha Cabinet clears ₹17,250-cr. manufacturing complex project

Satyasundar Barik

BHUBANESWAR



Mohan Charan Majhi

vanced Materials Private Limited, and an industrial component casting and forging unit by Bharat Forge, the State government said in a statement.

Job generation

Addressing a press conference after the Cabinet

meeting, Chief Secretary Anu Garg said the project is expected to generate more than 4,800 direct and about 5,500 indirect jobs during construction and initial operations, with total employment projected to exceed 20,000 as vendor parks and ancillary ecosystems scale up.

The government said the project would strengthen Odisha's position in strategic materials such as titanium and speciality steel, boost downstream value addition within the State, and reduce dependence on imports for critical components and advanced materials.

India denies Epstein claim of U.S. role in PM's 2017 Israel visit

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Union government on Saturday denied the contents of newly released emails from the late financier and sex-offender Jeffrey Epstein, which claimed that U.S. President Donald Trump had played a role in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel in 2017, referring to the mails as "trashy ruminations by a convicted criminal".

In more than a dozen

mails and phone messages

released by the U.S. government on Friday, Epstein referred to India and Mr. Modi, expressing a desire to enhance U.S.-India engagement. He claimed he would set up a meeting with the Prime Minister for

Trump associate Steve Bannon,

shortly after the

2019 general election.

Epstein also appeared to be engaged in correspondence with businessman Anil Ambani about many of these issues.

The Opposition, includ-

ing the Congress, called for

an explanation from the

government regarding the

allegations, terming them

a "national shame".

Epstein had linked a

Modi-Trump meeting

on June 25 to 26,

2017 to PM's Israel

visit from July 4 to 6

on Saturday. "Beyond the fact of the Prime Minister's official visit to Israel in July 2017, the rest of the allusions in the email are little more than trashy ruminations by a convicted criminal, which deserve to be dismissed..."

The move came a day after the parents of the girl met Bihar Director-General of Police (DGP) Vinay Kumar at his residence, alleging that the police were trying to hush up the case by denying sexual assault and claiming that it was a case of suicide. High drama was witnessed outside the residence of the DGP during the meeting.

On Friday, the mother of the girl told the media that the investigation was not being conducted properly and alleged that the police were not acting impartially. She also said that attempts were being made to suppress the case.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) was constituted on January 16 on the orders of the State government, soon after the post-mortem report dated January 12 surfaced in the public domain. It noted "physical injuries and marks of violence on the body", and stated that "sexual violence cannot be ruled out".

On January 25, Patna Senior Superintendent of Police issued a press note stating that on January 10, the family members of the deceased provided some of the clothes of the girl to the police, which were sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) following due legal procedure.

Trinamool Congress MP Sagarika Ghosh called the so-called Epstein files that has a reference to the Prime Minister and his visit to Israel, the MCA spokesperson said in a statement.

"We have seen reports of an email message from the

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Assam CM dragging SC into his anti-Miya narrative: Congress

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi on Saturday said that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had gone quiet after being reminded that he was dragging the Supreme Court into his anti-Miya narrative.

Miya, a respectful term elsewhere in India, is a pejorative used often in Assam to mean Bengali-speaking Muslims or people from Bangladesh who entered the country illegally.

The Chief Minister, on January 29, asserted that the Bharatiya Janata Party government would continue to cause trouble to the *Miya*, and that they did not have the right to vote in Assam. He said his statements were grounded in the observations made by the Supreme Court. He also cited the court's "warning of a silent and demographic invasion of Assam".

Mr. Gogoi said the Chief Minister had "become quiet" after he publicly raised the issue of contempt of the Supreme Court. He also said the rest of the BJP ran on "rhetoric and screenshots" and ran "the risk of contempt too".

The Jorhat MP pointed out that when a court cited a report relied on by a party, it did not make the language of that report the



Gaurav Gogoi
court's "own words".

Clear case of contempt

"Attributing it to the Supreme Court is a clear case for contempt," Mr. Gogoi said, adding that the court's said observation was related to former Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal's case that led to the scrapping of the controversial Illegal Migrants (Deterrence) by Tribunal Act.

The court's observations were being twisted to create a misleading narrative, he said.

Mr. Gogoi said that misrepresenting the Supreme Court's observations was not a minor political lapse but a serious institutional offence when done by constitutional authorities, and could corrode public trust in the judiciary.

Mr. Sarma retaliated saying that the Congress was "obsessed" with *Miya* while ignoring the interests and identity of the "Asomia" (Assamese) people.

Real satisfaction when BJP wins in Bengal: Shah

Accusing Trinamool of 'institutionalising corruption', Union Home Minister says the 'Mamata Banerjee government in West Bengal is the most corrupt government in the entire country'

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Emphasising that the founder of Jana Sangh and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Syama Prasad Mookerjee hailed from West Bengal, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the BJP and National Democratic Alliance (NDA) had governments in 21 States and Union Territories, but real satisfaction would come only when the BJP won the West Bengal Assembly election.

"The BJP and NDA have governments in 21 States, but it does not matter. On this land of Bengal, 60 of our workers were killed by Trinamool Congress goons. Can the BJP workers tolerate this? Even after forming governments in 21 States, there is no satisfaction for BJP workers and our Prime Minister. A smile will come on their faces when there is a BJP government in West Bengal," the Home Minister said at a public meeting at Siliguri in north Bengal.

During the day, Mr. Shah addressed two public meetings at Siliguri in north Bengal and Barrackpore in south Bengal. In Siliguri, the BJP leader said that the party would sweep all Assembly



Home Minister Amit Shah during BJP workers meeting, at Barrackpore on Saturday. BJP West Bengal President Samik Bhattacharya and BJP Leader Suvendu Adhikari are also present. ANI

seats in north Bengal in the upcoming polls. The Assembly polls in West Bengal are likely to be held in the next few months.

Accusing the Trinamool Congress of "institutionalising corruption", Mr. Shah said the "Mamata Banerjee government in West Bengal is the most corrupt government in the entire country".

The BJP leader also accused the Trinamool Congress of opposing a discussion on *Vande Mataram* in Parliament to appease "infiltrators" who were the vote bank of the party.

At both public meetings,

Mr. Shah accused the State government of not providing land for fencing along the Bangladesh border.

"The infiltration happening from West Bengal is a matter of national security," Mr. Shah said, adding that those who infiltrated from the State got their fake documents made in the State and spread in different parts of the country.

Mr. Shah said that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was opposed to the SIR (special intensive revision) as the process was removing "infiltrators" from electoral rolls. "We will ensure that discrepancies are re-

moved from electoral rolls," he said.

Emphasising the strategic importance of the area called chicken's neck near Siliguri, the Home Minister said that some people had raised slogans to cut off the chicken's neck.

"Some time ago, some people raised slogans in Delhi that they wanted to cut off the chicken's neck.

Mr. Shah said that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was opposed to the SIR (special intensive revision) as the process was removing "infiltrators" from electoral rolls. "We will ensure that discrepancies are re-

'Kerala for All': final day to discuss future of tourism

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The second day of 'Kerala for All', the two-day knowledge conclave on inclusive and accessible tourism jointly organised by Kerala Tourism and *The Hindu*, will be structured around governance, institutional direction, innovation, and sector-wide implementation.

Building on the conceptual and design-led discussions on the opening day, Day Two brings policymakers, administrators, practitioners, and industry leaders together to outline pathways to embed inclusive thinking into the future of Kerala's tourism landscape.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will inaugurate the conference at Hotel Grand Hyatt at 11 a.m.

N. Ram, Director, *The Hindu Group*, will deliver a special address at the session.

The inaugural session will set the policy tone for the day, signalling the State's intent to move from dialogue to long-term structural change.

The first session, "Vision Kerala for all: shaping the future of Kerala Tourism", will bring together Suman Billa, Additional Secretary and Director-General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and K. Biju, Secretary, Kerala Tourism.

On accessible tourism

A session titled "Seeing travel differently: navigating the world without sight" will centre on the perspectives of visually challenged travellers, highlighting challenges related to wayfinding, information access, and public infrastructure.

The broader social dimensions of tourism will be examined in "Gender



inclusivity at the heart of tourism", which brings together voices from government, international organisations, and design practice.

A presentation on "Inclusive tourism through a neurodiverse lens" will examine how tourism environments, from hotels to public spaces, can be overwelming or exclusionary, and will outline approaches for designing more accommodating and responsive systems.

The session on "International spotlight: how leading countries built accessible tourism circuits" will draw on global case studies to examine how accessibility has been integrated into destination planning elsewhere.

Technology and innovation will take centre stage in "Digital and tech innovation in inclusive and accessible tourism".

The session "Accessible hospitality: Rethinking hotels, resorts and public venues" will bring together hospitality leaders and practitioners to examine how inclusive principles can be translated into design, operations, and guest experience.

Together, the sessions aim to consolidate the conclave's deliberations into a forward-looking framework. Svayam, a leading Indian non-profit championing barrier-free and inclusive environments, is the knowledge partner for the event.



Bharat Jodo Yatra will be cherished for decades: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

On the third anniversary of the completion of the Rahul Gandhi-led Kanniyakumari-to-Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra, Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh, in post on social media platform X on Saturday, recalled how the yatra's central message focused on "sharpening economic inequalities, deepening social polarisation, and increasing political authoritarianism" in the past 12 years.

Mr. Ramesh on Saturday said the Bharat Jodo Yatra that covered 4,000 km across 12 States was "a profoundly transformative event in our country's politics".

"It will be recalled and cherished for decades to come," the Congress leader added.

Economy in a free fall; will Union Budget offer real solutions: Congress chief

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Mallikarjun Kharge

A day before Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will table the Union Budget, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday stressed that the Narendra Modi government could not hide behind the excuse of "legacy".

"Their own legacy has pushed the economy into an unprecedented mess. Will this Budget offer real solutions to the multiple economic indicators that are now in free fall," Mr. Kharge asked in an X post. He shared a video of comparative analysis of growth under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, headed by the Congress, and the Modi government.

He said manufacturing growth had declined from an average of 7.4% during the UPA years to 3.54% under the current government, while the sector's share in GDP remained stuck at about 13%, well short of the 25% target promised under the "Make in India" programme.

Only one in two graduates was employable. Unemployment among young women stood at 26.3% and

among young men at 15.8%, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey and the India Skills Report.

He pointed to a sharp slowdown in exports, saying that India's share in global trade had fallen to its lowest in 80 years.

Mr. Kharge said household savings had declined from 7.4% to 5.3%, according to official estimates.

Rising food inflation, falling two-wheeler sales and an increase in personal loans reflected weakening middle-class consumption, he said. On infrastructure, he cited the Economic Survey to say that 51% of the annual highway construction target remained incomplete.

"The mess is yours, the legacy is yours. Now, show us the solution if you have one," he said.

Modi to visit Punjab today to unveil renamed airport

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH



Narendra Modi

To celebrate the 649th birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas, the renaming of Adampur airport in Jalandhar district as 'Sri Guru Ravidas Ji' Airport. The Prime Minister will also inaugurate the terminal building at Halwara Airport in Ludhiana.

To celebrate the 649th birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas, the renaming of Adampur airport honours the revered saint and social reformer..., an official statement said.

Mr. Modi will be at Dera Sach Khand Ballan at Balwan village and will meet Sant Nirjan Dass, who was recently named for the Padma Shri. The visit assumes political significance, pointing to the par-

Major police reshuffle in West Bengal ahead of Assembly election

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

In a major reshuffle of the West Bengal police, senior IPS officer Peeyush Pandey has been appointed Director-General and Inspector-General of Police (DGP) in charge.

Mr. Pandey, a 1993-batch officer, will take up the post of DGP following the superannuation of incumbent Rajeev Kumar on Saturday. The reshuffle comes months ahead of the Assembly election in West Bengal.

Praveen Kumar Tripathi, Commissioner of Police, Howrah, has been posted as Commissioner of Police, Barrackpore.

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF T.G. LIMITED
6-1-50, Corporate Office, Mint Compound, Hyderabad - 63
Expression of Interest Notice (Paper Notification)

TGSPCL invites interested firms to submit their Expression of Interest proposals along with presentation at 11:00 Hrs. on 17.02.2026 at corporate office, TGSPCL for laying of optical fiber cable in the ducts proposed in UG Cabling works in GHMC area along the main roads.

Phone: 040-23431321, E-mail: cgmproj@tgspclpower.org

Website: tgspclpower.org Sd/-Chief Engineer/Projects

TGSPCL:Hyderabad Ref ID: R.O.N.6.1116-PPICL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2026-26 DT:31.01.2026

KSEB KERALA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED E-TENDER NOTICE
O/o the Chief Engineer (Distribution Central), Ernakulam.

E-Tender ID No. 2026_KSEB_829956_1, PAC Rs.3,40,20,713/- Last Date: 07.02.2026 04.00 pm

O/o the Executive Engineer, Generation Division, Parinkalkuthu, Thrissur.

E-Tender ID No. 2026_KSEB_832019_1, PAC Rs.1,06,52,000/- Last Date: 02.03.2026 05.00 pm

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE

O/o the Executive Engineer, Transmission Division, Nedumkandam, Idukki.

E-Tender ID No. 2026_KSEB_826640, PAC Rs.1,98,79,969,74/- Last Date: 06.02.2026 03.00 pm

Visit: www.etenders.kerala.gov.in and www.kseb.in

Ref : PR/MC1/E597/E-tender/2026

Directorate, Mines & Geology, Udaipur (Raj.)
File No- Dir/PO/2024-25 Date:- 15.01.2026

NIT No.: 06/2025-26

Bids for Manual Hydraulic Core Splitter, Ball Mill and WD-XRF with accessories & 5 years CAMC are invited from interested bidders up to 1.00 PM, 05.02.2026 Other particulars of the bid may be visited on website https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in & https://mines.rajasthan.gov.in/ The approximate value of procurement is 4.57 crore.

UBN- 1. WD-XRF→ MIN2526GLOB00063
2. Core splitter→ MIN2526GLOB00065
3. BALL MILL→ MIN2526GLOB00064

DIPR/C/1784/26 DMG UDAIPUR

GLOBAL EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL), A Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) under the Ministry of Railways, invites EOI through online from potential buyers / contractors for purchase of Trench Cutter Machines (Bauer BC-35) available @ Chennai. Further details are available on <https://rvnl.ewizard.in>. Last date for submission of application Date : 15.02.2026 (Online Mode only) 15.00 hrs.

National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management, Thanjavur (NIFTEM-T)
(An Institute of National Importance under Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India), Pudukkottai Road, Thanjavur - 613 005, Tamil Nadu

No: A/217/2025 Date: 01.02.2026

VACANCY NOTIFICATION

National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship & Management, Thanjavur (NIFTEM-T) is inviting online applications from eligible candidates for Teaching Positions on a regular basis. The details are as follows:

Name of the Post	* No. of Vacancies	Pay Level
Associate Professor	03	Pay Level 13A
Assistant Professor	06	Pay Level 10

* The above number of vacancies may get reduced/cancelled without assigning any reason. For online application, eligibility criteria and terms & conditions, visit our website: www.niftem-t.ac.in

Registrar

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD
(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)
Head Office : Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram-14,
(Telephone No. 0471-2945600, 2945640)
E-mail : drugs.kmscl@kerala.gov.in,
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U2423KLM2007SGC021616
No.KMSCL/ED/39/2025 Date : 31.01.2026

E-TENDER NOTICE

Online bids are invited for the procurement of Test Kits for Plan Fund and NVBDCP for Department of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Kerala vide e-tender no KMSCL/ED/Test Kits(Plan & NVBDCP)/RC/2026/001 dated: 31.01.2026.

Sl. No.	Name of Item	No. of Items	Last Date & time of Uploading of tender	Date & time of Technical Bid opening
1.	Medical Diagnostic Test Kits</			

IN BRIEF



Media sector is transforming at a fast pace, says L. Murugan

Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan on Saturday said India's media industry was undergoing a rapid transformation. The journey has moved from traditional platforms to digital media, and now into an AI-based media era, he said. Speaking at BES Expo 2026, the Minister said technology had completely changed the way content was created, distributed, and consumed. He said India's creative strength and technological capability were gaining recognition on the global stage. He spoke about skill-building initiatives taken by the government, including setting up the Indian Institute of Creative Technology.

Truck driven on wrong side runs over 5 Odisha motorists

Five persons on bikes were killed and eight sustained injuries when a truck being driven on the wrong side rammed them in Ganjam district of Odisha on Saturday afternoon. The accident took place on the Gosaia Nuagaon overbridge where a truck sped into traffic, resulting in the death of five bike riders. Eight others were rushed to hospital where the condition of two persons was stated to be critical. The driver fled the spot, but was later arrested, the police said. Expressing grief over the loss of lives, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced an *ex-gratia* of ₹4 lakh each for the families of the deceased.

Sonam Wangchuk taken to AIIMS, Jodhpur on SC order

Activist and scientist Sonam Wangchuk, lodged in Jodhpur Central Jail since September 27, 2025, was taken to AIIMS Jodhpur for a medical examination early on Saturday morning, officials said. He spent about 90 minutes in the gastroenterology department before being taken back to the prison. According to sources, Mr. Wangchuk was experiencing stomach-related issues and had visited the hospital on Friday as well. The Supreme Court, currently hearing a petition filed by his wife, has requested Mr. Wangchuk's medical report by February 2. His counsel said he was suffering from stomach pain due to the jail's water quality. PTI

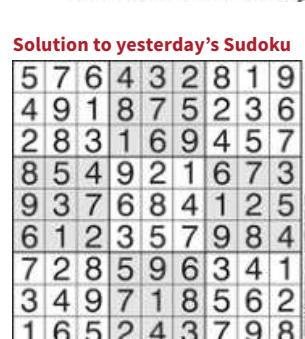
UAE hails India-EU trade pact; calls it 'model of partnerships'

The United Arab Emirates has applauded the free trade agreement reached between India and the European Union. In a recent statement by the UAE's Foreign Ministry, Minister of State Saeed Al Hajeri said the pact "reflects the commitment of both sides to promoting free trade and economic openness and embodies as a model of economic partnerships that support sustainable growth and shared prosperity". The UAE noted its own Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with India as an example of an advanced model of strategic trade partnership. The statement hoped UAE-EU talks would also conclude positively, leading to a similar pact. PTI

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆



5	7	6	4	3	2	8	1	9
4	9	1	8	7	5	2	3	6
2	8	3	1	6	9	4	5	7
8	5	4	9	2	1	6	7	3
9	3	7	6	8	4	1	2	5
6	1	2	3	5	7	9	8	4
7	2	8	5	9	6	3	4	1
3	4	9	7	1	8	5	6	2
1	6	5	2	4	3	7	9	8

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

Warehouse fire spotlights illegal structures on Kolkata wetlands

Experts warn that rapid encroachment on protected wetland zone, a natural filter for sewage, can lead to long-term damage to the ecosystem of city and its surroundings; parties engage in blame game over blaze that killed 25 people

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

A massive blaze tore through a warehouse at Anandapur of east Kolkata and killed over 25 people on Republic Day, it exposed a deeper fault line in the system – how illegal and indiscriminate construction has eaten away at the ecologically sensitive zone on the fringes of the region.

Experts warn that such rapid encroachment of the Ramsar-listed wetlands, which are a natural filter for sewage, can lead to long-term damage to the ecosystem of the city and its surroundings.

Official records and court proceedings have raised concerns over encroachment and unauthorised development in the protected wetland zone.

The East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority (EKWMA) Management Action Plan, 2021-2026 says, "Land use and land cover of the wetland to be [is] maintained in line with regulatory requirements under Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 and East Kolkata Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Act, 2006. No illegal transformation of land use."

Experts fear that the land has become a lucrative business space for the land mafia.



Officials say the warehouses existed before 2006, prior to the Ramsar Convention, and warn that closure of such commercial spaces can affect the livelihoods of many poor people. DEBASISH BHADURI

The report says the wetlands save Kolkata city and its surroundings a whopping ₹4,680 million annually in water treatment costs.

The wetlands treats over 900 million litres of sewage generated in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation area every day (approximately 65% of the total sewage generated in the metropolitan area).

These wetlands, which are situated right beside the capital city of West Bengal, span a massive 12,500 hectares.

Experts fear that the

land has become a lucrative business space for the land mafia.

Threat to resources

"This is part of our natural resources. The wetlands filters huge amounts of water on a daily basis. It also helps the production of almost half of our fishes and vegetables. If this space shrinks, our ecosystem will also be destroyed," Partha Pratim Biswas, Professor of construction engineering at Jadavpur University, told *The Hindu*.

Professor Biswas added that as these wetlands lie right beside Kolkata, most

of it was officially part of the gram panchayat area and not included in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation area. There is not much of an uproar over encroachment, though it could rapidly impact the lives of the city-dwellers, he said.

"Setting up warehouses here does not cost much money, way less than in prime Kolkata locations. It is strategically placed under a gram panchayat, which makes law implementation slow and loose, making the construction and encroachment lucrative," he added.

Professor Biswas added that as these wetlands lie right beside Kolkata, most

tive for all business owners," he added.

As rescue operations continue, political parties have blamed each other.

"This has been here before 2006, before the Ramsar convention came into place. We did not stop it because closing down commercial spaces such as this indiscriminately can stop the income of many poor people," Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim said. He said that currently, no other wetlands were being encroached, and if it happened, they were being razed.

However, Opposition leaders said that most constructions in these parts were illegal.

Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suvenu Adhikari said, "This is not an accident, it is a man-made disaster caused by illegal warehouses operating without fire safety norms, NOCs, or audits in the east Kolkata wetlands. The Trinamool Congress government's chronic apathy, corruption, and failure to enforce basic regulations have caused this."

Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Sujan Chakraborty said these illegal constructions had happened under the Trinamool government.

BJP demands SC-monitored SIT probe into Kolkata fire

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday demanded a Supreme Court-monitored special investigation team (SIT) probe into the Anandapur warehouse fire in West Bengal, accusing the Trinamool Congress government of not taking action against the "main culprits".

At a press conference, BJP spokesperson Guru Prakash Paswan said that 27 people had lost their lives so far and that several others were still missing. "However, neither Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee nor any State Minister has visited the site. They are silent over the whole issue," he alleged.

Mr. Paswan further alleged that the chief executive officer of Wow! Momo, the fast-food chain whose warehouse was one of the two gutted in the fire, had recently accompanied Ms. Banerjee on her visit to Madrid. He questioned why the State government had not taken action against him. He said the arrest of the warehouse manager and deputy manager was a mere "token action".

Alleging that basic fire safety norms were not enforced, the BJP leader said the State government appears to be completely indifferent despite multiple fires.

El Nino might occur after July; a clear picture will emerge after April: IMD

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has pulled up cricket stadiums across the India for using groundwater to irrigate their grounds, instead of treated wastewater, as per a recent order.

It also imposed a fine of ₹5,000 each on Arun Jaitly Stadium in Delhi and 11 other stadiums for not submitting the required details about their water usage to the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA), as ordered by the court.

"It appears that IS Bindra Stadium, Mohali/Punjab Cricket Association is not inclined to comply with the orders of the Tribunal and without utilising the STP treated water it intends to continue using the groundwater which has a serious adverse impact on the environment," the NGT said in an order dated January 22. The order said the situation was "somewhat similar" in some other cricket associations as well.

The associations have been directed to submit their explanations within six weeks.



El Nino phenomenon is defined as a climate pattern characterised by warmer ocean surface temperature. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

the two are cyclical phenomena. The last global El Nino was during 2023-24, a year that saw rainfall below normal levels in India.

The latest climate models show a greater than 50% chance of an El Nino appearing over India after June and increasing to nearly 70% during July, August, and September. July and August are the most important months of the summer monsoon.

Jatin Singh, chairman of the private weather forecasting company Skymet, said that "early" climate models signalled a likely El Nino in 2026, raising the risk of a "sub-par monsoon" and drought conditions over India".

El Nino forecasts made in February and March are generally prone to error, Mr. Mohapatra said, adding that those made in April are generally more accurate.

Hotter February days

The IMD forecast said that below-normal rainfall was likely over most parts of the country in February, except in some areas of northwest and east-central India. Temperatures over most of India were likely to be on the higher side, except in parts of southern India, the IMD added.

NIA to probe Beldanga violence; will examine conspiracy angle

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday began its probe into the violence in Beldanga that kept West Bengal's Murshidabad district on edge for over two days during mid-January.

The agency will investigate whether the violence was an organised conspiracy, including the role of fake news or deliberate provocation by groups or individuals.

An NIA team has already reached Beldanga and held discussions with officials involved in the earlier probe. The Central agency has also reportedly registered a fresh case and sought relevant documents from the local police.

Leader of Opposition Suvenu Adhikari had demanded an NIA probe into the matter on multiple occasions. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders had previously alleged that the violence was pre-planned. "The latest riots in Murshidabad's Beldanga were not spontaneous. They were



NIA team arriving at the Beldanga police station in Murshidabad, West Bengal. PTI

politically convenient," BJP leader Amit Malviya had said.

Violence erupted in Beldanga on January 16 following the death of a migrant worker from the area in the neighbouring Jharkhand.

Large numbers of people took to the streets, blocking railway tracks and a national highway for several hours. As the protests turned violent, police resorted to baton charges to control the situation. At least 12 people were injured in the clashes, and around 30 were arrested for inciting violence.

Panel to provide guidance on healthcare for trans people

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has constituted a panel of medical experts from various domains to hold discussions and provide technical and policy-level guidance on healthcare-related issues concerning transgender persons, as outlined in its directive issued earlier this week.

The directive comes after an advisory committee held on January 24, 2026 that there was no representative



An ethical and science-based approach can foster a more equitable society for trans people. EMMANUEL YOGINI

from the Union Health Ministry. Healthcare is a critical area, and in view of the specialised needs of trans-

gender persons, the committee considered that this subject requires focused deliberation in a dedicated

duals deserve dignity and rights, policies must be grounded in biological sex distinctions to protect all vulnerable groups. I urge ICMR, AIIMS, and the government to fund peer-reviewed, longitudinal studies on GAS/HRT outcomes, integrate genetic counselling, and reform prison policies for separate transgender facilities."

"This science-based approach will mitigate suffering, align with ethical imperatives, and foster a truly equitable society," they added.



The first day of the two-day 'Kerala for All' conclave in Kochi elicited a good response from the audience. R.K. NITHIN



Shinkari Melam performed by Poombatta, Kerala's first differently abled percussion ensemble, at the conclave. THULASI KAKKAT



Delegates attending a session at the conclave which addressed crucial issues on accessibility. THULASI KAKKAT



A delegate poses a question to the speakers at a session of the conclave. THULASI KAKKAT



Rupeshkumar K., CEO, Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission Society; Mini Sukumar, expert member, Kerala State Planning Board; and Soity Banerjee, travel & food journalist, take part in the conclave. H. VIBHU

State rides the Responsible Tourism wave

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

What started as a community-level vegetable cultivation among a group of local community members has now evolved into a nationally acclaimed Responsible Tourism movement in Kerala, Rupeshkumar K., chief executive officer, Kerala RT Mission Society, has said.

Addressing a session on Kerala's Responsible Tourism Legacy as part of the two-day conclave on inclusive and accessible tourism on Saturday, he said when the Responsible Tourism Mission was launched in Kerala in 2007, many critics wanted to know what role vegetable cultivation would play in tourism.

"We wanted to develop community-based tourism activities that offered a different and engaging experience for the visitors. With activities such as coconut climbing, coir-making and fishing for visitors, village tourism over the years became a big success story of Kerala under the Responsible Tourism Mission, winning accolades including national awards for the Best RT Village and the Best Agri-Tourism Village for the projects it implemented at Kadakkal in Kozhikode and Kumarakom, respectively," said Mr. Rupeshkumar.

Farm tourism destination

The backwater destination of Kumarakom in Kottayam turned into a major farm tourism destination through the schemes initiated by the RT Mission in partnership with the grama panchayat, he said.

Now, around 1.9 lakh families are engaged with the RT Mission. More than 26,000 units are into village tourism activities, and of them, more than 18,000 units are funded by women, he said.

According to Soity Banerjee, travel and food journalist, Responsible Tourism strategist, and co-founder of KINDOW, Kerala has reframed the idea of Responsible Tourism by effective interventions. The State has reframed the concept, which has become the signature style of tourism that Kerala is known for, said Ms. Banerjee.

The initiative is also instrumental in empowering women in the State by creating an environment that is conducive for women to travel and work at all levels. Now women of all ages are willing to travel, and the budget tourism initiative started by the State is another successful model for inspiring women to travel, said Mini Sukumar, expert member, Kerala State Planning Board. S. Anandan, Resident Editor, Kerala, *The Hindu*, moderated the session.

'Kerala has set a national benchmark for inclusive and accessible tourism'

At 'Kerala for All' conclave, organised by Kerala Tourism and *The Hindu*, State Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas says physical, social and informational, and attitudinal barriers must be removed so as to enable every traveller to explore the world with dignity and independence

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Inclusive and accessible tourism is not a special service for a few, but a shared responsibility of governments, industry, stakeholders, communities, and citizens, Kerala Minister for Public Works and Tourism P.A. Mohamed Riyas has said.

Opening the Kerala for All conclave, a two-day knowledge conclave on inclusive and accessible tourism organised jointly by *The Hindu* and Kerala Tourism in Kochi, on Saturday, Mr. Riyas said that "keeping this in mind, Kerala has initiated the first step towards this direction by drafting a design policy, a first-of-its-kind initiative in India."

Several States in the country are emulating Kerala, which shows the need for and acceptance of such policies across the nation, he said.

Emphasising that inclu-

sive tourism will enhance the quality of life for both visitors and host communities, the Minister said strong policy support, regulatory frameworks, and the smart use of technology such as assistive apps and digital guides are needed to accelerate this transformation.

Stressing the need to remove the physical, social, informational, and attitudinal barriers to enable every traveller to explore the world with dignity and independence, the Minister reminded that the right to travel safely, comfortably, and with dignity belongs to everyone.

Safe destinations

Accessibility benefits persons with disabilities, senior citizens, families with young children, people with temporary injuries, and indeed every traveller. Barrier-free infrastructure such as ramps, lifts, accessible toilets, and well-designed public spaces create

Kerala Public Works and Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas at the opening session of the 'Kerala for All' conclave organised by Kerala Tourism and *The Hindu* in Kochi on Saturday. THULASI KAKKAT

destinations comfortable and safe for all, the Minister said.

The Minister stressed the importance of having clear signage that is easy to understand. Accessible in-

formation further enhances the travel experience.

"However, infrastructure alone is not enough. The human element is equally important. Trained and sensitised tourism person-

nel play a critical role in creating inclusive hospitality environments. Inclusive tourism is built on universal design principles, ensuring that facilities are usable by everyone without the need for special adaptation," he said.

Inclusive tourism also embraces cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity, ensuring that no one feels excluded. Community participation is the backbone of successful inclusive tourism. When local communities are involved, tourism becomes more meaningful, sustainable, and socially inclusive, said Mr. Riyas.

The Minister also added that the association with the Kerala Tourism department and *The Hindu* Group together would open a new chapter in the area, making travel and its connected experiences

more democratic and also inclusive.

'Role of The Hindu'

In the welcome address, Suresh Nambath, Editor of *The Hindu*, said, "*The Hindu* believes that the wider civil society needs to be involved in

a sustained public discourse, and we are committed to fulfilling our role in this respect by shaping conversations and aiding policy formulations through our publishing platforms. Our support for tourism without barriers is just one example of *The Hindu*'s commitment to accessibility and inclusion in all sectors. The discussions will leave a lasting impact

and contribute to purposeful change in this area," he said.



Kerala mulls industry tag for tourism

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The State government is actively considering a proposal to give industry status to the tourism sector, a long-standing demand of the tourism stakeholders, said Minister for Industries P. Rajeeve.

He was speaking on the 'Role of Industries in Advancing Inclusive and Accessible Tourism in Kerala' at the Kerala for All conclave here on Saturday. Mr. Rajeeve said tourism entrepreneurs cited two main benefits for raising such a demand – low power charges and provision for low-interest loans. Now, the Electricity department is considering the first and the Finance department, the second, he said.

The State government has taken steps, including rule amendment by the Lo-



P. Rajeeve, Minister for Law and Industries, addresses a session on the 'Role of Industries in Advancing Inclusive and Accessible Tourism in Kerala'. R.K. NITHIN

cal Self-Governments department which allows utilisation of 50% of the occupied houses and 100% of the vacant houses for business activities, except the red category industries. I think it will give more momentum to the tourism industry, particularly for home stays," he said.

"Kerala is well known

for inclusiveness in tourism. In the MSME sector in Kerala, 40% of entrepreneurs are women, which is another facet of inclusiveness. We are now celebrating the 20th anniversary of Responsible Tourism and have all type of facilities here. Kerala is a small State, accounting for only 1.16% of the landscape of time frame," he said.

"However, we have to ensure full accessibility to all places, including tourism destinations. After this conclave *The Hindu*, I think, will submit a report to the government. Tourism and industry ministries are working together as a team and will look into the proposals, based on which the State government will take all possible steps within a stipulated time frame," he said.

They were speaking at a session on Accessibility First: Designing Tourism without Barriers (A Broad-based View on Accessibility) at the two-day Kerala for All conclave.

Emphasising the three components of the Accessible India Campaign – built environment accessibility, transportation system accessibility, and information and communication system accessibility – Ms. Prabhakaran added that while standards exist to ensure accessibility, they are not being implemented on the ground.

Ms. Murugkar, however, pointed out that the problem was not only empathy but also the absence of proper dissemination of information. She said only a small percentage of architects are aware that their building designs must incorporate accessibility standards. Accessibility is also missing from the curriculum of architecture and design schools. As a result, architects graduate without adequate knowledge or technical capacity to implement accessibility. Continuous education for architects, since rules change regularly, should be institutionalised.

Ms. Prabhakaran added that while the National Highways Authority of India and the Public Works department (PWD) follow the same standards in road construction, these standards prioritise vehicles over seamless connectivity. Sidewalks and drains are provided only when space permits and often as an afterthought.

Ms. Murugkar identified coordination between different departments as the greatest challenge to ensuring accessibility.

Educate architects on accessibility needs, says expert



Priyanjali Prabhakaran, Kavita Murugkar, and moderator S. Anandan, at a session. THULASI KAKKAT

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Lack of empathy, inadequate dissemination of information, and the absence of continuous education for architects are hampering universal accessibility, observed Priyanjali Prabhakaran, principal investigator, Barrier Free Consultancy Cell and Professor, Department of Architecture and Planning, College of Engineering Trivandrum, along with Kavita Murugkar, architect, educator, and universal design evangelist.

They were speaking at a session on Accessibility First: Designing Tourism without Barriers (A Broad-based View on Accessibility) at the two-day Kerala for All conclave.

Emphasising the three components of the Accessible India Campaign – built environment accessibility, transportation system accessibility, and information and communication system accessibility – Ms. Prabhakaran added that while standards exist to ensure accessibility, they are not being implemented on the ground.

Attitude, not infrastructure, the real barrier, says Paralympian

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Asserting that attitudinal barriers, more than infrastructural limitations, confine people with disabilities to their homes, Paralympian and world champion Ekta Bhyan called for the inclusion of elderly persons in accessibility initiatives.

Addressing the session 'Voices from the Road: Lived Realities of Diverse Travellers' at the Kerala for All conclave, Ms. Bhyan said accessibility remains a distant dream in a country like India. "You may not

have a person with disability in your family, but if you have an elderly member at home, you will surely understand how crucial accessibility to public infrastructure and public transportation is," she said.

'Sports, an ideal route' Divyanshu Ganatra, founder of the Adventures Beyond Barriers Foundation, who spoke at the session, said the status of persons with disabilities as a largely invisible minority is due to society's lack of contact with them.

"This lack of contact



Joby Mathew, Paralympian; Divyanshu Ganatra, founder, Adventures Beyond Barriers Foundation; Ekta Bhyan, Paralympian; and moderator K.C. Vijaya Kumar, at a session of the conclave. R.K. NITHIN

breeds bias and perpetuates it," he noted, while calling for systemic chang-

es. According to him, the most effective way to achieve this is by delinking the disability model of accessibility from charity. "Sports, for instance, is an ideal route for achieving this, as it speaks the same language to everyone. It helps push the concept of accessibility through spirit and intention," Mr. Ganatra said.

'Poor implementation' According to him, accessibility in India still has a long way to go.

"It is not that we lack legislation to promote accessibility. It is on the implementation side that we are falling behind," Mr. Ganatra added.

The session was moderated by K.C. Vijaya Kumar, Sports Editor of *The Hindu*.

CM YK A CH-CHE

IN BRIEF

**SBI unveils CHAKRA Centre for financing sunrise sectors**

State Bank of India (SBI) unveiled 'CHAKRA' - Centre of Excellence (CoE) for financing sunrise sectors critical to India's economic development. The Centre will focus on renewable energy, advanced cell chemistry & battery storage, electric mobility, green hydrogen, semiconductor, decarbonisation, smart infrastructure and data centre infrastructure. By 2030, these sectors are expected to entail capital investment of more than ₹100 lakh crore. PTI

IDFC FIRST Bank Q3 net surges 48% to ₹503 crore

IDFC FIRST Bank reported net profit for the third quarter ended 31 December surged 48% year-on-year to ₹503 crore. Net Interest Margin (NIM) slid 28 basis points to 5.76%. "We are seeing a strong business momentum across all our main lines of businesses, including lending, deposits, wealth management, transaction banking etc," said V. Vaidyanathan, MD and CEO. "Our asset quality has improved with GNPA at 1.69% and Net NPA at 0.53%," he added.

GAIL's Q3 net declines 58.6%, declares ₹5 interim dividend

State-owned Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL)'s standalone profit in the third quarter ended December 31 slid 58.6% year-on-year to ₹1,602.57 crore primarily on slipping momentum with the petrochemical segment registering a loss and the LPG and liquid hydrocarbon segments logging an exponential dip in profit. Revenue slid about 2.7% to ₹34,755.27 crore. The state-owned gas provider also declared an interim dividend of ₹5 per share.

Adani to get legal notice in U.S. SEC civil fraud case, to respond in 90 days

Press Trust of India
NEW YORK/NEW DELHI

Billionaire Gautam Adani and his nephew, Sagar Adani, have agreed to receive a legal notice from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in a civil fraud lawsuit alleging they misled investors about a bribery scheme, according to a court filing.

The stipulation is subject to court approval.

In a filing in a federal court in Brooklyn, New York, seen by PTI, the SEC and U.S.-based lawyers for Gautam and Sagar Adani said the lawyers agreed to accept service of the regulator's legal papers, removing the need for a judge to rule on how the defendants should be served.

Submitted for approval
The joint application (or stipulation) has been submitted for approval from the concerned Court. This is a standard procedural step in U.S. legal proceedings that allows for the orderly resolution of cases.

If agreed by the judge, the joint application will allow the SEC matter to progress while giving time to the Adanis to either file motion to dismiss or defense within 90 days. The SEC thereafter can file opposition within a further period of 60 days.

The Defendants can file replies to such opposition within 45 days.

The SEC had filed a lawsuit in November 2024 alleging that the two violated U.S. securities laws by making false and misleading representations about Adani Green Energy Ltd. (AGEL).

In addition to the SEC's



In a spot: The logo of the Adani Group is seen on the facade of its corporate house on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, India. REUTERS FILE

civil complaint, federal prosecutors in Brooklyn, New York, have charged the Adanis and others with allegedly helping to drive a \$265 million bribery scheme in India to secure solar power contracts. The Adani Group repeatedly denied accusations against it or the founder family.

Lawsuits stalled
Both lawsuits have been stalled for more than a year as both Adanis remain in India and couldn't be served the notices. Last week, the SEC asked a U.S. judge to allow alternative methods to notify them of the suit, including service by email and through other U.S. law firms representing the Adanis.

Procedural step
AGEL, the renewable energy arm of the ports-to-city conglomerate Gautam Adani, in a stock exchange filing, said the defendants - Gautam and Sagar Adani - agreeing to accept the notice is a procedural step and they would seek dismissal of the SEC's complaint or file responsive pleadings.

"We understand that on

Will ISRO's arm NSIL pick up the slack of a flat space budget?

The gap between what the industry wants and what the Department of Space needs has never been wider; industry wants govt. to inject 18x the amount of private capital raised in a single year, turning the state into the primary venture capitalist

NEWS ANALYSIS**Vasudevan Mukunth**

From the historic high of landing on the moon to the recent sobering reality of failed launches and near-misses that triggered internal reviews, the last five years have been a period of strategic volatility for Department of Space (DoS).

What began as a celebrated era of 'unlocking' the sector, marked by the Indian government's 2020 reforms, the creation of IN-SPACe, and the entry of private players like Skyroot and Agnikul, has transitioned into a complex phase of growing pains.

The Economic Survey 2025-26, however, has read the events of the last decade not as a period of struggle but one of export consolidation. It noted that between 2015 and 2024, India launched 393 foreign satellites for 34 countries, earning over \$143 million and €272 million.

But it's possible that this revenue stream is masking the Department's internal structural fragility. The space industry has been clamouring for a historic budget hike to fund a projected \$44 billion space economy over the next decade, a figure that the Survey backs, including upstream launch and satellite manufacturing and down-

Dept. of Space

The budget is increasingly consumed by operational costs rather than new infrastructure or R&D assets



stream applications and services. So the Department needs to balance the promises of human spaceflight and a space station against the unglamorous need to fix the manufacturing issues threatening its primary launch capability.

Capacity to absorb
The Budget Estimates (BE) have grown minimally over the last four years. Between FY22 and FY26, the nominal allocation decreased and then recovered slightly, effectively shrinking when adjusted for inflation. The Department of Space has consistently failed to use up its initial allocations, leading to progressive downward revisions in the Revised Estimates (RE), weakening the case for a larger increase in the FY27 Budget. (The Finance Ministry has historically preferred a greater capacity to absorb funds over fulfilling ambitions.)

In FY22, the capital expenses, on assets like new

launch pads, spacecraft, etc., was ₹8,228 crore but by FY26 it had dropped to ₹6,103 crore. Conversely, revenue expenditure such as salaries and for operations rose from ₹5,720 crore in FY22 to ₹7,311 crore in FY26. Thus the budget is increasingly consumed by operational costs rather than new infrastructure or R&D assets.

This is a worrying trend for a technology-intensive organisation whose competitiveness in the long term depends on sustained capital formation.

The government appears to be betting that NewSpace India Ltd. (NSIL) - ISRO's commercial arm - can plug this capital gap. The Survey pointed out NSIL's revenue surged from ₹322 crore in FY20 to ₹2,940 crore in FY23, with the implicit strategy to replace tax-funded infrastructure with growth funded by commerce, even as the core R&D budget stagnates.

To understand how ambitious the ₹18,000 crore request is, one need only look at the Survey's data on private capital: India's

entire 'NewSpace' ecosystem raised just over ₹1,000 crore in FY23. In other words the industry effectively wants the government to inject 18x the amount of private capital raised in a single year, turning the state into the primary venture capitalist.

ISPA, which represents major private players including Bharti Airtel, L&T, etc., asked the space sector be classified as "critical infrastructure" in the FY27 Budget. This is a financial mechanism to lower the cost of borrowing for private space firms. And instead of just asking for government grants, it demanded a policy where the government required 50% of all space-based services and hardware be procured from the domestic private sector.

The rationale was that predictable demand, with the government as an anchor customer, is more valuable than R&D subsidies, i.e. shifting from 'Department spending on itself' to 'Department buying from industry'. This model is closer to NASA's services-driven procurement approach than to ISRO's traditional asset ownership.

Building confidence
Leading private firms have echoed these sentiments and often focused on specific fiscal operational hurdles rather than just the total budget size.

'Seismic study of blocks awarded done for OALP-X bidding plan'

Saptaparno Ghosh
BETUL, GOA

Oil India undertook seismic study of the blocks awarded during the ninth round of the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) to chart a bidding strategy for the tenth round, CMD Ranjit Rath told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the India Energy Week in Goa.

"As we speak, 2D seismic acquisition is complete. We had planned this much before," he stated, adding, "We have also completed 36% of the 3D seismic [study] alongside petroleum system modelling study of the basins as part of our in-house study, analysis of locations and [to chart] a bidding strategy," he said.

"Now, we are looking at OALP Round-X and would be submitting bids [accordingly]."

For context, the Maharashtra had submitted bids for nine blocks, standalone and in joint ventures and won all in the erstwhile OALP round. This expanded the acreage by more than 51,000 square kilometre to 110,000 square kilometre.

OIL secured blocks in Assam Shelf basin, Mahanadi basin, Krishna Godavari basin and debuted in the Cambay basin.

Exploration target

In response to a query, Mr. Rath informed the explorer is targeting to cross 80 wells this fiscal year and 100 in the next fiscal year.

Labour cooperative ULCCS' unit U-Sphere eyes national play**Lalatendu Mishra**
MUMBAI

U-Sphere, the EPC subsidiary of Kerala's labour cooperative ULCCS, having started operations from Kerala last year is planning to go pan-India next year. The firm had won many projects in southern States and is mobilising resources for capacity building, CEO Biju Mahima told *The Hindu* in an interview.

"We are strong in Kerala. We have two projects in Bengaluru and one more in the pipeline. We have signed work in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh with more expected. We are receiving inquiries in Tamil Nadu, especially Chennai, though no contracts are signed yet," he said.

"We are also in advanced discussions for 30-40 storey high-rise buildings in Bengaluru and Hyderabad," he added.

"By next year, we expect presence across South India, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. We are also receiving inquiries from Delhi. FY28 onwards, we plan to be pan-India," he added.

"Currently, we have booked projects worth ₹50-60 crore with a target of ₹7,500 crore order book over the next five years. Around ₹400-500 crore is in the negotiation pipeline," Mr. Mahima said.

One of ULCCS' 11 verticals, U-Sphere focuses on construction using innovative technologies to improve speed, quality and client convenience. Speed is a key parameter in construction and innovation is its core focus. It was officially launched in 2025.

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SCIENCE

IIT-Kanpur team develops new way to predict solar cycles

Vasudevan Mukund

The sun is a giant magnetic ball that goes through roughly 11-year cycles of activity that drive solar flares and space weather that can disrupt satellites and power grids on the earth. But predicting the strength and timing of these cycles has been difficult because scientists can't see the magnetic fields deep inside the sun, where the activity originates.

In a January 20 study in

Astrophysical Journal Letters, PhD student Soumyadeep Chatterjee and assistant professor Gopal Hazra at IIT-Kanpur reported reconstructing the invisible magnetic fields inside the sun using 30 years of data collected from the surface.

For decades, solar physicists have used computer simulations called dynamo models to understand how the sun generates its magnetic field. Traditionally, these models relied on simplified theoretical rules

to represent sunspots. For example, previous models often treated sunspots as simple, symmetrical circular patches even though real sunspots are messy and irregular. But such simplifications often led to inaccurate predictions.

The duo, instead of relying on theoretical shapes, fed their 3D computer model real observations of the sun's surface field. They used data recorded between 1996 and 2025 by satellites like SOHO and the

Solar Dynamics Observatory. By forcing the model to align with observations from the surface, they could estimate what the magnetic fields deep inside the sun must be doing.

The data-driven model could reproduce the 'butterfly diagram', a chart visualising how sunspots migrate from the sun's high latitudes towards the equator over a cycle.

It also revealed the behaviour of the toroidal magnetic field within the

sun's convection zone. This field wraps around the sun like a doughnut and is the primary driver of sunspots. The researchers found their simulated internal field matched the actual intensities of cycles 23, 24, and 25.

"Our findings on one hand strengthen our physics understanding of the generation of solar magnetic fields and on the other... predict when the sun will be active, violent, and very dangerous for spaceborne technological assets and communications," Dr. Hazra told *The Hindu*.

three years in advance. So by monitoring the surface magnetic fields today, scientists can get a reliable warning of how active the sun will be later.

SNAPSHOTS



Virus hijacks caterpillar's gut-brain link to spread

HearNPV viruses cause infected cotton bollworm caterpillars to climb to the tops of plants before dying, allowing the virus to scatter further by wind and gravity and infect healthy larvae below. Scientists have found how now. When the virus infects the caterpillar's midgut, it triggers the release of a chemical messenger, tachykinin, which travels in the blood to the brain and activates the HaTKR receptor. This signal renders the caterpillar attracted to light, causing it to climb upwards.



Ultra-thin electronics better survive space radiation

Space radiation usually destroys standard silicon electronics quickly. Scientists have developed an electronic system using molybdenum disulphide only a few atoms thick; high-energy particles pass through it without causing damage. The team built a communication device using MoS₂ and launched it into orbit. It operated for nine months with nearly zero data transmission errors. While traditional silicon systems might fail within two years in harsher orbits, the new system is predicted to last 270 years.



In surprise, unique plant evolved before spreading

Lipstick vines, which grow in North India and Southeast Asia, grow red tube-shaped flowers for sunbirds with long beaks. But one relative, *Aeschynanthus acuminatus*, has shorter flowers for birds with shorter beaks. Scientists investigated how this plant evolved in Taiwan. Surprisingly, they found the plant changed its flowers on the mainland, then migrated to Taiwan, challenging ideas of speciation and suggesting the plant shifted to a new pollinator.

PRIYA trial links B12 intake to long-term health in babies

Vitamin B12 could be a 'regulator of regulators' that controls enzymes involved in gene expression; based on the finding, experts said the national policy should include vitamin B12 supplements to improve the nutritional status of adolescents

Rohini Karandikar

It is known that the Indian population, particularly vegetarians, is deficient in vitamin B12. The vitamin essential for the formation of blood cells and the functioning of nerve cells is mainly found in animal-derived food. B12 deficiency during pregnancy has been associated with neural tube defects and poor foetal growth, affecting long-term health.

In 1993, Chittaranjan Yajnik, Director, Diabetes Unit, King Edward Memorial Hospital, Pune, undertook the Pune Maternal Nutrition Study (PMNS) to investigate the parental determinants of foetal growth. The study showed that low vitamin B12 and high folate among women predicted a higher risk of what Dr. Yajnik called 'diabesity', or insulin resistance and obesity in offspring's later life.

Researchers asked if increasing the B12 status early on, in adolescence, could reduce the risk of diabesity in offspring. The Pune Rural Intervention in Young Adolescents (PRIYA) trial tested this hypothesis in 2012-2020, within PMNS. The follow-up studies on the babies of the women who were adolescents around 2012 ended in 2025.

This trial led to the first *in vivo* human study in which researchers investigated the molecular aspects of vitamin B12 deficiency through an intergenerational approach.

'Regulator of regulators'

Interventions targeting adolescent nutrition aim to prevent 'diabesity'

- Vitamin B12 deficiency is common in India and negatively affects foetal growth and long-term health

- The Pune Maternal Nutrition Study previously linked low maternal B12 to increased obesity risks in offspring

- In the PRIYA trial, researchers supplemented adolescents with B12 to see if doing so improved health outcomes for future children

- Supplementation improved neonatal weight proportions and significantly altered gene expression in cord blood cells



Vital vitamins: Vitamin B12 and multi-micronutrient supplements in adolescents (plus standard care) improved the ponderal index in their neonates. RAGHAVENDRA V. KONKATHI

- Higher B12 levels surprisingly regulated the expression of genes that control DNA methylation processes

Investigators gave adolescents in the rural areas of Pune vitamin B12 and multi-micronutrient supplements (over and above standard care) and followed up to the delivery of their first child. Following delivery, they isolated the cord blood mononuclear cells (CMCs) and investigated them to study gene expression. The researchers reported that supplementation with vitamin B12 and multi-micronutrients in adolescents improved the ponderal index, i.e., weight in proportion to height, later in their neonates and altered gene expression in the CMCs.

Vitamin B12's role in the regulation of methylases came as a surprise to researchers.

"You see, the activity of regulators [methylases] is known to be affected by B12, as B12 is involved in regenerating Sadenosyl methionine, or SAM, for methylation reactions," Satyajeet Khare, associate professor at Symbiosis School of Biological Sciences, and one of the co-cor-

responding authors of the study, said. "But who would have imagined that the expression of these regulators themselves is under the control of B12? Our results suggest the presence of a molecular mechanism for targeted regulation of genes by B12. B12 appears to act as a regulator of regulators."

Thus, the study contributes to the 'developmental origins of health and disease' hypothesis, which proposes that the intrauterine environment affects the long-term health of a developing foetus, in part through epigenetics.

The researchers noted that the study doesn't establish a causal link between vitamin B12 levels and gene expression.

That said, in the future, they could identify targets of methylases and demeth-

ylases. The present study also focused only on cord blood cells.

"We are only at cord blood right now. We do not know what is going to happen in the future," Dr. Khare said.

"Replication of the present study by using existing biobank samples at the global level will be required [to confirm] the mechanism hypothesised in the paper," Mohan Gupte, founder-director (retd.), ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology and the ICMR School of Public Health, Chennai, said by email.

That said, he added, "The PRIYA study of Dr Yajnik has demonstrated the effectiveness of the recommended daily allowance of 2 micrograms. Even for the group with very low levels of B12, i.e., less than 100 pmol/L, 2 micrograms of B12 supplementation was found to be extremely useful."

Researchers and experts in the field recommended that the national policy should include giving physiological doses of vitamin B12 in iron and folic acid tablets to improve the nutritional status of adolescents and women of reproductive age.

"This will have beneficial effects on the health of the population, human capital, and promote growth and development of the nation," Dr. Yajnik, also a co-corresponding author of this study, said.

Rohini Karandikar works with the TNQ Foundation and is a science communicator and educator

How to start building a career in the age of AI

DEC DED

John Xavier

Internships and apprenticeships have long been effective for graduates and young adults to test their learning, develop new skills and secure employment. For organisations, they provided a way to identify potential hires.

However, recent advances in artificial intelligence and agentic systems are quickly making this 'on-the-job' learning and hiring channel vulnerable - much to the dismay of students and young adults.

Many organisations are rethinking entry-level roles and budgets, increasing AI spending while reducing these positions. This shift raises questions about career prospects for those looking to build a future in

the coming decades.

Let's start with the basics. A career is a long-term professional journey marked by skill development, mobility and rewards. This journey has become increasingly chaotic for successive generations, but the biggest change began with Gen X.

Gen X witnessed a major shift in employment that challenged the traditional linear progression theory, where people typically start and end their careers at a single company. They entered a job market that valued individual competency over loyalty.

Looking back, we can see how the Internet, personal computers and globalisation transformed the stable job market of the Silent Generation. These changes flattened organisational hierarchies and created a new, laterally mobile talent pool. However, a deeper analysis re-



Ideally, seek roles that allow you to develop skills by enhancing your learning outcomes through AI tools. AP

veals a hidden pattern: a world in flux that needed a new breed of talent.

The world was shifting away from Abraham Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' theory towards David McClelland's 'Human Motivation' theory. While both ideas centred on individual needs and growth, McClelland's theory removed the rigidity of Maslow's. He realised that individuals don't necessarily need to follow strict hierar-

chies to achieve fulfillment. Instead, people can meet their needs in non-hierarchical and non-linear ways.

Competency became the most crucial factor for growth and career advancement, surpassing loyalty and years of experience. Learning new skills led to promotions or switching to companies offering higher pay for those skills. This fluidity in the job market allowed people to move

laterally and explore new industries and roles.

While formal skills and advanced degrees still commanded premiums, large language models - codified knowledge from textbooks - have nearly absorbed all existing digital formal knowledge. This disruption is affecting talent flow at the entry level and changing hiring practices.

In this future workforce, entry-level positions will begin with young professionals building augmentative working mechanisms using agentic AI systems. Today's job market demands that career builders view existing AI tools as learning facilitators rather than task finishers. This distinction is vital because any AI-performed task diminishes the human element, which is something you'd rather avoid. Ideally, seek roles that allow you to develop skills by enhanc-

ing your learning outcomes through AI tools.

Also, this approach will gradually build a solid foundation, enabling you to add value to your profile and direction for your next move. It will also cultivate the right mindset to seek and build human-centric roles.

It's inevitable that AI agents will displace some jobs but new ones will eventually emerge. However, this development is beyond your control at the moment. Instead, you'll be shaping it through augmented employment. For organisations, this is the perfect time to rethink talent pipelines as they experiment with AI agents across various tasks and functions. A checklist on the best and worst cases from their AI deployments will help them identify areas where human factors remain crucial even as AI systems advance.

Q

Question Corner

Colour theory

Why are some stars blue, some white, some red?

- B.R. Sravan

The main reason is surface temperature.

Stars behave roughly as objects that absorb all incoming radiation and radiate energy back based solely on their temperature. The colour we see depends on the wavelength of light that the star emits the most energy. Yellow stars such as the sun and Alpha Centauri A have surfaces at 5,200-7,500 K. Finally, orange and red stars' surfaces are up to 5,200 K hot. These are the coolest stars and emit most of their energy as infrared radiation. Examples include Betelgeuse and Proxima Centauri.

7,500-10,000 K, hot enough for the peak radiation to be in the visible spectrum. To the human eye, colours appear together as white. This is also why we don't see green stars: they also emit other colours that the human eye mixes together. Yellow stars such as the sun and Alpha Centauri A have surfaces at 5,200-7,500 K. Finally, orange and red stars' surfaces are up to 5,200 K hot. These are the coolest stars and emit most of their energy as infrared radiation. Examples include Betelgeuse and Proxima Centauri.

Readers may send their questions / answers to science@thehindu.co.in

FAQ

What's ailing India's battery scheme for EVs?

Why is there a lack of momentum? How will it affect the domestic battery manufacturing ecosystem?

Jacob Koshy

The story so far:

An ambitious ₹18,100 crore scheme to facilitate the manufacture of advanced chemistry cell batteries in India, particularly for Electric Vehicles (EVs), is floundering. The Advanced Chemistry Cell Production Linked Incentive (ACC PLI) had a target of making battery cells worth 50 gigawatt-hour (GWh) by 2025, but only 1.4 GWh has been installed; approximately 8.6 GWh is 'under development' but delayed, while 20 GWh has seen no progress at all. Additionally, the scheme has generated only 1,118 jobs – just 0.12% of the estimated 1.03 million – and attracted only 25.58% of its targeted investment.

What are Advanced Chemistry Cells (ACC)? They represent a new generation of advanced storage technologies that can store electric energy as chemical energy and convert it back to electric energy as and when required. Lithium-ions – the mainstay of cellphone batteries – are the most prominent today among this class of batteries. However, the scheme is "technology agnostic" and is open to other combinations such as nickel manganese cobalt, lithium-ion phosphate and sodium-ion batteries.

What is the intent of this scheme? The ACC PLI scheme, launched in October 2021, was designed to catalyse a domestic battery

To make the ACC PLI a success, dedicated schemes for critical mineral refining and component manufacturing are required

manufacturing ecosystem and reduce a near-total reliance on Chinese imports. However, an analysis by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and JMK Research and Analysis reveals that the policy's ambitious goals have yet to translate into significant realised capacity. As of October 2025, only 2.8% of the targeted 50 GWh capacity has been commissioned. The 1.4 GWh is from a single beneficiary, Ola Electric. Moreover, despite a targeted incentive disbursement of ₹2,900 crore by this period, zero funds have been paid out because no beneficiary has met the necessary milestones.

How was the scheme supposed to work?

The primary aim of the scheme was to encourage industry into building domestic capacity for essential components like cathodes, anodes, and electrolytes. This was to be done by attracting major private players and global technology partnerships to the sector and in the process lower battery costs to accelerate the adoption of EVs and Energy Storage Systems (ESS). The latter are large blocks of battery cells that can be used to supply solar or wind power, during the night or windless days respectively. Companies were to participate in an auction to commit to a minimum bid size of 5 GWh and have a net worth of at least ₹225 crore per GWh of committed capacity and produce batteries. For every battery sold, they could claim up to ₹2,000 per KWh as subsidy. There were other caveats though: companies had to achieve 25% Domestic Value Addition (DVA) within two years and reach 60% DVA by the fifth year.

Which companies were selected?

In the first auction round of the ACC PLI scheme, three companies were selected as beneficiaries: Ola Electric, Reliance New Energy, and Rajesh Exports. Ola Electric was awarded a capacity of 20 GWh; Reliance New Energy initially secured 15 GWh in the first round and subsequently won an additional 10 GWh in the second auction round; and Rajesh Exports was awarded a capacity of 5 GWh.

Why has the scheme been unsuccessful?

The scheme mandates that beneficiaries commission their facilities within a two-year "gestation period," a target deemed unrealistic for building complex gigafactories from scratch in a nascent market. Additionally, the DVA requirements have been difficult because India lacks sufficient facilities for processing minerals, lithium, nickel and cobalt. Secondly, the scheme's evaluation criteria prioritised DVA and subsidy benchmarks over prior manufacturing experience. Thus, established battery players like Exide and Amara Raja did not qualify, leaving the project in the hands of novices who are still building foundational technical competencies. Finally, India's dependency on China for raw material, technical competency and knowhow has led to sluggish progress. A major bottleneck is the delay in visa approvals for Chinese technical specialists, as India lacks skilled workforce for cell manufacturing.

What fix does the report recommend?

Immediate recommendations include fast-tracking visas for technical experts and extending implementation timelines by at least one year to waive current penalties. Long-term success will require schemes for critical mineral refining and component manufacturing, alongside focused R&D and talent development.

Why is India-EU trade agreement significant?

How much of the trade value of what India exports to the European Union region will the EU's tariff concessions cover? Which are the sectors besides textiles, apparel, manufactured goods and Indian traditional medicine services that the free trade agreement will help?

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

The story so far:

Negotiations on the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) – dubbed the 'mother of all deals' by leaders on both sides – officially concluded on January 27, closing about two decades worth of intermittent talks. The deal, which has benefits for both, simultaneously avoids intractable sensitive issues while securing advantageous concessions on most others.

Why is it the 'mother of all deals'?

The FTA has been called thus because of the size of the economies, markets, and bilateral trade involved. The deal brings together the second- and fourth-largest single customs blocs, with the Indian government estimating the combined market size to be ₹2,091.6 lakh crore or about \$24 trillion. India has signed about eight FTAs in the last four years. While the other eight FTAs together accounted for about 16% of India's total trade in 2024-25, in the latest full year of data available, the EU itself accounted for nearly 12%. Bilateral merchandise trade between India and the EU stood at ₹11.5 lakh crore (\$136.54 billion) in 2024-25, with Indian exports accounting for about ₹6.4 lakh crore (\$75.85 billion) of this. The India-EU trade in services touched ₹7.2 lakh crore (\$83.10 billion) in 2024.

What is India gaining?

The detailed FTA document has not been made public yet, with information only available through government releases from both sides. Under the deal, the EU will eliminate duties on about 70.4% of tariff lines immediately once the deal comes into effect, covering nearly 90.7% of India's export value. Another 20.3% of products

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal claims the deal will be implemented in calendar year 2026

covering 2.9% of India's exports will see tariffs eliminated over 3-5 years from implementation for certain marine products, processed food items, arms and ammunition, among others. In addition, 6.1% tariff lines covering 6% of India's exports will see tariffs reduced, but not eliminated, for certain poultry products, preserved vegetables, bakery products among others or be reduced through quota-based tariffs for cars, steel, certain shrimp and prawns products, among others. So, taken together, the EU's tariff concessions cover more than 99% of the trade value of what India exports to the region. The concessions offered are not limited to merchandise either. While the services sector has not seen as wide an opening up as merchandise, the EU has offered "broader and deeper commitments" across 144 service sub-sectors, including IT/ITeS, professional services, education, and other business services, the government has said.

Which sectors stand to benefit?

"The potential [of the EU FTA] on labour intensive sectors, where we've got huge wins, is about \$35 billion. Out of the \$35 billion, \$33.5 billion will become 0% duty on day 1," Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal explained to *The Hindu* in an interview following the closure of negotiations. These sectors, which include textiles, apparel, marine, leather, footwear, chemicals, plastics/rubber, sports goods, toys, and gems and jewellery, currently attract tariffs ranging from 4-26%. This is particularly noteworthy because these are primarily the sectors that have been hit by the 50% tariffs imposed by the U.S. on imports from India. "Preferential market access for agricultural products like tea, coffee, spices, grapes, gherkins and cucumbers, dried onion, fresh vegetables and fruits as well as for processed food products will make them more competitive in the EU," the government said in a release. The FTA is expected to benefit Indian traditional medicine services and practitioners as well, it added. As per the deal, in EU countries where regulations do not exist, AYUSH practitioners will be able to provide their services using the qualifications they have obtained in India.

What has India offered to the EU?

Under the deal, about 49.6% of tariff lines covering 30.6% of trade value will see their duties immediately eliminated once the deal comes into effect. Another 39.5% of tariff lines with a trade value of 63.1% will see their tariffs eliminated over five, seven, or 10 years from when the deal is implemented. Taken together, India's total offer covers about 92.1% of tariff



New horizon: The signing of the India-EU FTA in New Delhi on January 27. ANI

lines and 97.5% of trade value.

While a lot of European items are set to get cheaper for Indians, the main consumer-facing items of interest are wine and automobiles. European wine will see current duties of about 150% falling in a phased manner over seven years to 30% for wine priced between 2.5 to 10 euros and to 20% for wine over 10 euros. No concessions have been offered on cheap wine to protect domestic producers. These tariffs all apply under a quota, however, with amounts exceeding the quota limit attracting non-FTA tariffs. On motor vehicles, the tariffs will be gradually reduced to 10% from the current 110%, but also under a quota system. Cars below ₹25 lakh, which account for majority of the Indian market, are not part of the deal. Cars above that limit are divided into three quota brackets. The lowest of these brackets has the smallest quota for European cars, since Indian manufacturers do have a presence there. The highest segment has the biggest quota for European cars since the ultra-luxury segment is where European carmakers don't have Indian competition.

Which sectors are kept out of the deal?

In his interview, Mr. Goyal explained that in all his FTA negotiations the two countries begin by laying out their 'red lines' or sectors that they will not offer any concessions on. So, in the EU deal, India managed to keep out sensitive agricultural sectors such as beef, poultry, dairy products, fish and seafood, cereals, especially rice and wheat, fruits and vegetables, nuts, edible oils, tea, coffee, spices, and tobacco. The EU has kept beef, sugar, rice, chicken meat, milk powder, honey, bananas, soft wheat, garlic, and ethanol out of the deal, and has offered quotas on sheep and goat meat, sweetcorn, grapes, cucumbers, dried onions, and rum made of molasses and starches. Mr. Goyal has expressed his confidence that the deal will be implemented in calendar year 2026, despite the fact that the text still needs to go through legal vetting, translation into 24 European languages, approval in 27 European countries, and finally passage in the European Parliament.

What are some concerns?

The FTA could not make much headway in addressing the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), a tariff structure the EU devised to address the carbon footprint of countries and companies. The EU side argued that CBAM tariffs apply to all countries equally and so it cannot give any concessions to specific countries. However, India has secured a commitment that, if the EU gives CBAM concessions to any other country, those would automatically apply to India as well.

Another concern is that, if India is to attract investments from countries looking to take advantage of the new tariff-free route to Europe, it will have to quickly implement more reforms to make India investment-friendly.

Why have the new UGC regulations been stayed?

Why have there been protests? How have the regulations defined caste-based discrimination? Why were new regulations introduced? What was the main thrust of the 2026 regulations on grievance redressal mechanisms as opposed to the 2012 ones?

Abhinav Lakshman

The story so far:

In January 29, the Supreme Court stayed a new set of regulations notified by the University Grants Commission (UGC) earlier this month on the promotion of equity within higher educational institutes, saying they were "vague and could be misused". These regulations were brought to replace a previous version in effect since 2012, to specifically address issues of caste discrimination in campuses.

What are the 2026 UGC equity regulations?

The University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations Bill, 2026, were notified by the higher education regulator on January 13, 2026. In these regulations, the UGC defined "caste-based discrimination" as "discrimination only on the basis of caste or tribe against the members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other backward classes". It also defined "discrimination" as "any unfair, differential, or biased treatment or any such act against any stakeholder, whether explicit or implicit, on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, disability, or any of

A significant section argued that the new regulations were not strengthening the 2012 rules on anti-discrimination

them..." The regulations provided for establishing a layered grievance redressal system for addressing discrimination. This included provisions to set up Equal Opportunity Centres, Equity Committees, and Equity Squads in each institute, and Equity Ambassadors in each unit (departments, schools) of the institutes. It also provided for an institutional accountability mechanism, where institutes found violating the regulations could be penalised.

Why were the regulations said to be biased?

Protesters argued that the regulations discriminated against "general or upper castes", hinging on the (lack of) definition of "caste-based discrimination", the dropping of the provision on "false complaints", and the ambiguity in the functioning of bodies like the 'Equity Squads'. By leaving them out of this definition, the upper caste section argued that the regulations had "presupposed" that general or upper caste students would be the perpetrators of caste discrimination at all times. Further, the protesters argued that the provision of punishment for "false complaints" had also been absent, which they said could have been useful to counter false complaints.

How did these regulations come about?

These regulations were devised under the supervision of a Supreme Court Bench that was hearing a batch of petitions filed in 2019 by the mothers of Rohith Vemula and Payal Tadvi, both of whom had died by suicide, alleging caste-discrimination in 2016 and 2019, respectively. Their petition had argued that the 2012 UGC regulations were not being implemented to address "rampant caste-discrimination" in higher education institutes. During the hearings, the UGC had told the Supreme Court that it had formed a Expert Committee to revisit the 2012 regulations under the Chairmanship of Professor Shailesh N. Zala. The committee drafted a revised version of the equity regulations, and the final regulations were notified in 2026.

What were the 2012 regulations?

In the 2012 regulations, the regulatory authority

had not defined "caste-based discrimination" separately. It had defined "discrimination" with sub-sections on depriving access to education, imposing undignified conditions, and maintaining separate educational and social spaces within the campuses on the basis of caste, creed, religion, language, ethnicity, gender, and disability. The 2012 regulations had provided for the setting up of grievance redressal mechanisms, which included the establishment of Equal Opportunity Cells, SC/ST Cells, and the appointment of an anti-discrimination officer. Further, in prohibiting discrimination against SC and ST students in higher educational institutes, the 2012 regulations had identified a total of 25 specific instances and types of discrimination in various aspects of campus life. None of these specific acts has been included in the 2026 regulations. However, the 2012 regulations did not provide the language to protect "Other Backward Classes" and did not have institutional consequences for not following through on the implementation of the regulations.

Were only upper castes upset?

No. A significant section argued that the new regulations were not strengthening the 2012 rules on anti-discrimination, principally because of the lack of specificity on what counted as discrimination. Professor Sukhadeo Thorat, former Chairperson of the UGC argued that the new regulations do not clarify if they will be applicable to institutes like IITs, IIMs, polytechnics, nursing institutions, etc., further noting that the composition of Equity Committees should mention the quantum of representation for SC, ST, and OBC members. Jadavpur University Assistant Professor Subhajit Naskar said in dropping the specific acts of discrimination, the new regulations had, in fact, diluted the 2012 regulations.

Now what?

The SC has said that the batch of petitions challenging the 2026 regulations will be heard with the petitions filed by the mothers of Rohith Vemula and Payal Tadvi, also calling for the UGC to go back to its 2012 regulations while it hears the challenges to the new version. In doing so, the SC has also framed certain legal questions that are to be addressed in the course of the hearings in these matters from now onwards. These petitions are to come up for the next hearing in March.



Heavy pushback: A protest being held in Lucknow against the new UGC equity guidelines on January 29. SANDEEP SAXENA

PROFILES

Between the sea and the state

The Great Nicobar project

The ₹72,000-crore mega-infrastructure initiative, which envisions transforming the remote outpost into a major transhipment and defence hub, has sparked procedural, ecological and displacement concerns

Vasudevan Mukunth

Great Nicobar Island, the southernmost tip of the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago, is one of the most pristine and isolated ecosystems on the planet, and the home of the Shompen and the Nicobarese tribes and unique wildlife.

This tranquillity is poised for a radical transformation. The Indian government has sanctioned a ₹72,000-crore mega-infrastructure initiative called the 'Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island'. Spearheaded by NITI Aayog and implemented by the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation, the project envisions transforming the remote outpost into a major transhipment and defence hub.

The project covers around 166 sq. km, or nearly 18% of the island's total land area, and entails an integrated city-state designed to serve both commercial and military purposes. The crown jewel is the international Container Transhipment Terminal in Galathea Bay. The bay's natural depth is ideal to handle large container ships that currently dock in Colombo, Singapore or Klang. The government has said the terminal will eventually handle 14.2 million TEUs of cargo, capturing a significant slice of the transhipment revenue.

A new airport serving both civilian and military needs is planned for 24/7 operations, including handling 4,000 passengers per hour at its peak. The government has said this airport will offer a forward base for surveillance and logistics in the Indian Ocean region.

Perhaps the project's most transformative aspect is the new township. The government has estimated that over the next 30 years, the local population will swell from the current 8,000 to more than 3.5 lakh people. The township will include industrial zones and residential areas and will effectively urbanise a significant chunk of the rainforest. All this infrastructure will be powered by a new 450-MVA gas- and solar-based power plant.



GETTY IMAGES

India's push is driven by geopolitics and economics. The island overlooks the western entrance of the Strait of Malacca, a narrow shipping lane through which around 40% of the world's trade and most of China's energy imports pass. In the event of a conflict, a robust military presence here would allow India to theoretically monitor or interdict Chinese naval assets entering the Indian Ocean. Second, nearly 75% of India's transhipment cargo is currently handled by ports outside the country, increasing the logistic costs for Indian trade. A transhipment hub at Great Nicobar could on the other hand allow India to service its own cargo as well as attract international vessels.

Source of controversy

The project's primary source of controversy has been speed, which critics have argued is part of government efforts to sidestep due diligence. In 2021, NITI Aayog engaged AECOM, a global infrastructure firm, to prepare a pre-feasibility report. In March 2022, the terms of reference for the environmental impact assessment (EIA) were finalised. And in November,

the Union Environment Ministry granted stage-I forest clearance to divert 130.75 sq. km of forest land. Days later, the final clearance was granted as well.

The rapidity raised eyebrows because the project required denotifying parts of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and tribal reserve. Galathea Bay is itself a crucial nesting site for the giant leatherback turtle, ancient mariners that travel thousands of kilometres to nest on these beaches. Building breakwaters and dredging for the port will effectively destroy the beach and permanently drive the turtles away. Conservationists and policymakers have also criticised the EIA for being based on a single season of data rather than the comprehensive multi-season data usually required for projects of this magnitude.

To build the township and airport, an estimated 9.64 lakh trees will be cut, per government figures; independent ecologists fear the number could be higher. These forests are the only home of the Nicobar megapode and the Nicobar tree shrew.

The rules require the state to plant trees elsewhere to 'compensate' for

the deforestation. Since there is no land left in the archipelago, the government has proposed planting trees in Haryana, thousands of kilometres away – an idea ecologists have scoffed at because planting saplings in a dry, dusty scrubland in North India couldn't possibly replace the complex ecological functions of a tropical evergreen rainforest in the Bay of Bengal.

The project will also affect more than 20,000 coral colonies. The government has proposed translocating these corals to other sites but that's a complex process with a notoriously low survival rate worldwide. Overall, critics have said the state's ideas amount to ticking boxes rather than a genuine conservation strategy.

The project's social effects are likely to be equally volatile. The island is home to two distinct indigenous groups, the Nicobarese and the Shompen. The Shompen are a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) – largely semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers who have lived in the island's interior for millennia, with limited contact with the outside world.

While the government claims the Shompen settlements won't be disturbed, anthropologists are clear that an influx of 3 lakh outsiders and construction activity will push them into smaller pockets of land. The Shompen also lack immunity to common diseases. Greater contact with construction workers and tourists thus poses a severe risk of an epidemic that could wipe out the tribe, a fear international scholars have articulated as a risk of "genocide".

Tragic history

While the Nicobarese are more assimilated, they have a tragic history with the project site. Before the 2004 tsunami, many of its members lived on the west coast; after the tsunami, they were relocated to the east coast with the promise that they could eventually return to their ancestral lands. But by designating the west coast for the project, the government is effectively barring the Nicobarese from ever returning home.

Under the Forest Rights Act 2006, diverting forest land requires the gram sabhas' consent. Reports, however, indicate that the Tribal Council issued a 'no objection certificate' in 2022, only to withdraw it later alleging the Council had been rushed into signing without understanding the implications. The government has proceeded with the project anyway.

In 2023, the National Green Tribunal temporarily stayed the project and constituted a high-powered committee to revisit its clearances. However, the committee submitted its report in a sealed cover and the NGT allowed the project to proceed saying the committee had found the project to be compliant. Critics, including a group of former civil servants, condemned this lack of transparency saying an environmental clearance process for a public project couldn't be treated as a state secret.

Tribal leaders continue to protest, with captains from Great Nicobar alleging publicly that they were forced by district administrations to sign "surrender certificates" for their land, further fuelling suspicions that the government is bulldozing the project through.

THE GIST

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The project's primary source of controversy has been speed, which critics have argued is part of government efforts to sidestep due diligence

The island is home to two distinct indigenous groups, the Nicobarese and the Shompen, who are likely to be affected by the project

Out of the shadows

Sunetra Pawar

Ajit Pawar's wife has large shoes to fill as she takes on the twin responsibilities of party leadership and the role of Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit

Her gaze fixed on the floor, pallu firmly tucked over both shoulders, sadness in her eyes and a quiet demeanour. That is how Sunetra Pawar, mother of two sons and wife of former Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and NCP supremo Ajit Pawar, walked into Maharashtra's Vidhan Bhavan on Saturday. Flanked by party leaders, she strode quietly to the NCP office in Mumbai and paid floral tributes to the photo of her husband who was killed in a plane crash on January 28. It was here that the party which her husband formed three years ago along with several regional satraps after rebelling against uncle Sharad Pawar, chose her unanimously as its leader on Saturday.

Within some time, clad in a white saree, she reached Lok Bhavan to be sworn in as Maharashtra's first woman Deputy Chief Minister. None of the Pawar family members except her son were present for the swearing-in ceremony, as they said they were not invited. For Sharad Pawar, who had once called her an 'outsider' in the Pawar family, the immediate concern was to take care of the grief-struck family.

She takes over the reins



of her husband's party at a time when it faces a survival crisis. There is a buzz about a possible reunification between the NCP and Sharad Pawar's NCP SP, as the leadership within the NCP looks fragmented and directionless. Like most regional parties which are dynastic in nature, the NCP too would want a Pawar at the helm, to keep it together. The debate over which Pawar should helm it and whether Sharad Pawar should now take the decision for both parties together, is yet to be settled. Meanwhile, Sharad Pawar has himself said it was senior NCP leaders Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare who had taken decisions for their party, indicating that they were trying to keep the rest of the Pawar family out of it.

Tall task

Sunetra Pawar is a political novice, say critics, who will now try to fill in the large shoes of her late husband who was known as an able administrator, a politician with a distinct mass appeal and captivating oratory skills. His sudden demise has turned the bipolar political combine of the ruling Mahayuti to a bipolar one. The assertive NCP, which had created its own space in the alliance, faces a tough road ahead, say critics.

So far, Sunetra Pawar had been seen only in the shadows of Ajit Pawar. She has been a Rajya Sabha MP for the past year and a half, with over 26 years of experience in social service and the educational sector. In any case, she has so far taken a subservient role, coming from a political culture where women are seen as a subsidiary support system to their ambitious men folk.

She was born and brought up in Ter village in Dharashiv in Marathwada, in a Maratha political family. Her brother Padmasinha Patil was a Minister in the State government. A Bachelor of Commerce by education, she took more

interest in music, photography and painting. Friends say she has been closely involved in several rural development, education and women's empowerment projects in Barwati for years.

"She is a sensitive, meticulous and caring person who always prioritised her children, her mother-in-law, her family and her village, taking keen interest in every small rural empowerment initiative in (Ajit Pawar's home town) Kattewadi," said a friend Asha Shinde.

When in Mumbai, she would love photographing the sun, the sea and nature, said friends.

She sings well, loves listening to music, loves to paint. One of her painting exhibitions was hosted in Mumbai. "Even when we would go out as friends, she would take a few audio cassettes with her. We would listen to lovely songs on our way to the trip," said Vandana Katti, a friend of over 22 years.

Many of her close friends expressed confidence that she will be an evolved, progressive and sensitive leader who knows how to take people along. For now, the question is whether she will be able to keep her flock together and navigate the party and family relations through the most challenging phase.

The Young Turk

Gagan Thapa

The 49-year-old Nepali Congress leader says he is ready to carry the generational change within the country's oldest party to governance if he is voted to power

Sanjeev Satgaina

In mid-January, Nepal's oldest party, the Nepali Congress, was in turmoil. A cohort of young leaders led by Gagan Thapa launched a mutiny against the party's old guard, which refused to relent despite growing internal pressure.

Mr. Thapa then marshalled his supporters to convene a "special convention" of the party, a move that culminated in his election as party president. Now, the Nepali Congress heads into elections under the leadership of the 49-year-old, claiming that the party has undergone internal reform and promising to carry that change into governance if voted to power.

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His call for generational change grew sharper after the September Gen Z protests, which demanded not only an end to corruption and misgovernance but also a shift in political leadership – from ageing elites to younger figures. Mr. Thapa argued that if the establish-

ment was unwilling to allow a generational transition through the party's regular convention, a special convention was necessary to force change. And he did it.

Risen from the ranks

Born into a middle-class family, Gagan Thapa grew up in Kathmandu and developed an early interest in politics during his school years. He entered public life as a student activist during the 1990 political movement that restored multiparty democracy in Nepal. During the 2006 people's movement, he emerged as a vocal advocate for the abolition of the monarchy.

Appointed to the Constituent Assembly in 2008 under the proportional representation system, he steadily consolidated his position within the party. Since 2013, he has won three consecutive elections from Kathmandu-4 to serve as a Member of Parliament. This time, however,

dur Deuba joined hands with CPN-UML leader K.P. Sharma Oli to form a government – a move widely criticised as an unparliamentary practice because it brought together the two largest parties – Mr. Thapa publicly opposed the decision. Yet, he later chose to support the Oli government, accepting that he had little room to manoeuvre.

Mr. Thapa has assumed control of the party just ahead of the March 5 elections, widely seen as a litmus test for Nepal's traditional political forces following the Gen Z protests that led to the fall of the Oli government, which had been backed by the Deuba-led Congress.

He takes over at a moment of widespread public discontent with established parties, even as new political forces gain traction. The Congress named him its prime ministerial candidate amid pressure after the Rastriya Swatantra Party, a relatively new entrant, tapped Barendra Shah – a popular figure among the youth – as its prime ministerial face.

Mr. Thapa now carries dual responsibilities: steering the party through a period of transition and delivering electoral success. "He may have won the internal battle, but his real test begins now," says Chandrakishore.

er, he is contesting from Sarlahi-4 in the Madhesh plains, bordering India, and the party has named him its prime ministerial candidate.

"He has struggled his way to the top, but what also needs to be noted is that he has switched alliances multiple times," says Chandrakishore, a political commentator. "Now, as the new leader of the country's oldest party, his real challenges are only beginning."

Mr. Thapa, a crowd-puller, has a keen sense of political timing and an ability to connect with masses. But the same loquaciousness that earns him praise has also become a vulnerability. Critics accuse him of delivering more rhetoric than substance. Though known for opposing leadership high-handedness, he is also viewed as selective in his dissent. On more than one occasion, he has chosen accommodation over confrontation.

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WASHINGTON

Trump administration approves arms sales to Israel, Saudi Arabia



The Trump administration has approved a massive new series of arms sales to Israel totalling \$6.67 billion and to Saudi Arabia worth \$9 billion. The Saudi sale is for 730 Patriot missiles and related equipments. The sales to Israel are split into four separate packages, including one for 30 Apache attack helicopters. AP

WASHINGTON

U.S. govt. enters partial shutdown but a quick resolution is expected



The U.S. government entered a partial shutdown on Saturday as a midnight funding deadline passed without Congress approving a 2026 Budget, though disruption was expected to be limited with the House set to move early next week to ratify a Senate-backed deal. Roughly three-quarters of federal operations are affected. AFP

CARACAS

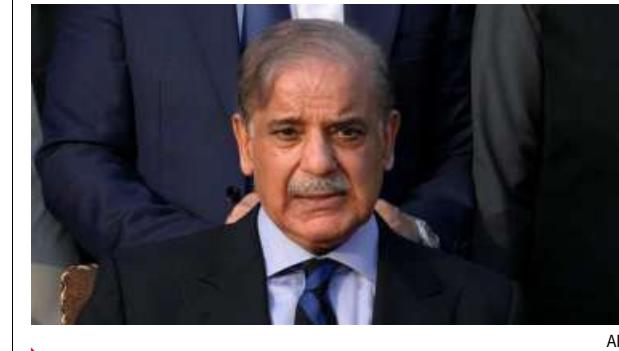
Venezuela announces amnesty Bill to release political prisoners



Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodriguez on Friday announced an amnesty Bill that could lead to the release of hundreds of prisoners, including Opposition leaders, journalists and human rights activists detained for political reasons. The measure had long been sought by the United States-backed Opposition. AP

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan had to 'bow' its head while seeking financial aid: Sharif



Seeking loan had forced Pakistan to "bow" its head and make compromises at the "cost of self-respect", Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said in a candid admission about the humiliation involved in approaching "friendly countries" for financial aid. He added that loans also create obligations that have to be fulfilled. PTI

Separatists kill 21 in multiple attacks in southern Pakistan

Associated Press
QUETTA

Separatists from Pakistan's Balochistan province claimed responsibility for nearly a dozen coordinated attacks across southern Pakistan early Saturday that targeted civilians, a high-security prison, police stations and paramilitary installations. Eleven civilians, 10 security personnel and 67 insurgents were killed, authorities said.

Though Baloch separatists and the Pakistani Taliban frequently target security forces in Balochistan and elsewhere in the country, coordinated attacks on this scale are rare. Authorities said at least 108 militants have been killed across Balochistan over the past 48 hours, including 67 on Saturday. Analysts said



Pakistani soldiers and other security officials examine a site following a militant attack in Quetta on Saturday. AP

it was the deadliest single day for militants in decades.

The dead included 11 civilians, among them three women and three children, in Balochistan's Gwadar, police official Ibad Khan said. He said the dead civilians were ethnic Baloch.

Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said in a statement that 10 security officers were killed.

The outlawed Baloch Liberation Army, or BLA, claimed responsibility for the attacks, during which some of the banks were robbed and a police station and dozens of vehicles torched. The BLA released videos showing female fighters taking part in the attacks, apparently part of a propaganda to highlight the role of women among the militants.

U.S., Israel, Europe incited unrest to tear Iran apart, says Pezeshkian

President accuses the U.S., Israel, and European leaders of exploiting Iran's economic crisis; Trump had expressed support for protesters and warned that the U.S. might take action; Army chief says Iran's nuclear expertise could not be eliminated

Reuters

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Saturday that U.S., Israeli and European leaders had exploited Iran's economic problems, incited unrest and provided people with the means to "tear the nation apart" in recent protests.

The two-week-long nationwide protests, which began in late December over an economic crisis marked by soaring inflation and rising living costs, have abated after a bloody crackdown by the clerical authorities that U.S.-based rights group HRANA says has killed at least 6,563, including 6,170 protesters



Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a visit to the mausoleum of leader of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, in Tehran on Saturday. REUTERS

and 214 security forces.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told CNN Turk that 3,100, including 2,000 security forces, had been killed.

The U.S., Israeli and Eu-

U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly voiced support for the demonstrators, saying the U.S. was prepared to take action if Iran continued to kill protesters. U.S. officials said on Friday that Mr. Trump was reviewing his options but had not decided whether to strike Iran.

Israel's Ynet news website said on Friday that a U.S. Navy destroyer had docked at the Israeli port of Eilat.

"Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Europeans 'rode on our problems, provoked, and were seeking – and still seek – to fragment society,'" Mr. Pezeshkian added.

Meanwhile, Iranian army chief Amir Hatami warned the United States and Israel against an attack, saying his country's forces were on high alert following Washington's heavy military deployments in the Gulf.

He also insisted the Islamic republic's nuclear expertise could not be eliminated, after Mr. Trump said he expected Tehran to seek a deal to avoid U.S. strikes.

"If the enemy makes a mistake, without a doubt it will endanger its own security, the security of the region, and the security of the Zionist regime," Gen. Hatami said, according to the IRNA news agency.

The rise and fall of General Zhang Youxia

NEWS ANALYSIS

Stanly Johny

Gen. Zhang Youxia is one of China's few top military officers with combat experience. He joined the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2007, and in 2012, he was appointed to the Central Military Commission (CMC), the country's highest military decision-making body. In 2017, he entered the Politburo, the 24-member body that oversees both the party and the central government, and was elevated to the second-ranked Vice Chairman of the CMC.

In 2022, as President Xi Jinping began a third term following a constitutional amendment, Gen. Zhang retained his position on the CMC and was promoted to first-ranked Vice Chairman, the country's highest-ranking military officer. Even as several senior military officers were removed amid a widening "anti-corruption" crackdown, Gen. Zhang, widely seen as having close ties to Mr. Xi, seemed unaffected. On January 24, China's



Gen. Zhang Youxia

over the armed forces and undermine the Party's governance foundation."

Zhang Youxia, born in 1950 in Weinan City, Shaanxi Province, is a princeling like Xi Jinping – the descendants of China's founding revolutionaries. His father Zhang Zongxun fought alongside Mr. Xi's father Xi Zhongxun during China's civil war. Mr. Zhang joined the PLA in 1968 and gained rare combat experience during the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese war. He became a Major General in 1997 and the commander of the PLA's Shenyang Military Region, which shares a border with North Korea and Russia, in 2007. In the same year, he was appointed to the Central Committee of the party when Hu Jintao was the President. In 2011, he became a General.

A year later, Gen. Zhang was appointed the head of the PLA General Armaments Department, a position that placed him at the centre of China's military modernisation drive, initiated by Xi Jinping.

Mr. Xi launched a sweeping anti-corruption drive aimed at rooting out corruption and favouritism within the PLA's top ranks. He also overhauled the military's command structure, centralising control and authority in his own hands. Several senior officers have fallen to the crackdown, particularly after Mr. Xi assumed his third term. Those sacked since 2022 include Li Yuchao, the commander of China's Rocket Force, and his deputy Liu Guangbin and former deputy Zhang Zhenzhong.

Disagreements with Xi
When the current CMC began its term in 2022, it comprised seven members: Xi Jinping (Chairman); Zhang Youxia (Vice Chairman); He Weidong (Vice Chairman); Li Shangfu (Defence Minister); Liu Zhenli (Chief of the Joint Staff Department); Miao Hua (Director of the Politi-

cal Work Department); and Zhang Shengmin (Secretary of the Military's discipline commission). Of these, only two have remained in their positions unaffected by the anti-corruption drive – President Xi himself and Zhang Shengmin, the discipline czar who was promoted to the rank of Vice Chairman in October 2025.

While official statements and party mouthpieces offer few details about the investigation into Gen. Zhang, an analysis of official statements by the Jamestown Foundation, a U.S.-based think tank, argued that disagreements with Mr. Xi over PLA development and training were the cause of the General's downfall.

"Zhang Youxia's timeline for PLA joint operations training did not align with Xi Jinping's 2027 deadline for the PLA to be capable of invading Taiwan," K. Tristan Tang wrote in Jamestown. "His force-building agenda also focused on fewer priorities and placed less emphasis than Xi on military struggle as a standalone objective, instead integrating it into training activities."

U.S. releases largest batch yet of Epstein documents

Associated Press
NEW YORK

The Justice Department on Friday released more records from its investigative files on Jeffrey Epstein, resuming disclosures under a law intended to reveal what the government knew about his sexual abuse of young girls.

Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said the department would be releasing more than 3 million pages of documents along with more than 2,000 videos and 1.8 lakh images.

Israeli air strikes kill at least 30 Palestinians

Associated Press
DEIR AL-BALAH

Hospitals in Gaza said Israeli strikes killed at least 30 Palestinians on Saturday, one of the highest tolls since the October ceasefire aimed at stopping the fighting.

A day after Israel ac-

cused Hamas of new ceasefire violations, strikes hit locations throughout Gaza, including lethal ones on an apartment building in Gaza City and a tent camp in Khan Younis.

The strikes also came a day before the Rafah crossing along the border with Egypt is set to open.

Tamil Nadu Power Generation Corporation Ltd Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)		
Specification No.	Tender Inviting Authority	Name of the Work
16	CE / Electrical / NCTPP - III	Manual unloading of Indigenous coal from Railway wagons
For details of works / Procurement / Due date of submission / Opening, viewing and download of e-tenders, please visit websites: www.tnpsc.org , www.tenders.tn.gov.in , www.tntenders.gov.in		
DIPR/640/Tender/2026		

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA, NIRMAN SUDHA, KESHARI NAGAR, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR-751 001	
1 st Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. CE-BRIDGES - 14 / 2025-26	
Following changes are made to the Invitation for the work at SI.01 "Improvement such as widening and strengthening of Raikia - Simanbadhi road from 0/0 to 9/000m (Except 6/425km to 6/575km) in the District of Kandhamal for the year 2025-26" vide Bid Identification No. CE - BRIDGES - 14 / 2025-26.	
► The Last date of submission of tender is extended upto 5.00 PM of dt.17.02.2026.	
► Bids received on line shall be opened at 11.30 A.M on dt.18.02.2026.	
All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.	
Chief Engineer, Bridges, Odisha, Bhubaneswar, OIPR-34001/34174/1/25-26/0012	

ODISHA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED	
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)	
Regd. Office: OPTCL Tech Tower, Janpath, Sahaed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007	Lifeline of Odisha
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSET PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN OPTCL	
E-EOI NO- EOI-CPC-61/2025-26	

Date: 31.01.2026
OPTCL invites sealed Expression of Interest (EOI) for Implementation of Asset Performance Management System in OPTCL.

The EOI Document containing the details of qualification criteria, submission requirement, brief objective & scope of work and evaluation criteria etc. can be downloaded from the website www.optcl.co.in/ / www.tenderwizard.com/OPTCL Dt: 02.02.2026, 12:00 Hrs onwards.

The last date for submission of Expression of Interest (EOI) is

16.02.2026 up to 14.00 Hrs.

HIPR-72/2025-26

Sd/-
CGM(CPC)

Ukraine, Moldova hit by blackouts

Reuters

KYIV/CHISINAU

Parts of Ukraine and Moldova, including the capitals of both neighbouring countries, were plunged into blackouts on Saturday caused by malfunctions to high-voltage power lines, officials said.

Officials did not directly link the blackouts to war damage, although Ukraine's power grid has suf-

fered from the accumulated impact of months of air strikes leading to severe restrictions on electricity supplies in recent weeks.

Ukraine's Digital Ministry also said a cyberattack was not to blame.

The system is under greater pressure as a cold spell returns this weekend.

Russia said on Friday it had agreed to halt strikes on Ukraine's energy infrastructure until February 1 at

Mine collapses in Congo, leaving at least 200 dead

Associated Press

GOMA

A landslide earlier this week collapsed several mines at a major coltan mining site in eastern Congo, leaving at least 200 people dead, rebel authorities said on Saturday.

The collapse took place on Wednesday at the Rubaya mines, which are con-

trolled by the M23 rebels, Lumumba Kambara Muyisa, the spokesperson of the rebel-appointed governor of North-Kivu province said.

He said the landslide was caused by heavy rains.

"For now, there are more than 200 dead, some of whom are still in the mud and have not yet been recovered," Mr. Muyisa said.

classifieds

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thehinduads.com

SITUATIONS VACANT

INDEX OF SITUATIONS VACANT

ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

BPO

COURIER

COMPUTER/ INFO. TECH.

DETECTIVE/ SECURITY SERVICES

ENGG./PRODN./ TECHNICAL

GARMENTS

HOTEL

HOUSE KEEPING

HRD & ADMN.

INSURANCE

LOGISTICS

MARKETING & SALES

MEDICAL

MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION

OVERSEAS

PLACEMENT CONSULTANTS

PRINTING/ E-PUBLISHING

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

R & D / LAB

SECRETARIAL

SHIPPING & CARGO

SKILLED LABOUR

STORES/ PURCHASE

TRAINING & PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

WALK-IN

GENERAL

FINANCE

Wanted Accounts Manager with B.Com / MBA (Finance) Tally prime 5 yrs experience handling TDS, GST, IT returns, Banking, MIS statements, total responsible for accounts department. Contact: 99403 57311. Mail:swaminathan@goranlageos.com

BRS HOSPITAL Nungambakkam requires Accounts Asst 9 am to 5pm Ct: 9840669913/ 9716418576

WANTED EXP Finance Controller, Qual: M.Com, MBA, Age: Below 5yrs. Good Salary @ Kolathur Senthil Nagar & Around 10km Male only C:9629333005

WANTED ACCOUNTANT Well Experience in Tally ERP, GST, Filing, TDS, PF, etc. / Meppedu, Thiruvallur District. Ct: 7550222888, 9500116757

CONSTRUCTION COMPANY Req Accounts Executive with Proficiency in Finance /Tally Exp Immediate placements Apply to: hr.civicons@hotmail.com

GENERAL

SR. CITIZENS Rtd Govt & Pvt, VRS 50 - 65 with Sal upto 75K 9500211800

PART TIME System Typist. Wanted Tamil Part time System Typist Male / Female for T.Nagar office from 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm. Send CV to vijayditya@gmail.com or Call: 90259 21832.

✓ REPUTED BUILDER Concern - Looking to hire 1. Engr/ Diploma (Civil) 2.Receptionist. 3.Sales Manager Ct/Watsapp: Details:38840552/9841035556

VIKAL MULTIMEDIA Req 1.Web Designer/Content Creator 2.Digital Mktg Reporter 3.Social Media Reporter 4.Accountant-Tally knowledge 5. Hospitality Mngr Apply: vikalpm4u@gmail.com

ABN LOGISTICS Pvt Ltd, Vichoor require Warehouse Incharge, Warehouse Marketing Executive, Forklift Operator, 3+ yrs Relevant Exp & Fluent in English for Executives. Send Resumes To: abnlogistics.sales@gmail.com C: 9841035500

REPUTED REAL Estate Co. seek Telecaller G.Sal-Inc. Ct: 9176574578

IMMEDIATE OPENING for Tel callers for our travel office in Adyar. Ct 9962031723

REQUIRED OFFICE Admin Min 3yrs Exp with Com Knowledge & English Fluency Apply : reliancebricks@gmail.com

WANTED FOR A reputed NGO Exp. Web Designer with knowledge of PHP & Networking Age no bar M.F. 9839300227 / 7710203020. mtcservice@gmail.com

REPUTED BANKING Sector Red Senior Citizens (Rtd/VRS) M.F. 76398 24654

SENIOR ACCOUNTANT 5-7YRS exp. with tally knowledge & Project coordinator, 2-3 yrs exp with civil knowledge. @ Kellys. klpakup.Ct: 26445535 @ 9962500893 Email: mcmntra@gmail.com

HEMLIT SHOP- Staff reqd 18K/pm plus Attractive Incentives. Ct: 7705640848

WANTED MALE/FEMALE Candidates with Computer Proficiency to Maintain Accounts in Chennai. Salary Rs. 20,000/- Email Your Resume to azhagappan.annamalai@gmail.com

WANTED FEMALE Accountant & Assistant with 3yrs Experience in & around Avadi. Contact: 94400 51834.

WANTED EXP. Accountant with Tally and Office Assistant. Apply immediately Ramya Electric Gear (P) Ltd, Thirumudikulam. Email: ramyaelectric2012@gmail.com

WANTED ADMIN. Manager & ACCOUNTANT, Qual: B.Com., M.Com, Exp. in Tally Prime, E-Way bill, E-Invoice. Age below 40yrs. Good Salary @ Kolathur Senthil Nagar & Around 10km. Male only Ct: 9629333000

Looking for a qualified Accounts Manager for an Educational Institution in OMR, Thoraipakkam. Candidates with working experience in Tally, e-filing of Statutory returns can apply.

Contact :

9840572999

9600112467

RENTAL - COMMERCIAL

TO-LET COMMERCIAL LANDS (1) 3720 sq.ft near pattaiperumbudur Toll Gate, Chennai-Iruvupuram Hwy, 40ft frontage; (2) 57 cents near TN-APB Border, 40 ft frontage. Prime locations, good visibility, ideal for hotel/commercial use. Contact:944310251

500sqft Office / Rental Space Available. 1st Flr with lift opp. Tagore Engg. College, Chennai. ct: 8838195959.

OMR, KARAPAKKAM, Shops/Offices for rent in a gated community with 625 flats, 309 to 2162 sq.ft. Call: 81108 60606

VENGAVALAS NR.MEDAVAKKAM 642 to 916 sqft Shops/Offices for rent 7200017255

MOGAPPARAI S.M.NARAYANAN SI, GT-1030sqft, available in 150,200 alsoRs.120/Sqft suit for Beauty Saloon, office, Clinic, ATM. Ct: 9600077474

GOPALAPURAM, 2540 Slt, 1st floor with 4 & 2 wheel parking; 720013636

EKKATUTHANGAL DEFENCE colony 500sqft 1st & 2nd flr Corporate Office, IT Related Office.Etc Ct:9840096698

MYLAPORE RK SALAI GF FOR OFFICE CT:63805 06618

VANAGARAM - NOOMBAL

12500 SFT

WAREHOUSE

NR ULTRATECH

READYMIX

SUIT for all Commercial Purpose.

Ct: 81444 13081

GENERAL

GENERAL

MNC Co. Required Business Development Manager (Female Only)

Min 3-5yrs exp, Salary 55K - 1 Lac + Inc. Office / Work from Home—Opting to travel abroad if preferred. (Language: English, All South Indian & Arabic Language preferred.)

POWERCARE GROUP

RR Towers, Thiruvila Indl. Est, Guindy

admin@powercareolutions.in

80561 28081 / 96000 58550

A REPUTED Manufacturing Unit at Ambattur Estate requires Office Boy-10th std & Experience Ct: 9962229137, Apply:

hr@pioneergroups.co.in

REQ RTRD VRS NRI HW/Hires Opportunity to work as Consultants

7985604941

RECO RTRD VRS NRI HW/Hires Opportunity to work as Consultants

9785604941

REQ ACCOUNTANT Well Experience in Tally ERP, GST, Filing, TDS, PF, etc. / Meppedu, Thiruvallur District. Ct: 7550222888, 9500116757

CONSTRUCTION COMPANY Req Accounts Executive with Proficiency in Finance /Tally Exp Immediate placements Apply to: hr.civicons@hotmail.com

hotmail.com

REQ ACCOUNTS Exp 1-2 years & Data Entry. Exec Any Degree Exp 0-2 years. Sal:10K - 20K Ct: 95.00000000000001/04-2627515

Mail: tradingondot@gmail.com

9176161567 / 7299081567

CABLE MF Co, Sales, Marketing, Account, CAD Design, M/F. Deg/Dep Exp 2-6yrs. info@konnectflex.com

9047967557

WANTED RECEPIONIST Sal 22K, any degree with Good communication skills, age limit 45yrs; Pharmacist Sal 22K, Wardboys Sal 15k, Driver Sal 25k, Residential Cook 20k. Ct: 9840975917, Location: Psysmed Hospital, Harrington Rd, send CV to recruitment_psymedhospital@gmail.com

REPUTED REAL Estate Co. seek Telecaller G.Sal-Inc. Ct: 9176574578

VIKAL MULTIMEDIA Req 1.Web Designer/Content Creator 2.Digital Mktg Reporter 3.Social Media Reporter 4.Accountant-Tally knowledge 5. Hospitality Mngr Apply: vikalpm4u@gmail.com

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Contact :

9840572999

9600112467

RENTAL - COMMERCIAL

Site Engineers : 2 to 10 Yrs Exp

Safety Head : Min 15 Yrs Exp

QS (Billing) : Min 5 Yrs Exp

Steward : Min 2 Yrs Exp

Store Keeper : Min 5 Yrs Exp

Accounts Executive : Min 5 Yrs Exp

STPS 7no's, Trunk Sewer 70K M

Interception & Division (I&D) - 40 no's

Pumping / Lifting Station - 4 no's

Earth work for Embankments- 70 KM

Preferred: Relevant Experience & Qualification.

Apply within a week

Email : hrd@pandc.co.in

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Available Area: 15,000 to 25,000 Sqft

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COSMIC PROPERTIES

VADAPALANI G+2 1500Sft to 5000Sft

Furnished opp AVM Studio.

VELACHERY 100 feet Road 2577 sqft

Each 1st & 2nd Floor suitable for

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Classifieds

Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

THE HINDU

BRIDEROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEROOMS WANTED

BRIDES WANTED

Classification Common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

ASSAMESE

AWADHI

BENGALI

BHOJPURI

BIHARI

CHHATTISGARHI

ENGLISH

GUJARATI

HARYANI

HINDI

KANNADA

KASHMIRI

KONKANI

MALAYALAM

MANIPURI

MARATHI

MARWARI

NEPALI

ORIYA

PARSI

PUNJABI

SAURASHTRA

SINDHI

TAMIL

TELUGU

TULU

URDU

ADVOCATE

BUSINESS

DEFENCE

DOCTOR

ENGINEER

FINANCE/ BANKING

GOVERNMENT/ QUASI-GOVERNMENT

IAS / ALLIED SERVICES

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MBA / CA / ICWA

NRI

COSMOPOLITAN

DIVORCEE

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

MARRIAGE BUREAUS

WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

COSMOPOLITAN

BEAUTIFUL, FAMILY-ORIENTED architect 27, 166cm, affluent, open-minded S. Indian business family. Seeking accomplished, compatible groom. Caste no bar. Call/WhatsApp to 9345634363

DELHI-BASED BANIYA girl, 34, 57", Fair, USA/Harvard Masters, MNC employed. Seeks well-educated Groom. Ph: 9811278555

YADAVA (TAMIL,CHENNAI) 29/155 cm LMM (IIT) Presently Hyderabad Employee. Seeks Professional Groom. Civil Services / Defence.CNB.C. 8754411141

DIVORCEE

CHEERFUL, ATTRACTIVE 32, well-educated (MS) US-based professional. Willing to relocate. Seeks responsible, compatible groom. Religion & community no bar. Call/WA 9345 634 365

VANNIYAR, 30 Aiyalaiyam, Employed in Bank, Legally Divorced. No Issues. Groom needed from Tanjore, Kumbakonam or Chennai area only. 9804961251

MUDHALIYAR, 35, Sathayam, Divorced. No Issue. Bank employee's daughter. Suitable Groom Needed. 9444046770

DOCTOR

MUSLIM GIRL MBBS, 166/26, doing PG (Surgery), Father Rtd. Dist. Officer, Mother Rtd. Deputy Director (Higher Secondary Education), reputed family, Kollam, Kerala. 999583247

36 Doctor MD inter - caste Hindu-Christian Caste No Bar. Seeks Doctor UG / PG or other professional. Contact: 90925 53399

SEEKS BRIDE groom, aged 41-46, ht above 173 cms/PG Drs. High profile businessman or Professionally well settled for Kerala fair & beautiful lady Dr. 41 yrs. Ezaav. Superpecialised, divorced having one daughter living together. Suitable alliances are solicited from Hindu family, caste no bar. Contact: 8075341214

DOCTOR

MBBS MD Dr Marathi Brahmin 37/ 165cm divorced issueless girl from Indore looking for educated upper caste issueless groom. Contact: 9984067923

CHRISTIAN, 26, UK, Medical, 50 lakhs, VVIP. PH: 8137001255

MUSLIM, 28, Private, NRI, 35 lakhs. PH: 8138900312

Muslim (kula) 31/163, PhD, NRI Abu Dhabi seeks groom Professional and religious (no shirk and bidah) 9500146962/safanet@gmail.com

CATHOLIC, 35, Tech, TCS Canada, PR. Would also consider facts revealing trarianian divorce without kids. Ct: 75388 0230

TAMIL MUSLIM Bride 31/159cm, MCA, AVP – Tech Lead, US bank, BLR, 30LPA well-settled family. Seats Tamil speaking never married groom, similar background. Ct 90805 01299

BORN AGAIN Canadian Citizen Bride 29/153cm is looking for God fearing Family Oriented, Canadian or American Citizen. Age 30-35, Biblical values and Faith, Email Profile and Photo to: rjplanning@gmail.com Call: 96771 81606

TAMIL MUSLIM 28/174 MD Radiology sees prof qualified bride Ct: 8220042091 mullahsafi@gmail.com

TAMIL CSI Protestant Vellala fair 27/165/60kg. B.Tech/TI well settled family in Chennai, seeks well settled Christian Doctor/BE/CA/ Architect/ B.E. from Chn/Dubai/ US 9840784555

HINDU, SC(AD), M Tech, 24, Parent (Doctor-Engineer) sees Doctor/Engineer-employed Govt/Abroad-Groom with good family value, Ct: 9003035547

PILLAI PSYCHOLOGIST 26/174 kettai, Slim Fair. M.phil Clinical Psychologist seeks Good looking Well Qualified Groom Subset No Bar Ct 9840194246

LOOKING FOR a suitable Bridegroom for a vannari girl, aged 28 yrs, B.com B.L. Hon's with ACS & employed in a big Corporate. Similar profile or other Professionals with good family background in Chennai preferred – 900319945 9003035547

HINDU SCA 30, B.Sc (CS), second Marriage have a child boy 5 years need a clean habit Groom. Ct: 9994284675

HINDU, 25, Divorced, Chettiyar, MBA, 20 lakhs. PH: 8137003550

HINDU, 28, Tamil speaking Naidu, Bsc, 30 lakhs. PH: 8138900412

HINDU, 32, VIP, NRI, caste no bar, 30 crores. PH: 8137001255

HINDU NADAR Girl 33yrs, MBBS, M.S Ophthalmology Vitreo - Retina Surgeon Doctor only. 9840038499/ 9487928218

ENGINEER

CHRISTIAN NADAR Girls BE, MS Fair, 27, Seeks Suitable Engineer/Wish to Go to Canada Ct: 73586 38363

GOVT / QUASI GOVT

HINDU NADAR 26 yrs, 168 cm, Civil Judge Seeks Bridegroom Below 30 yrs from Same Profession / Group I / Group II Officer in Tamilnadu Only. Ct: 9710209761, 9840425972

HINDI

LOOKING for a phd, professor, scientist for a 30 yrs PhD Chem Engg(IITD) Mb: 9417712071

MALAYALAM

CHENNAI SETTLED Malayalee Catholic parents seek suitable alliance for their daughter 29/158cm B.Tech, MS, working in Europe. Contact: 9444072065

ALLIANCE FROM Malayalee unmarried allopoly Doctor groom for unmarried Hindu spinner69 looks young 9495621351

EZHUTHACHAN GIRL from Ottappalam 30, Ph.D Molecular Biology from prestigious US university, studied & worked in US, now moved to India seeks well educated, professionally established groom (30-35) settled in India & supportive of her career. Girls Parents Respectable, well educated, progressive, worked abroad at NRIs, now settled in Palakkad, Kerala. Send biodata & photograph via WhatsApp to 97031397/ 974160079

WELL EDUCATED, 37, Divorcee Seeks Compatible Groom. Caste No Bar. Call / WA 949695984.

AGAMUDI MUDALIAR 34/165 Mirugam Raghu Lagnam, PG (HR, MNC, Hyderabad) Seeks MS, M.Tech Groom 9176780777

HINDU NADAR, Chennai, 31, Govt Officer, Good Salary, Seeking PG, Well Settled. Educated Family in and around Chennai, 9445055308

WELL SETTLED Doctor, 40 yrs. Divorcee without child. Hindu, BC seeks compatible professional Groom. Ct: 8056868090

HINDU, 29, Pillai, ME, Private, 50 lakhs. PH: 8138905057

HINDU, 31, Mudaliyar, MBA, royal family. PH: 8138900412

HINDU, 30, UK, caste no bar, MSc, 50 crores. PH: 8137003550

BRIDEGROOM WANTED

SENTHUJA MUDALIAR, 26 Yrs. 154 cms, B.Com, MBA, Into father's Business, Family is financially well off. Looking for affluent family match, preferably in around Pondicherry.

SC AD Hindu Bride Age 26/163, BE, MCA Thiruvonam/Magam Working in Nationalized Bank. Seeks from the same Community Preferably Chennai Groom/Bank/Govt Job from well Educated Family, below 30yrs. Ct: 944216376

HASTHAM 38 Fair MCA Chennai wanted Pillai/Mudaliar Prof. quid working group 163cm, M.S. Well settled Groom. Ct: 944136336/ 8220757159

CHRISTIAN, 26, born again, rich affluent, seeks qualified, employed, unmarried Tamil Groom. Ct: 944233779

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN DOCTOR, 39/162cm, working with UN well-settled family. Well-educated NRI groom preferred. Contact: 9650638095/ 9444852650

CHRISTIAN, Coimbatore - 30 Yrs/ 163cm, M.S., Business - well settled - Rich and Affluent. Wanted Christian Groom. Ct: 948184227

CHRISTIAN, 26, born again, rich affluent, ACCA, NRI, 30 crores. PH: 8138900312

✓ TAMIL MUSLIM Girl 38, Engineer, slim, seeks qualified, employed, unmarried Tamil Groom. Ct: 944233779

ARCHITECT FAIR Girl, 29 years, well settled and doing fine-lancing. Mudaliar, seeking for a good looking bride, groom from decent family, well settled in White Town, Puducherry, seeks from a Hindu family, caste no bar. Contact: 9842320716

VANNIA KULAKSHTRIYA Girl, 32 years 155cm, MDS (Dentist) working as Senior Lecturer in Chennai. Star Moolam 4padam, DhanusRasi. Contact: 9382167197 / 9962781093

TAMIL

TAMIL

TAMIL

✓ HINDU ADIDRAVIDAR, 30 yrs 172 cm, BE MBA, (UK) employed in MNC bank, Bangalore. Rs.40 lacs pa, seeking a suitable employed groom. Good Family Background. Ct: 9844347616

MUDALIAR, 29 yrs, BE, affluent family with moral values at Bengaluru. Seeks suitable groom. Ct: 7975421774

HINDU VANNIYAR Girl, 27yrs, 162cm, kettai, BE, Asst Manager Govt Bank seeks suitable Groom. Ct: 9894128789

GROOM WANTED Rich Mudaliar 31yrs, MBBS, MPH (US), Elite business family. Contact: 9841329471/ 9380719919

GROOM WANTED Hindu Nadar, 28yrs, MBBS, MPH (US), Elite business family. Contact: 9841329471/ 9380719919

MUDALIAR (C) 25/166, Fair, Beautiful, SWE, SWF Barclays UK 75000. Pounds, PA,CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

HINDU, 29, Divorced, caste no bar, 50 lakhs, MD, Doctor PH: 8138900412

HINDU, 29, Divorced, caste no bar, 50 lakhs, MD, Doctor PH: 8138900412

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HINDU, 29, Divorced, caste no bar, 50 lakhs, MD, Doctor PH: 8138900412



E-Open Tender

01. Name of work with its location: Modification of OHE due to left over work by Construction MHX in GW/H to DEORIA Section in Sonpur Station. 02. Approx Cost of the works (₹): ₹ 1,63,29,669.5/- 03. Earnest Money to be deposited (₹): ₹ 2,31,700/- 04. Date & time for submission of e-tender and opening of e-tender: Opening of e-tenders: on 23.02.2026 at 12.00 Hrs. in the office of the Sr. Div. Electrical Engineer (TRD), DRM Office, E.C. Railway, Sonpur. 05. Website particulars and notice board location where complete details of e-tender can be seen : Website : http://www.ireps.gov.in Notice Board: DRM Office Campus, E.C. Railway, Sonpur. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD East Central Railway/Sonpur PR/1725/SEE/TRD/T/25-26/28

THE HINDU

Air Surcharge as applicable:
New Delhi - Rs. 15/-;
Port Blair - Rs. 15/-

மத்திய சித்த மருத்துவ ஆராய்ச்சிக் கழும்
(அமைச்சரவை, இந்திய அரசு)
கேந்திய ஸித் அனுஸ்வான பரிஷத்
CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN SIDDHA
(Ministry of Ayush, Govt. of India)

GST Road, Tambaram Sanatorium, Chennai - 600 047.

Phone: 044-2621 2421, 2621 1621, e-mail: ccrs-ayush@gov.in, www.ccrs.ayush.gov.in

Advertisement No. 01/2026

Central Council for Research in Siddha (CCRS) a Central Autonomous Body under the aegis of Ministry of Ayush, Govt. of India invites applications for the following regular posts for CCRS, HQ & Peripheral Institutes / Units:

SL. No.	Name of the Posts	No. of Vacancies	Pay Level / Pay Matrix (7th CPC)	Maximum age
1.	Research Officer (Siddha)	02 - EWS	Level -10	40 Years
2.	Research Assistant (Chemistry)	02 - UR	Level -06	30 Years
3.	Medical Laboratory Technologist (MLT)	09 - (ST-01), UR-03, EWS-02 & OBC-03	Level - 06	35 Years
4.	Laboratory Attendant	01 - EWS	Level-02	25 Years

The last date for receipt of the applications will be 60 days from the date of this advertisement in Employment News released on 31.01.2026. The details regarding the educational qualifications, experience, proforma of application, other terms and conditions etc. are available at the Council's website: www.ccrs.ayush.gov.in / www.siddhacouncil.com. Any addendum / corrigendum of the said advt. will be published in the website only.

01.02.2026

Director General, CCRS.

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Corrigendum no.1 dt: 29.01.2026

SI. No. 1,In EPC Agreement Note under Annexure-II (Schedule-A) has been modified and uploaded in the documents attached to NIT No. JBP-PROJECT-EPC-2025-02 dated 08.01.2026. SI.No.2, Replies to the Pre-Bid Queries raised by bidders during the Pre-Bid Meeting held on 22.01.2026 have been uploaded on IREPS. Note: Rest items shall remain same and unaltered. (Sd.) Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer (Project) West Central Railway, Jalapur

सत्त्व भारत अधिवेशन
एक कदम स्वतंत्रता की ओर

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Open Tender

01. Name of work with its location: Chakia-Katihar-Modification of OHE due to ABSS work in Sonpur Division, 02. Approx Cost of the works (₹): ₹ 1,19,74,545/- 03. Earnest Money to be deposited (₹): ₹ 2,09,000/- 04. Date & time for submission of e-tender and opening of e-tender: Opening of e-tenders: on 23.02.2026 at 12.00 Hrs. in the office of the Sr. Div. Electrical Engineer (TRD), DRM Office, E.C. Railway, Sonpur. 05. Website particulars and notice board location where complete details of e-tender can be seen : Website : <http://www.ireps.gov.in> Notice Board: DRM Office Campus, E.C. Railway, Sonpur. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD East Central Railway/Sonpur PR/1725/SEE/TRD/T/25-26/28

INDIAN RAILWAYS
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PATIALA-147003

Tel.: 2396001, 2396001 Fax No.: 91-0175-2306413

Notice inviting Electronic Tenders

On behalf of President of India Principal Chief Materials Manager/PLW/Patiala invites tenders in electronic form for following items:

e-Tender Notice No.42 ET/2025-26

Tender No.	Description	Qty.	Tender closing date.
02261002	02-Types of Pinion For AC Motor	1370 Nos.	23.02.2026*
022513574	Set of Five Types of formed Kapton Covered Copper Conductor	10 Set	18.02.2026
11255427	Electric Overhead Travelling Crane Capacity: 10 Ton	01 Nos.	27.02.2026
21261001	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of On-Board Kavach Equipment	379 Sets	23.02.2026

Tender closing Time 15:00 Hrs.

Item marked with * is reserved for procurement from BLW approved sources. The prospective Tenderers are advised to visit the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> or plw.indianrailways.gov.in, for detailed description of items & other terms and conditions of tender document. Please note that Tenderers can submit their quotations only through <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.

Corrigendum to e-Tender Notice No. 38 ET/2025-26: 1) Closing date of Tender No.12251489 may be read as 06.02.2026. 2) Closing date of Tender No.21255006A may be read as 16.02.2026.

Corrigendum to e-Tender Notice No. 39 ET/2025-26: Closing date of Tender No. 21251300 may be read as 09.02.2026.

357/2026

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30, 188 cm, Fair MBA M Sc, Dublin (Ireland) Working Professional seeks Educated Girl willing to relocate in Dublin. Castle no bar Ph: 7708957779 nethajid@yahoo.com

THULIWA Vellala Mudaliar / Naidu 33 / 182 cm , B.E, Teetotaler, well settled Chennai based wealthy family seeks suitable bride. Ph: 98410 36017

WELL SETTLED HINDU KONGU BOY

39/183 Sadayam B.Sc MBA Business 48L PA, Settled in Chennai with Own Flat & Plots, Upper Middle Class. Looking for Girl with any degree in B.C / F.C Community

WHATAPP 93603 23979

TAMIL

HINDU NADAR 37/169cm BE Software Chennai Visakam seeks bride. Brok excuse. CNB: 93848 59697

BRIDE WANTED

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Seeking bride from similar background for educated handsome boy from affluent family 29/180cm/B.Tech, M.S/ Uthiram / Kannirasi / Working in Bangalore as PM

Contact : 93848-27999

TELUGU

URDU

DOCTOR PARENTS, Sunni Urdu, seek Medico Bride for their Doctor son pursuing MD Post Graduation, Fair 26/180cm. absash25@gmail.com

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, M Dhanalakshmi, wife of Thiru R Manogaran, born on 18th June 1964 (District of Birth: Dindigul) residing at No. 9, Sakthi Street, Om Sakthi Nagar, Chithappakam, Chennai-600 064, shall henceforth be known as JAYANTH MANOGARAMARAM DHANALAKSHMI (Old Name)

BALJIA NAIDU, 1985/180cms, Krifai, Whites, MBA, IT Director in Dubai seeks suitable bride – decent family with BHP ct: 984063177

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94700

RESIDENTIAL HOUSE

LAND WANTED: 1 to 2 grounds with old demolish condition building in Chennai. 98405 06751

RESIDENTIAL LAND

WANTED LAND Oragadam, Sriperumbudur, Vadagal Valam, Ezhuchur: 950093444

RESIDENTIAL FLAT-NEW

WANTED LAND Kovalam Nemelli Mahabalipuram Poonjeri Manamai-950093444

RESIDENTIAL FLAT-RESALE

WANTED LAND Flat-Acreage 950093444

RESIDENTIAL HOUSE

LAND WANTED: 1 to 2 grounds with old demolish condition building in Chennai. 98405 06751

RESIDENTIAL LAND

WANTED LAND Oragadam, Sriperumbudur, Vadagal Valam, Ezhuchur: 950093444

RESIDENTIAL FLAT-NEW

WANTED LAND For JV or Outright

200ft Radial Rd, Velachery - Tambram, Medavakkam. Ph: 9677196666

RESIDENTIAL FLAT-RESALE

WANTED LAND for JV or Outright

200ft Radial Rd, Velachery - Tambram, Medavakkam. Ph: 9677196666

RESIDENTIAL FLAT-RESALE

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WANTED LAND for JV or Outright

200ft Radial Rd, Velachery - Tambram, Medavakkam. Ph: 9677196666

RESIDENTIAL FLAT-RESALE

WANTED LAND for JV or Outright

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SMASHING TIME

India and New Zealand batters go on a six-hitting spree



NIRMAL HARINDRAN

As many as 36 sixes were hit in the fifth T20I between India and New Zealand in Thiruvananthapuram, making it the most-ever in a match between full-member nations. The Indian innings contained 23 maximums while the Kiwis hit 13. The Indian batters smacked 69 sixes, the most by any team in a bilateral series.

OUTCLASSED

Pakistan seals T20I series after Australia fails trial by spin

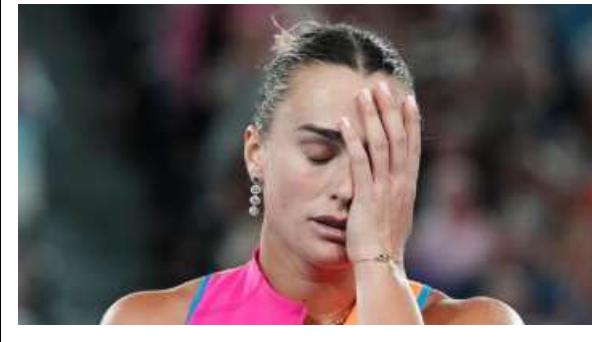


AP

Pakistan took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match T20I series against Australia as Salman Agha led by example in a 90-run win in the second match in Lahore. **The scores:** Pakistan 198/5 in 20 overs (Agha 76, Usman 53) bt Australia 108 in 15.4 overs (Green 35, Abrar 3/14, Shadab 3/26); **Toss:** Pakistan; **PoM:** Agha.

TOUGH LOSS

Sabalenka 'really upset' after blowing chances in the final



AP

Aryna Sabalenka said she was "really upset" with herself for failing to take her chances in the defeat to Elena Rybakina in the Australian Open final, having led 3-0 in the deciding set. "I was really upset with myself, I would say, because once again I had opportunities," Sabalenka said after losing a second straight final in Melbourne.

EARLY PREDICTION

Nadal has 'full respect' for old-rival Djokovic, but tips Alcaraz for title



AP

Rafael Nadal said he has "full respect" for old rival Novak Djokovic but tipped Spanish compatriot Carlos Alcaraz to win Sunday's Australian Open final. "I think the favourite is Carlos. He's young, he has the energy and he's in his prime. But I mean, Novak is Novak. (But) the favourite is Carlos from my point of view," Nadal said.

Kishan knocks the stuffing out of New Zealand

The southpaw's sensational 43-ball 103 powers the Men in Blue to 271; Suryakumar, Hardik and Abhishek, too, sizzle; the Kiwis fall short despite Allen's daredevilry; Arshdeep scalps five

NZ IN INDIA

P.K. Ajith Kumar
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Ishan Kishan's stunning comeback tale turned even more stunning on Saturday night.

From two years of wilderness to the World Cup squad, it has been a remarkable journey for the man from Jharkhand. Now, the team management may find it difficult to keep him out of the XI in the T20I World Cup starting on February 7.

On the rampage
Kishan did no harm to his prospects in India's last match before the big event. He scored a sensational maiden T20I hundred in the fifth match of the series against New Zealand as the Men in Blue posted 271 for five and scripted a 46-run win at the Greenfield Stadium.

Kishan (103, 43b, 6x6, 10x6) was brilliant in front of a near-capacity crowd, which may have come more to watch another Indian wicketkeeper-batter. But, local lad Sanju Samson failed yet again.

Samson had to trudge back to the dressing room in the third over; his thick outside edge off Lockie Ferguson found Bevon Ja-

cobs at deep backward point. So, a disappointing series came to a dismal end for the opener who was, interestingly, playing his first-ever international match at home, after debuting for India way back in 2015.

Sanju's partner Abhishek Sharma (30, 16b, 4x4, 2x6), who lofted a glorious drive over the extra cover fence against Jacob Duffy in the first over, was shaping up nicely when he was cleaned up by Ferguson, the quick who was playing his first game for New Zealand in well over a year.

But, Suryakumar Yadav joined Kishan and initially chose to watch the exceptional hitting from the latter at the other end. The skipper then changed gears at the right time to score his third fifty (63, 30b, 4x4, 6x6) of the series, and his third-wicket partnership with Kishan yielded 137 off just 57 balls.

Kishan completed his hundred off 42 balls, slog-sweeping Mitchell Santner over deep-midwicket. It was an astonishing display of strokemaking, playing all around the wicket.

Blitzkrieg: Kishan threw caution to the wind en route his maiden T20I ton. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

days ago, provided that with a blistering 80 (38b, 8x4, 6x6) and he added 100 for the second wicket with Rachin Ravindra.

He became the first of Axar Patel's three victims. Arshdeep Singh took five. And India had just the perfect night.

Arshdeep Singh (not out 7 (2b, 1x6); Extras (w-10, nb-2): 12; Total (for five wkt. in 20 overs): 271.



Stellar show: Suryakumar smashed 63 off just 30 balls while Arshdeep claimed his first-ever five-for in the shortest format. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

SCOREBOARD**INDIA**

Abhishek Sharma b Ferguson 30 (16b, 4x4, 2x6), Sanju Samson c Jacobs b Ferguson 6 (6b, 1x4), Ishan Kishan c Phillips b Duffy 103 (43b, 6x4, 10x6), Suryakumar Yadav st. Seifert b Santner 63 (30b, 4x4, 6x6), Hardik Pandya c Jacobs b Jamison 42 (17b, 1x4, 4x6), Rinku Singh (not out) 8 (8b, 1x4), Shivam Dube (not out) 7 (2b, 1x6); Extras (w-10, nb-2): 12; Total (for five wkt. in 20 overs): 271.

FALL OF WICKETS**1-31 (Samson, 2.5 overs), 2-48 (Abhishek, 4.6), 3-185 (Suryakumar, 14.3), 4-233 (Kishan, 17.3), 5-261 (Hardik, 19.2).****NEW ZEALAND BOWLING**

Duffy 4-0-53-1, Jamison 4-0-59-1, Ferguson 4-0-41-2, Sodhi 3-0-48-0, Phillips 1-0-10-0, Santner 4-0-60-1.

NEW ZEALAND

Tim Seifert c Hardik b Arshdeep 5 (3b, 1x4), Finn Allen c Rinku b Axar 80 (38b, 8x4, 6x6), Rachin Ravindra c Axar b Arshdeep 30 (8b, 1b-4, w-4): 16; Total (19.4 overs): 225.

INDIA BOWLING

Arshdeep 4-0-51-5, Hardik 2-0-15-0, Bumrah 4-0-58-2, Varun 4-0-36-1, Axar 4-0-33-3, Abhishek 1-0-13-0, Rinku 0-4-0-7-1.

Toss: India.

PoM: Kishan; **Pos:** Suryakumar. India won by 46 runs to clinch five-match series 4-1.

Rybakina edges out Sabalenka, becomes queen of Melbourne

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

Elena Rybakina took revenge over World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka to win a nail-biting Australian Open final on Saturday and clinch her second Grand Slam title.

The big-serving Kazakh fifth seed held her nerve to pull through 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 at Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne in 2hrs 18mins.

It was payback after the Belarusian Sabalenka won the 2023 final between two of the hardest hitters in women's tennis.

The ice-cool Rybakina, 26, who was born in Moscow, adds her Melbourne triumph to her Wimbledon win in 2022.

It was more disappointment in a Major final for Sabalenka, who won the US Open last year for the second time but lost the French Open and Melbourne title deciders.

She was into her fourth straight Australian Open final and had been imperious until now, with tears in her eyes at the end.

The results (finals):

Day 14 in numbers

1 Rybakina becomes the first Kazakh to win the Australian Open

1 She is the first woman to triumph at Melbourne Park by beating top-6 players in the quarterfinals (Swiatek), semifinal (Pegula) and final (Sabalenka) since Sharapova in 2008

1 Rybakina is the first woman to win the WTA Finals and the Australian Open in the subsequent year since Wozniacki (2017-18)

3 The Kazakh will rise to a career-high No. 3 in the rankings

3 Rybakina has defeated both the World No. 1 and 2 at a single event thrice so far. Since the WTA rankings were established (1975), only Serena (8) and Venus (4) have achieved it more times

6 She is the sixth woman to win her first two Majors on grass and hard courts (after Mauresmo, Davenport, Sharapova, Hingis and Venus)

60 Rybakina has the highest win-percentage (9-6) against World No. 1s since the WTA rankings were established (minimum 10 meetings)

92 Rybakina and Sabalenka won the same number of points (92) in the final

113 Sabalenka extends her streak of winning at least one set in Grand Slam matches to 113. Only Navratilova (143) has a longer streak

Compiled by ANIRUDH VELAMURI

**Sunday's Pick****MEN'S SINGLES FINAL**

1-Alcaraz vs 4-Djokovic

A battle for THE AGES



TTFI forms an enquiry committee

Amol Karhadkar

MUMBAI

The Table Tennis Federation of India has formed a three-member enquiry committee to probe into various charges pressed against Kamlesh Mehta, who was suspended as Secretary General during the AGM on Wednesday.

"The federation emphasises that Mehta has not been condemned or removed without due process. He has been placed under suspension pending an enquiry," Raju Duggal, vice-president and interim treasurer, wrote in a statement issued by the TTFI on Saturday.

The Hindu understands that the committee includes Chetan Gurang (UTK), Samarjeet Singh (JH) and Sundara Varadhan (PY). The trio has been a part of the TTFI's Executive Committee.

"I've not been given any details about these allegations. I can respond to it through proper channels only if and when I get the details," Mehta told The Hindu. "I didn't receive any response from the president when I wrote to her reminding about convening the AGM".

Women: 5-Rybakina (Kaz) bt 1-Sabalenka (Bel) 6-4, 4-6, 6-4.
Doubles: 4-Mertens (Bel) & Shuai

(Chn) bt 7-Daniilina (Kaz) & Krunic (Srb) 7-6(4), 6-4.

Men's doubles: 6-Harrison (USA) & Skupski (GBR) bt Kubler & Polmans (Aus) 7-6(4), 6-4.

Compiled by ANIRUDH VELAMURI

Win against MI one of our best, says Klinger

GG ends its losing streak against the Mumbai outfit and qualifies for the Eliminator; Gardner's decision to bat first proves to be a masterstroke

WPL-4

Vivek Krishnan
VADODARA

Until Friday's fixture in the Women's Premier League, Gujarat Giants hadn't prevailed over Mumbai Indians in eight meetings. Amid vociferous backing by its legion of fans at the Kotambi Stadium, Ashleigh Gardner's side finally got rid of the millstone around its neck by registering a hard-earned 11-run victory. It also ensured a spot in the playoffs for the hosts.

According to Giants coach Michael Klinger, this was right among the team's best performances. "We know what we've got to do to beat any team. When we play somewhere very close to our best, we're in a position to beat most teams. We were pretty close to one of our best games tonight. On a surface that was a little bit slower, getting close to 170 was maybe slightly above par," said the Australian.

At the toss, Gardner conspicuously went against the grain by electing to bat first. Among the factors that went into the call was the fact that the surface had been used for three previous games in the tournament.

"We've been playing pretty well batting first. It was the fourth time the wicket was being used. So, we felt if we could post a pretty solid total and bowl and field somewhere near



Chipping in: Wareham came good with an all-round display in the big game. FILE PHOTO: EMMANUEL YOGINI

Points table

	M	W	L	Pts	NRR
Royal Challengers (Q)	8	6	2	12	1.247
Gujarat Giants (Q)	8	5	3	10	-0.168
Mumbai Indians	8	3	5	6	0.059
Delhi Capitals	7	3	4	6	-0.164
UP Warriorz	7	2	5	4	-1.146

Q: Qualified

Today's match



LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

beaten 44, she provided two breakthroughs in four frugal overs.

Interestingly, Giants did consider benching Wareham for the game given her indifferent form.

"It was a real tough call because we thought a lot about bringing Danni Wyatt-Hodge back in," informed the 45-year-old coach.

"We felt (in the end) that Georgia in these conditions was the best option. Now with the confidence going forward, hopefully she'll play a big part in the Eliminator and then hopefully the final".

our best, we could defend it," Klinger stated.

The nature of the surface allowed leg-spinner Georgia Wareham to grab the spotlight.

Besides scoring an un-

Madsen – WCs in different sports 20 years apart

S. Shrivathsan
CHENNAI

When Wayne Madsen covers the blades of grass at the Eden Gardens and strolls in to face Scotland in the T20 World Cup fixture in Kolkata on February 9, he will inscribe his name in sports history books for more than one reason.

The obvious being Madsen having the "honour" of leading Italy in its first cricket World Cup match. But what may make many rub their eyes in astonishment is the 42-year-old's entry into an elite club. He will join a select list of athletes who have featured in World Cups in two different sports; in Madsen's curious case, it is for diffe-

rent nations.

Back in 2006, Madsen played in the hockey World Cup for South Africa, the country of his birth. Twenty years on, he will hold a cricket bat instead of a hockey stick on the global stage when donning Italy's blue in the T20 showpiece.

"I am really proud that I have been able to represent my countries in two different sports. I am extremely proud to play two sports at two World Cups 20 years apart. It is a pretty unique situation and I am honoured to have done it," Madsen said in an interview to Derbyshire, the county he represents in English cricket.

Those with an Indian connection may remem-



True all-rounder: Madsen, who played for South Africa in the 2006 hockey WC, will lead Italy in the T20 showpiece. GETTY IMAGES & ICC

ber the multi-faceted M.J. Gopalan turning out for the nation in both cricket and hockey.

As for Madsen, he locked horns with Dilip Tirkey, India's most-capped player and current

Hockey India president, during the Monchengladbach WC in Germany.

"Hockey (playing it) seems like a long time ago, but I do have such fond memories of it. The opportunity to play international hockey at a World Cup... the crowds that we had. They obviously stood me in good stead going into my cricket career," added the veteran.

Madsen, who qualified as an Italian citizen by descent, is still "pinching" himself while processing what has been bestowed on him ahead of the T20 World Cup. "I had not even dreamt of going to the World Cup (cricket)," he said. History awaits him in the City of Joy.

Haryana Thunders in the PWL title clash

Sports Bureau
NOIDA

Table-topper Haryana Thunders continued its impressive performance in the Pro Wrestling League, winning 5-4 over Punjab Royals in the first semifinal. It now awaits the winner of the other semifinal between Delhi Dangal Warriors and Maharashtra Kesari. Thunders bounced back from a 1-3 deficit to lead 5-3 and effectively sealed the match before captain Yui Susaki forfeited her final bout.

Royals opened the scoring, Chirag Chikara registering a 2-1 win in the 57kg against Rohit. Haryana levelled through Parvinder (74kg), who beat Chander Mohan. Punjab went 3-1

ahead before Haryana fought back through Neha Sangwan (57kg) and Tumur Ochir Tulga (65kg) to confirm a spot in the final.

The result: Semifinal: Haryana Thunders bt Punjab Royals 5-4
[Men: 57kg: Chirag Chikara (Royals) bt Rohit (Thunders) 2-1; 65kg: Tumur Ochir Tulga (Thunders) bt Anuj Kumar (Royals) 2-1; 74kg: Parvinder (Thunders) bt Chander Mohan (Royals) 8-8 by Last Point Scored; 86kg: Ashirov Ashraf (Thunders) 8-6.
Women: 53kg: Meenakshi (Royals) bt Yui Susaki (Thunders) Forfeit; 57kg: Neha Sangwan (Thunders) bt Rajnita Jangra (Royals) 9-2; 62kg: Iryna Koliadenko (Thunders) bt Ana Godinez (Royals) 5-5 by Fall; 76kg: Priya Malik (Royals) bt Kajal Dhochak (Thunders) 14-0 by Fall].

Arsenal romps past Leeds; Hoffenheim rolls on

EURO LEAGUES

Agencies
LEEDS



Premier League leader Arsenal ended its mini-slump with an emphatic 4-0 victory at Leeds United on Saturday, putting it seven points clear despite Bukayo Saka being ruled out through injury just before kickoff. Martin Zubimendi's header and an own goal by Leeds' keeper Karl Darlow put Arsenal in command before halftime, while Viktor Gyokeres' volley and a clever finish by Gabriel Jesus wrapped things up after the break.

Andrej Kramaric grabbed a brace as Hoffenheim extended its strong

Brighton 1 (Gross 73) drew with Everton 1 (Beto 90+7); Leeds 0 lost to Arsenal 4 (Zubimendi 27, Darlow 38-og, Gyokeres 69, Jesus 86); Wolves 0 lost to Bournemouth 2 (Kroupi 33, Scott 90+1).

Bundesliga: Werder Bremen 1 (Topp 90+4) drew with Borussia M'Gladbach 1 (Tabakovic 61); RB Leipzig 1 (Harder 40) lost to Mainz 2 (Wamangituka 49, Amiri 45+6-pen); Augsburg 2 (Gregoritsch 41, 59) bt St. Pauli 1 (Sinani 32-pen); Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Koch 50) lost to Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Soares 26, Tillman 33, Serrano 90+3); Hoffenheim 3 (Kramaric 42-pen, 45, Leite 47-og) bt Union Berlin 1 (Khedira 68).

On Friday: LaLiga: Espanyol 1 (Roberto 15) lost to Alaves 2 (Blanco 27, Boye 71).

Serie A: Lazio 3 (Pedro 56-pen, Taylor 62, Cataldi 90+10-pen) bt Genoa 2 (Matinovsky 67-pen, Vitinha 75).

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Celebration Partners





Unlikely friends: Showcasing a symbiotic relationship, a rufous treepie feeds on ectoparasites on a sambar deer at Pench Tiger Reserve.



Hand in glove: A pack of wild dogs rests together, taking a break from the day's hunt, in the National Park.



Used to visitors: The current generation of tigers at the reserve has almost grown up with the sounds of jeep safaris and humans visiting their habitat.



Fiesty felines: Two tigers in a brawl spotted near Bakhari Lake inside the Pench Tiger Reserve. The female is the mother of a five-month-old litter, possibly explaining the reticence towards the male.

Tigers find a safe perch in Pench

With a strong prey base and well-protected forests, Pench National Park in central India is writing a success story in tiger conservation; the lush landscape that inspired the setting for Kipling's *The Jungle Book* is also growing to be a popular destination among tourists, as it offers streamlined entry and a high chance of wildlife sightings



K.R. Deepak
deepak.kr@thehindu.co.in

Straddling the forested corridor between Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, Pench National Park continues to strengthen its standing as one of central India's key tiger conservation success stories. Recent population assessments indicate a steady rise in tiger numbers, with the broader Pench landscape now estimated to support more than a hundred big cats.

Forest officials credit this growth to a robust prey base – including chital, sambar, gaur, and wild boar – along with well-protected habitats that also sustain leopards, dholes, sloth bears, and a rich diversity of birdlife. More than 300 bird species have been documented, underlining the reserve's ecological depth.

Shared haven

Spanning 758 sq.km of contiguous forest spread across Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, Pench allows safaris to operate from both States. Of this area, 257 sq.km lies in Maharashtra, where shared borders facilitate genetic exchange among tigers – a factor conservation experts view as critical to long-term population health.

Located just two hours from Nagpur, Pench has also benefited from a surge in wildlife tourism. According to Conservation India, wildlife travel in the country is growing at nearly 15% annually. The reserve recently drew wider public attention following a visit by players of the Indian national cricket team ahead of their T20 match against New Zealand in Nagpur.

On the Maharashtra side, the Sillari gate is emerging as a preferred safari route due to a higher probability of wildlife sightings. With regulated vehicle entry and landscapes immortalised by Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, Pench today balances conservation priorities with its rising stature as a global wildlife destination.



Generous menu: A stable prey base in the reserve has been credited with supporting the growing tiger population and a diverse array of wildlife.



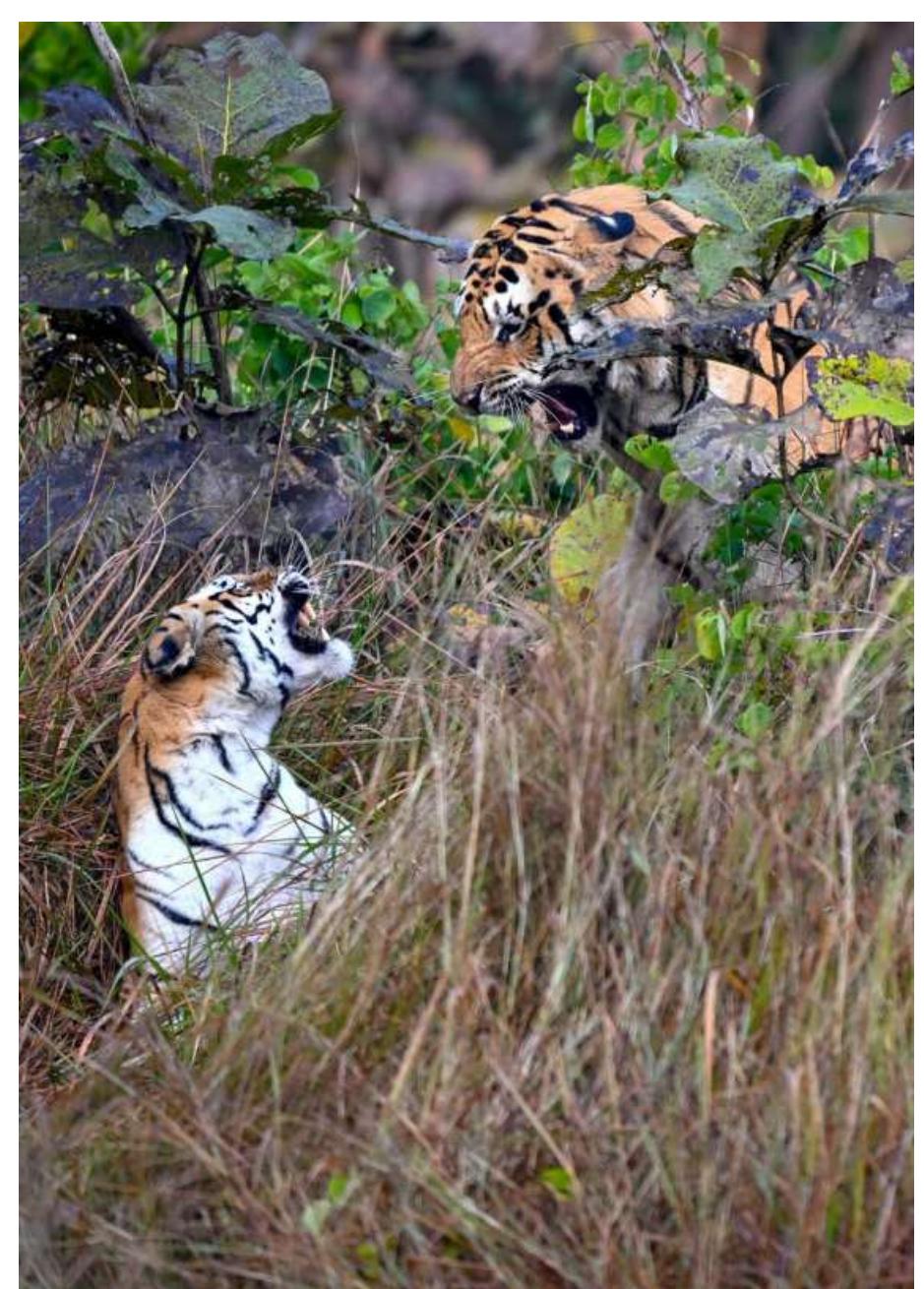
Wary wanderers: Spotted deer on alert while grazing at Pench Tiger Reserve.



Vibrant visitor: An Indian roller perched atop a dry branch at the reserve.



Rare sighting: An elusive melanistic leopard lounges on a rock at the park.



Mowgli's home: The forest here was the setting for Rudyard Kipling's renowned *The Jungle Book*.



A wild leap: A tiger springs across the road near Bakhari Lake as tourists watch from their vehicles at the Pench Tiger Reserve.