



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



Presenting

## LIC's GROUP SCHEMES

New Group Gratuity Cash  
Accumulation Plan - UIN: 512N281V04

New Group Leave Encashment  
Plan - UIN: 512N282V04

New Group Superannuation Cash  
Accumulation Plan - UIN: 512N274V03

Group Post Retirement Medical  
Benefit Scheme - UIN: 512N352V01

Salient  
Features:

Scientific funding Attractive Returns Benefit of insurance protection

Income Tax Benefits as per Rules Multiple options for annuity payments

For more details, email to [groupbusiness@licindia.com](mailto:groupbusiness@licindia.com) or contact your Agent/nearest LIC P&G unit

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



*Har Pal Aapke Saath*

Call Centre Services (022) 6827 6827

Visit: [www.licindia.in](http://www.licindia.in)

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

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

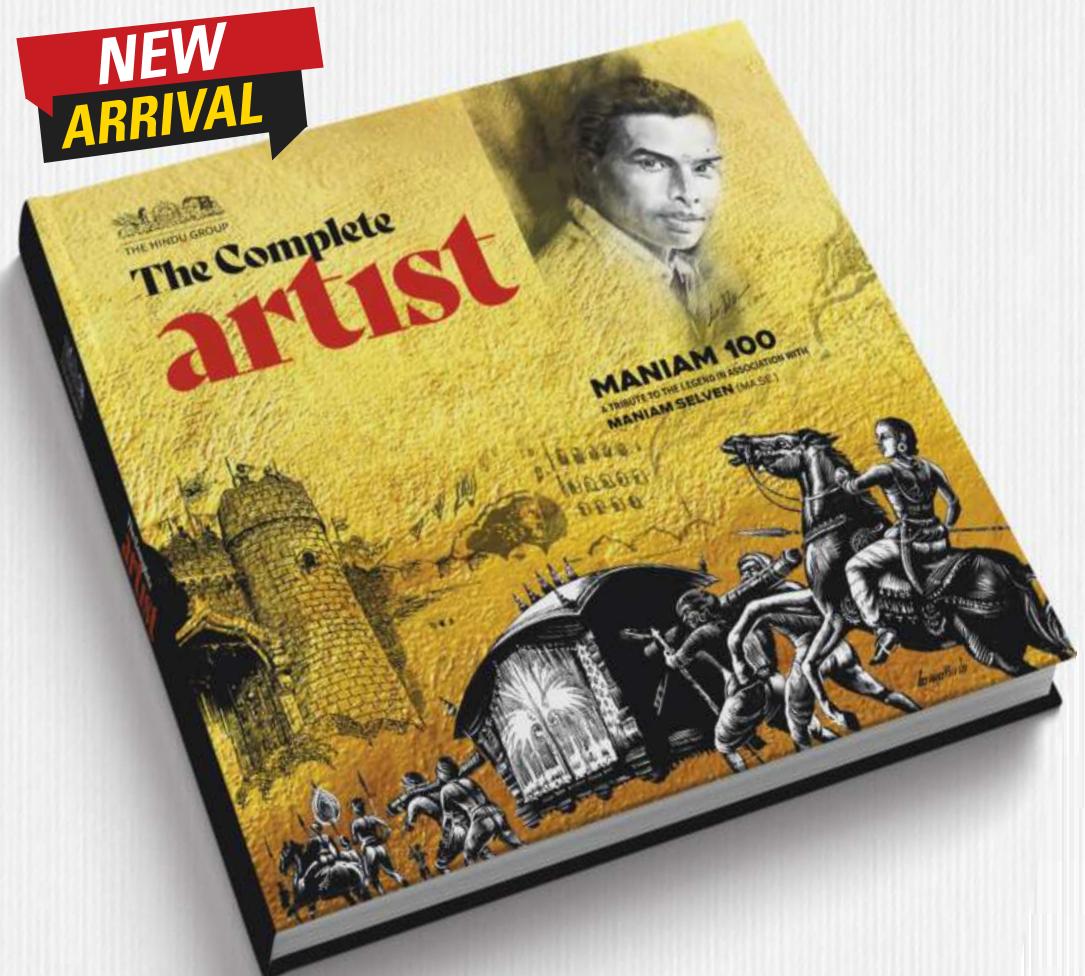
CMYK



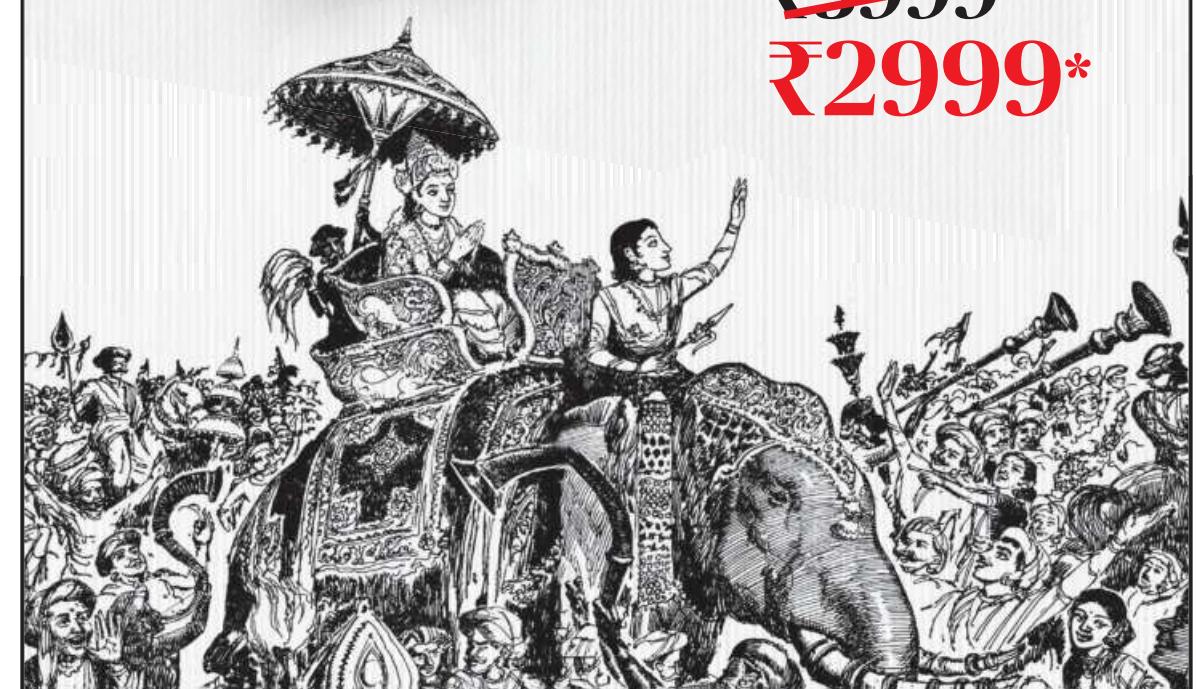
THE HINDU GROUP

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION  
FROM THE HINDU GROUP

**Maniam**, creator ahead of his time 'The Complete artist' is a tribute to the legendary Maniam to mark his birth centenary. Crafted by The Hindu Group of Publications, in association with **Maniam Selven**, this coffee-table book is a vintage collection of over 400 works of Maniam.



~~₹3999~~  
**₹2999\***



**BOOK  
YOUR COPY  
ONLINE**



Scan QR code or visit  
[newsth.live/THBookStore](http://newsth.live/THBookStore)

For bulk booking and enquiries, contact us at  
[bookstore@thehindu.co.in](mailto:bookstore@thehindu.co.in) or **1800 102 1878**



**BIAS CHARGE**  
Opposition moves to remove Speaker Birla

NEWS » PAGE 11

## TEXTILE TRADE

**U.S.-Bangladesh deal upsets Indian exporters**

BUSINESS » PAGE 13



**CONFLICT IN MANIPUR**  
Internet cut in Ukhrul as violence continues

NEWS » PAGE 10

## NEW REALITY

**Approaching AI surge, its global consequences**

*The issue is whether humanity can keep up*

EDITORIAL » PAGE 8



**CLINICAL DISPLAY**  
Farhan, Shadab shine in Pakistan's win

SPORT » PAGE 15

## NEARBY



**T.N. likely to be an electronics hub by 2030: Minister**

**CHENNAI**  
The electronics manufacturing industry aims at hitting the \$500-billion mark by 2030, and Tamil Nadu will likely be a \$150-billion market by then, Industries Minister T.R.B. Rajan said on Tuesday. » PAGE 6

**Women in higher education up by 34%, says Stalin**

**CHENNAI**  
Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday said the enrolment of women in higher education in Tamil Nadu had increased by 34% thanks to the Pudhumai Penn scheme. » PAGE 6

**OPPORTUNITIES PAGE 3**  
► Over 25 Jobs in today's issue

# Centre mandates label for photorealistic AI content

Amended IT Rules call for disclosure of AI-generated synthetic media, and warn platforms of loss of safe harbour for non-compliance; changes notified by the govt. to take effect on February 20

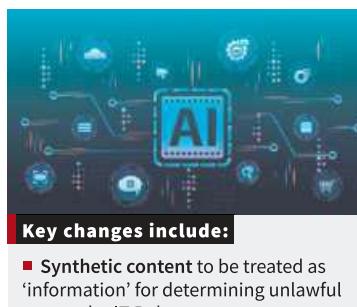
**Aroon Deep**  
NEW DELHI

**T**he Union government has notified amendments to the Information Technology Act, 2021, requiring photorealistic AI-generated content to be prominently labelled. The changes, which will come into force on February 20, also significantly shorten timelines for takedowns of illegal material.

Under the new rules, social media platforms will now have between two and three hours to remove certain categories of unlawful content, a sharp reduction from the earlier 24-36 hours. Content deemed illegal by a court or an "appropriate government" will have to be taken down within three hours, while sensitive content,

## Content check

Platforms that enable creation or sharing of synthetic content must ensure **clear and prominent labelling** under the new rules



### Key changes include:

■ Synthetic content to be treated as 'information' for determining unlawful acts under IT Rules

featuring non-consensual nudity and deepfakes, must be removed within two hours.

The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2026, defines synthetically generated con-

tent as "audio, visual or audio-visual information which is artificially or algorithmically created, generated, modified or altered using a computer resource, in a manner that such information appears to be real, authentic or true and depicts or portrays

A senior government official on Tuesday said the rules include a carve-out for touch-ups that smartphone cameras often perform automatically.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 10

**SC agrees to hear plea against Assam CM's 'hate speeches'**

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI



Himanta Biswa Sarma

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to schedule for urgent hearing a petition filed by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)], accusing Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of indulging in a "sustained pattern of hate speeches" and seeking the registration of a first information report (FIR) into the alleged instances of hate speeches. The petitioner party said Mr. Sarma, while holding a constitutional office, gave speeches which "target, terrorise, and instigate hostility against the Muslim community residing in Assam".

"As elections take place, part of the elections take place in the Supreme Court," Chief Justice of India Surya Kant remarked.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) has also moved

the top court through its national secretary, Annie Raja, against the repeated hate speeches and conduct of Mr. Sarma. The CPI submitted that a continuing pattern of statements and actions by the Chief Minister has vitiated the public atmosphere in Assam, deepened communal polarisation, and undermined the constitutional values of fraternity and secularism.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 10

**DMK to hold seat-sharing talks from February 22**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

With the Congress expressing disappointment over the delay in seat-sharing talks for the Assembly election in Tamil Nadu, the ruling DMK on Tuesday night announced that it would begin the exercise on February 22.

A committee to be appointed shortly by Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin would hold seat-sharing talks with the DMK's alliance partners, the party high-command said.

A party statement said the interim Budget would be presented in the Assembly on February 17, and the session would conclude on February 22. "After the session is over, seat-sharing talks will begin," the party said.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 6

**REVIVO CLINIC**  
Metabolic care for Obesity and Diabetes

## A New Era in Metabolic Health



Inaugurated by the Honourable Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of Tamil Nadu  
– Thiru Ma. Subramanian

Clinical medicine and lifestyle change unite to restore metabolic health from obesity and diabetes.

This Valentines,  
Start your story



PARLE PLATINA HIDE & SEEK MADE WITH THE WORLD'S FINEST CHOCOLATES

Parle Platinia Hide & Seek Choco Chip Cookies



## IN BRIEF



## Stalin opens new projects in his Kolathur constituency

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday inaugurated projects in his Kolathur Assembly constituency, and also unveiled the foundation for more works. He inaugurated an IoT-based automated sewage pumping station, with a facility to assess hydrogen sulfide gas emission, at ₹2.82 crore on Siva Elango Salai, and also unveiled the foundation for several projects at ₹3.45 crore in Jawahar Nagar. Mr. Stalin also inaugurated a modern integrated police complex housing the Kolathur Police District Deputy Commissioner's office, and other offices.

## Police arrest two youths for breaching Governor's convoy

Police arrested two youths for breaching Governor R.N. Ravi's convoy on Sunday night, in an attempt to dodge a police checkpoint. The incident occurred when Mr. Ravi was returning to Lok Bhawan after attending a wedding reception in Thiruvanmiyur. The accused, Anburaj, 22, and Jeeva, 22, riding a motorcycle, entered the convoy near Adyar Cancer Institute by bypassing security vehicles. Police personnel pursued the motorcycle and detained them. Investigations revealed that the duo, employees of a private firm in Perungalathur, were in an inebriated state. They are natives of Kallakurichi and Villupuram districts. Both were produced before a magistrate and remanded to judicial custody.

## Text &amp; Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper ([epaper.thehindu.com](http://epaper.thehindu.com)) carry explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (February 11, Wednesday), the following articles are available:

■ A reckoning for India's aviation sector [newsthrive/aviationduopex](#)

■ Global warming, pollution are stripping vibrant colours from nature [newsthrive/nocolour](#)

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

TAMIL NADU WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD					
INVITATION OF BIDS – ITEM WAR (Two Cover System) -Short Term e-Submission					
IFB No.	27 /F. WSS to Salamangalam / DO/CE /VLR /2026 / Dt.10.02.2026				
Eligibility	Registered Class I Contractors (Civil)				
Tender Invitee	Chief Engineer, TWAD Board, No.8, 1 <sup>st</sup> East Main Road, Gandhi Nagar, Vellore -46				
Downloading Period	12.02.2026 to 19.02.2026 upto 15.00 hours				
EMD Payable	Online Mode or e-Bid through e-Tendering Website <a href="https://intenders.gov.in">https://intenders.gov.in</a>				
Pre Bid meeting	16.02.2026 at 11.00 AM at the office of the Tender Invitee				
Bid Submission	19.02.2026 up to 15.00 Hours duly Digitally signed through e-Tendering Website <a href="https://intenders.gov.in">https://intenders.gov.in</a>				
Bid opening	20.02.2026 at 15.30 Hours through e-Tender Portal				
IFB No.	Name of work	Approximate value (Rs. in lakhs)	Bid Security (Rs. in lakhs)		
27	Providing 0.50 MLD of Water Supply to Tamilnadi Urban Habitat Development Board for 752 tenements at Salamangalam Village in Kundrathur Union of Kanchipuram District-100% deposit work - Construction period of 12 months, Trial run 6 months and Paid Maintenance period 12 months	1.98	1.50		
DIPR/ 897 /TENDER/2026	Chief Engineer (I/c), TWAD Board, Vellore-6				
SAVE WATER, CONSERVE WATER, EVERY DROP COUNTS					

## कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, चतरा। निविदा रद्द संबंधी सूचना

ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, चतरा के अन्तर्गत जिला खनिज फाउण्डेशन ट्रस्ट (DMFT) मद के तहत ई-अल्पकालीन निविदा संख्या - 08/2025-26/RWD/ CHATRA, दिनांक - 31.12.2025 (Construction of Road from Bulbul More to Kukurmarwa), जिसके अनुसार निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि - 02.02.2026 थी, जिसका P.R. No. 369877 (Rural Work Department) 25-26 (D) को अपरिहार्य कारणवश अगले आदेश तक रद्द किया जाता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, चतरा।

PR.NO.372730 Rural Work Department(25-26)D

## BENGALURU EAST CITY CORPORATION

Office of the Assistant Director (AH), Ground Floor, KR Puram, BECC Sub-Division Office, KR Puram, Bengaluru-560036

No: BECC/2025-26/SE0013/CALL-2

Date: 10.02.2026

## SHORT TERM EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

For Implementing Animal Birth Control (ABC),

Mass Dog Vaccination (ARV & Combined).

For Stray Dogs In Mahadevapura Zone (Zone-1) Of Bengaluru East City Corporation.

(1) Date of Commencement of Download of EOI Document from Karnataka public Procurement portal website <http://Kppp.karnataka.gov.in>: From 10/02/2026 (2) Last Date and Time for uploading Online Queries' in Karnataka public Procurement portal: Upto 16/02/2026 5:00pm (3) Date and Time of Pre-bid Meeting : 16/02/2026 at 2:30 PM at the following venue: Office of the AD(AH), Ground floor, KR Puram BECC Sub-Division Office, KR Puram, Bengaluru-560036 (4) Last Date and Time for uploading of EOI in Karnataka public Procurement portal : up to 24/02/2026 5:00 PM (5) Date and Time of Opening of EOI in Karnataka public Procurement portal : 25/02/2026, 5:10 PM (6) Place of Opening of EOI : Online at Karnataka public Procurement portal.

Sd/- Assistant Director (AH), BECC

## Concerns raised over GCC's plan to implement ₹100-cr. road works before election

Residents say that officials will soon be engaged in poll duty, making it difficult to coordinate and complete the works; AIADMK councillor says there is little time to finalise tender and begin work

## CITY MATTERS

R. Aishwaryaa  
CHENNAI

The Greater Chennai Corporation's (GCC) plan to undertake ₹100-crore worth of road works ahead of the announcement of dates for the 2026 Assembly election has raised questions over whether the relaying can be taken up and completed.

Residents raised concerns that officials may soon be engaged for poll-related work, and authorities may not be able to commence work once the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) comes into force.

**Coordination concerns**  
According to a senior GCC official, the work orders have been issued. As per documents shared by the Bus Route Roads Department, GCC has identified 489 roads, including 97 bus route roads, with a total length of 96,300 metres.

Works on these roads are to be taken up on a high-priority basis under two tenders, at a tentative estimate of ₹100.5 crore.

The official said as there was an acute shortage of funds, the initial plan to float tenders worth ₹486 crore for road relaying was scaled down. Loans would be availed from the Tamil Nadu Urban Development Fund for relaying high-priority roads that will be identified after inspection,



**Poll rush:** According to GCC, works on 489 roads, including 97 bus route roads, will be taken up on priority in an effort to complete them before the announcement of election schedule. R. RAVINDRAN

the official added.

A portion of Patel Road is slated for relaying, but

GCC officials will soon be engaged in poll-related work, making coordination difficult, said Raghu-

kumar Choodamani of the Perambur Neighbourhood Forum.

"Roads should last at least for three years, but this lane has worn off within months and is repeatedly restored only in parts," he claimed.

The dilapidated storm-water drain should have been restored first, but the road was laid a few months before the 2024 Lok Sabha election. When milling was done on this road earlier, locals had asked officials to reconsider relaying the road, Raghukumar said. He also urged authorities to engage with locals and improve inter-agency coordination before starting work

to avoid repeated digging and relaying of roads. Ma-

nappakkam councillor P.

Usharani Pandiyar of the AIADMK said, though re-

laying has now been pro-

posed, there would be little

time to finalise the tender

floated and begin work.

Ayanavaram councillor T.V. Shemmozhi of the DMK said such issues do occur, but could be avoided if each contractor for road relaying owns the necessary machinery and is assigned a maximum of 20 roads each.

## Lack of approvals

"Mahatma Gandhi Nagar and Sivasakthi Nagar in Kolathur have not had proper roads for nearly three decades. The underground pipeline for sewage disposal started a few weeks ago, but work has not happened for the past couple of days," said Kolathur Re-

sident Welfare Association Secretary M. Murthy.

"When Chief Minister M.K. Stalin visited the constituency recently, petitions were submitted through the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)]. Yet, local authori-

ties said new roads for these places have not been ap-

proved," he alleged.

R. Jayaraman, CPI(M)

councillor from Ward 4 in Tiruvottiyur, said that only

three of the 36 roads he

had proposed for relaying

were approved at an esti-

mated cost of ₹70 lakh.

"By the end of February or the first week of March, the election schedule and Model Code of Conduct dates are likely to be an-

nounced. If road work starts only before that, then there is a possibility

of finishing it. But tenders

have not been finalised yet," he said.

## Over 700 persons with disabilities stage protest

## The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

Over 700 persons with disabilities staged a protest on Tuesday demanding an increase in monthly assistance. All of them were detained by the police.

In a State-wide protest led by the Tamil Nadu Association for the Rights of All Types of Differently abled and Caregivers (TARATDAC). P. Jhansi Rani, president, TARATDAC, said the protesters demanded a monthly assistance of ₹6,000, on a par

## CINEMA • ARTS • EVENTS

## MUSIC DANCE DRAMA

Kalaimamani G. Harishankar Admirers Circle Trust Ph: 984115405

Tribute to Kanjira Maestro G.Harishankar today at Ragasudha Hall, Luz. - 6:00 p.m. Prayer 6:05 pm. Welcome Address: Nerkunam Dr.S.Sankar 6:10 p.m. Audio/Video presentation of Sri.C.Harishankar 6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes to G Harishankar by Guests: Vid Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid Parur M. A Krishnaswamy, 7:00pm Presentation of Kalaimamani Sri.G.Harishankar

6:40pm. Tributes



# Residents object to relaying of OMR without cold-milling

A resident of Perungudi says that in many places the slope is so steep that vehicles, especially two-wheelers and autorickshaws, find it difficult to get onto the main road from the service lane

## STORIES FROM THE ROAD

**Deepa H. Ramakrishnan**

CHENNAI

Residents of areas along Rajiv Gandhi Salai are objecting to increasing the height of the arterial road during the recent relaying. The road has not been cold-milled, a process where the top layer is scrapped to ensure that the height does not increase.

Wilson, a resident of Perungudi, said that in many places the slope was too steep and vehicles like two-wheelers and autorickshaws were finding it very difficult to climb up the road from the service lane. There have been instances of autorickshaw drivers losing control while trying to get off the road and



**Haphazard work:** Residents have expressed concern over the blacktopping work being carried out without cold-milling the surface of the road. DEEPA H. RAMAKRISHNAN

entering the service lane. They have not even made the gradient a gradual one. The work is half finished, he added.

Thoraipakkam resident S. Vasanth said that the laying was done in a poor manner, especially near the joints. "Vehicles suffer

Federation of OMR Resi-

dents Association (FOMRA) co-founder Harsha Koda said that he was alarmed by the blacktopping work being carried out without cold-milling the existing surface.

"It would only lead to diversion of some 60-70 lakh litres of rainwater onto side roads and service lanes, setting the stage for catastrophic flooding when the monsoon hits", he said. "This thick layer of tar isn't just a technical issue. It's a real threat to our homes, shops, offices, and daily lives on this vital IT corridor. We have endured years of waterlogging that turns our roads into rivers during even moderate rain, leaving families stranded and halting work in IT parks. As it is, the drains along the road are ill-equipped to carry the large volume of water and they are damaged too," he pointed out.

Federation of OMR Resi-

## Textile showroom employee arrested for stealing silk sarees

**The Hindu Bureau**

CHENNAI

The Chennai police have arrested a textile showroom employee for allegedly stealing expensive silk sarees from a shop located in T. Nagar.

According to the police,

Sudhan, the manager of the textile shop on Venkatanarayana Road in T. Nagar, noticed that silk sarees went missing from the showroom frequently.

On February 8, he caught an employee, Suresh, attempting to leave the shop with a silk saree.

On questioning him, it was found that Suresh had previously stolen more than 10 silk sarees from the shop.

Sudhan then handed him over to the Crime Wing of the Mambalam police station and filed a complaint.

## Chennai hospital performs robotic heart valve surgeries on teenager, senior citizen

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The Gleneagles Hospital Chennai has successfully completed robotic-assisted mitral valve replacement (MVR) surgeries on a 16-year-old boy and a 76-year-

old woman. The hospital said the procedure were performed using robotic technology that enables surgeons to access the heart through small incisions between the ribs, avoiding conventional open-chest surgery and

aiding faster recovery. The 16-year-old patient had suffered recurrent fever and an embolic stroke caused by severe mitral valve disease. Doctors replaced the damaged valve, and the patient is recovering.

The 76-year-old woman,

who had breathlessness and chest discomfort along with osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis, has regained mobility. The procedures were led by Govini Balasubramani, director of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery.

Association for widows, destitutes seeks separate department

## The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

The Widows and Destitute Women Welfare Association - Tamil Nadu has urged the State government to set up a separate department under the Social Welfare and Women Empowerment department to oversee their affairs.

Putting forth 10 demands ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, the coalition of over 25 associations also urged the government to pass a Tamil Nadu Widows and Single Women (Equality and Non-Discrimination) Act to prevent discrimination against women on religious, cultural, political and economic grounds.

**Increase assistance'** Among their demands, they also requested that assistance for widows be increased to ₹5,000, and an allocation of 10% be made for single women and widows under housing schemes. At least 5% of government employment must be reserved for widows and single women which must be on a par to their educational qualifications.

In an effort to ensure education for children they demanded that a State Widow and Single Women Insurance Scheme be introduced, under which their children's welfare and education is ensured through scholarships.

## Sridhar Vembu's estranged wife moves Madras HC to record his testimony

**Mohamed Imranullah S.**

CHENNAI

Zoho co-founder Sridhar Vembu's estranged wife, Pramila Srinivasan, has approached the Madras High Court with a plea to honour a Letters Rogatory (a request for international judicial assistance) issued by the Superior Court of California in the U.S., where a divorce case between the couple is pending, for recording the evidence of witnesses residing in India.

### Notice to Vembu

Justice P. Dhanabal has directed the High Court Registry to issue notice, returnable by February 23, to Mr. Vembu, who had shifted his residence from Pleasanton in California to Tenkasi in Tamil Nadu. The notice has been ordered to be issued in all three applications filed by Ms. Srinivasan with separate but interconnected prayers related to the Letters Rogatory.

In her first application, Ms. Srinivasan urged the High Court to appoint either a senior advocate or a retired judge as a local commissioner to record the testimonies of nine individuals including Mr. Vembu and his relatives, whom she had arrayed as respondents/witnesses, as well as that of Zoho Corporation Private Limited based at Estancia IT park at Vallanchery in Chengalpattu district.

The applicant said, the Superior Court of California had passed an order on October 2, 2025 for recording the testimonies of the witnesses on oath and also permitted collection of relevant documents from them. She said, the Letters Rogatory too had been issued for that purpose since all those witnesses were residing outside the territorial jurisdiction of the American court.

In her second application, Ms. Srinivasan urged the High Court to confer special powers upon the local commissioner so that he/she could summon all nine in-



Sridhar Vembu

dividuals as well as the authorised person representing Zoho Corporation, administer oath to them and record their testimony as per the California Code of Civil Procedure and also the Indian laws besides directing them to produce the relevant documents.

The applicant insisted that her counsel from the United States must also be allowed to examine or cross examine the witnesses, through video conferencing, in the presence of the local commissioner and insisted that the depositions must be recorded verbatim in writing. She wanted the local commissioner to record the testimony, collect relevant documents and also other evidences related to her case.

The third application had been filed seeking a direction to the local commissioner to transmit his/her report along with the recorded testimony, documents, evidence and any other material or information collected during the proceedings directly to the Superior Court of California's address mentioned in the Letters Rogatory. She insisted that those materials should be sent in a sealed cover.

It is common for courts across the globe to issue Letters Rogatory to each other seeking judicial assistance. In 2025, the Madras High Court had rejected a Letters Rogatory issued by the district court of Delaware in the U.S. for securing oral and documentary evidence from a Chengalpattu-based pharmaceutical company in connection with a patent dispute between Pfizer and Cipla.

## OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

### DEATH



JERALD PACKIASAMY  
(25 MARCH 1978 - 10 FEBRUARY 2026)

Those we love don't disappear; they change form – into the quiet strength we carry, the stories we repeat, the laughter that still returns. Gone from sight, never from us.

The Funeral Mass will be at 1:30 AM on 11-02-2026 at Santhome Cathedral, Santhome High Rd, Mylapore, Chennai 600003

LOVE  
PREETI, MIRA, TARA, PARENTS, FAMILY & FRIENDS

### DEATH



R. PUSHPAVALLI  
DOB: 04.12.1941 – DOD: 04.02.2026  
Founder: RAAGAA Industries & Anchor Services, Chennai  
Beloved wife, sister, mother & grandmother  
Contact: KPR (9840356748)



Mr. C.V. Sudarsan  
1948 – 2026  
Passed away peacefully on 08-Feb-2026  
Om Shanti  
Last rites on 11-Feb-2026  
No.51/2, 7th Cross Street,  
Shenoy Nagar, Chennai-30  
Deeply missed by the beloved family  
Rukmani, Roopa, Balaji, Siddhartha,  
Vaishnavi, Nakul, Rohan and Urvi

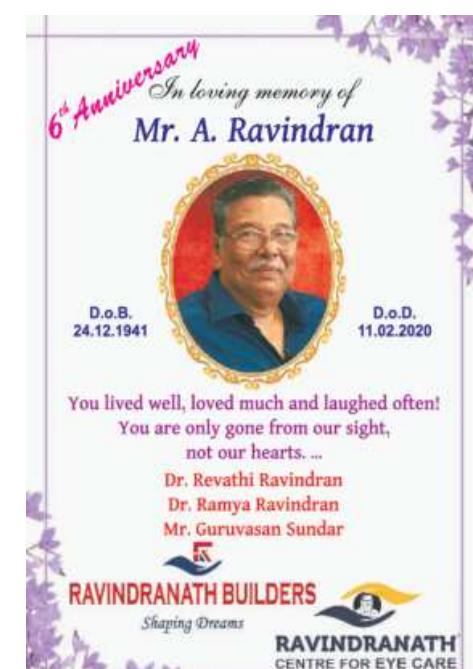


Mrs. VASUMATHY V  
(W/o Dr. R.M. Srinivasan) Age 78,  
Office Superintendent (Retd),  
Govt. Royapettah Hospital  
passed away on 10 Feb. 2026.  
Cremation on 11 Feb. 2026  
at 10 a.m., Kannampet Crematorium.  
An embodiment of affection and  
sacrifice who enlightened us  
at every stage of life and  
will continue to do so.  
Grieving family and friends.  
Ph: 8939189227



Mrs. Mangalam Balakrishnan  
06.11.1945 – 11.02.2025  
One year has passed. Still you are  
near. Not in our life to share but in  
our hearts you are always there.  
We pray to GOD for your soul to  
always rest in Peace.  
Fondly Remembered by:  
Family and Friends

### DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



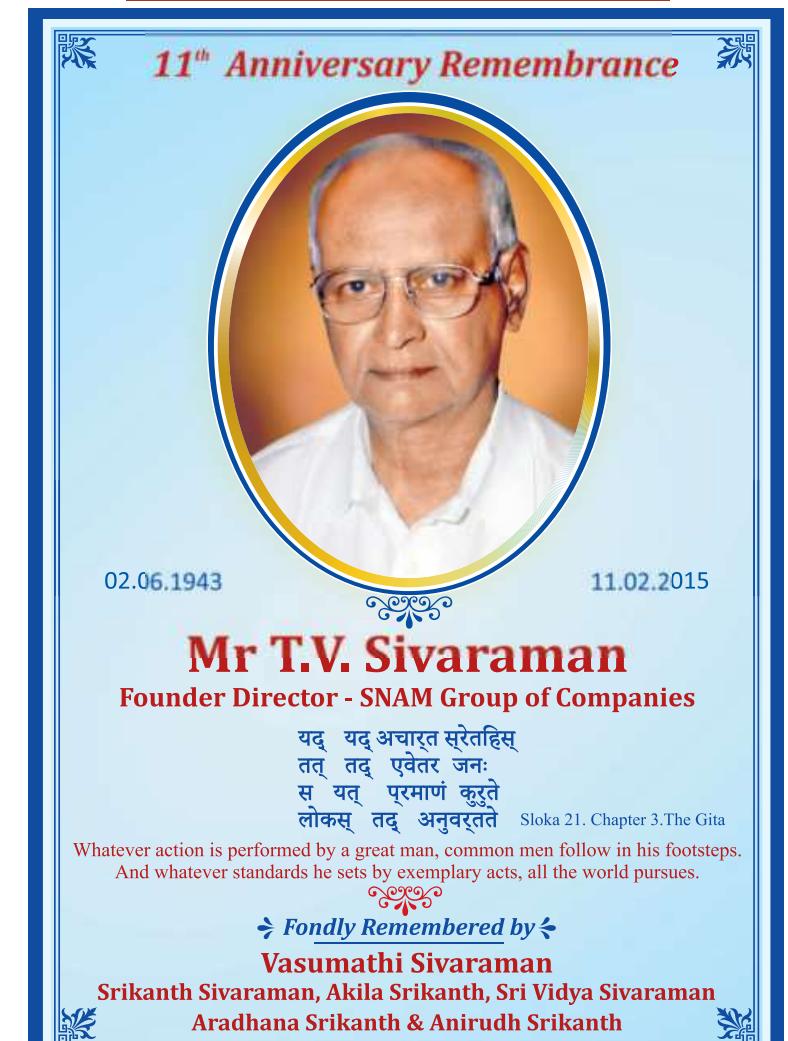
You lived well, loved much and laughed often!  
You are only gone from our sight,  
not our hearts...  
Dr. Revathi Ravindran  
Dr. Ramya Ravindran  
Mr. Guruvasan Sundar

### DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



27.7.1937 - 11.2.2008  
FONDLY REMEMBERED  
BY  
FAMILY & FRIENDS

### REMEMBRANCE



Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps.  
And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.

यद अचारं सरतहितः  
तत् तद् एवेत जनः  
स यत् प्रमाणं कुरुते  
लोकस् तद् अनुदरतते

Sloka 21. Chapter 3. The Gita

→ Fondly Remembered by →  
Vasumathi Sivaraman

Srikanth Sivaraman, Akila Srikanth, Sri Vidya Sivaraman  
Aradhana Srikanth & Anirudh Srikanth

### IN MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES

To dedicate a space in this section,  
Please contact: 044-28576300 from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Toll Free: 1800 102 4161 from 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m.

For Placing Advertisements Online log on to  
[www.thehinduads.com](http://www.thehinduads.com)

DONATE EYES - GIFT SIGHT

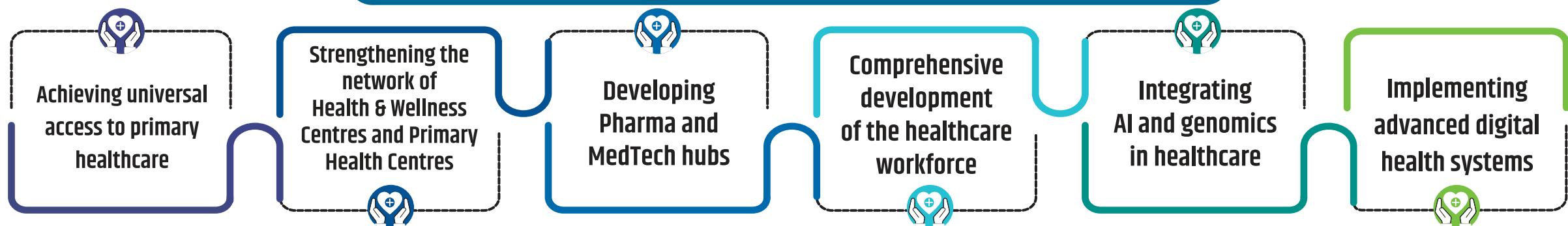
# UTTAR PRADESH

## ADVANCING QUALITY HEALTHCARE FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE



In approx 9 years, the Yogi government has transformed Uttar Pradesh's healthcare system through a mission-driven approach focused on quality, accessibility, and infrastructure expansion. Guided by the principle of "Health for All," the state has ensured cashless treatment of up to ₹5 lakh for over 9 crore beneficiaries under the Ayushman Bharat scheme. The One District–One Medical College initiative has significantly strengthened medical education and specialist services, while facilities such as dialysis centers, CT scan services, and Health ATMs are now available in every district. Simultaneously, the development of Medical Device Parks, Bulk Drug Parks, and MedTech Parks is positioning Uttar Pradesh as an emerging hub for healthcare manufacturing and innovation. Driven by strong policies and effective implementation, Uttar Pradesh has entered a new era of modern, inclusive, and people-centric healthcare, establishing itself among the leading states in healthcare delivery.

### STRATEGIC HEALTH SECTOR GOALS FOR 2047



#### EXPANDING HORIZONS IN MEDICAL EDUCATION

Under the 'One District, One Medical College' policy, **81 medical colleges are operational** in the state

Establishment of **Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University** in Gorakhpur to promote excellence in Yoga and Naturopathy research

**AIIMS Gorakhpur** and **AIIMS Raebareli** are functioning and providing advanced medical services

A Government **Ayurvedic Medical College** has been established in Ayodhya

A Government **Homeopathic Medical College** has been set up in Varanasi

**Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical University** is operational in Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh currently runs **2,110 Ayurvedic, 254 Unani, and 1,585 Homeopathic hospitals**, along with 8 Ayurvedic colleges, 2 Unani colleges, and 9 Homeopathic colleges, each with their respective attached hospitals

The number of MD, MS, and Diploma seats has increased from **900 to 1,871** and the private sector now offers 2,100 PG seats

In government institutions, **5,250 MBBS seats** are available; the private sector offers **6,550 MBBS seats**, and PPP-mode medical colleges have **350 MBBS seats**

An additional **7,000 seats** have been created in nursing, and **2,000 seats** in the paramedical sector

A total of **31 new nursing colleges** have been established across the state

#### HEALTHCARE SERVICES STRENGTHENED IN APPROX 9 YEAR

Every poor family has received free health protection coverage of up to ₹5 lakh, with **56.30 lakh beneficiaries** already availing treatment benefits

Under the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana**, Uttar Pradesh has issued the highest number of Ayushman cards in the country 5.35 crore, covering over **9 crore beneficiaries** so far

**250 Advanced Life Support ambulances, 2,270 National Ambulance Service vehicles, and 2,200 ambulances under the 108 service** are operational across the state

Health ATMs installed in all **Primary Health Centres (PHCs)** across Uttar Pradesh

Establishment of **5,000 new Health Sub-Centres** across the state

With the creation of **13.18 crore ABHA Health Accounts**, Uttar Pradesh ranks first in the country

Under the Ayushman Bharat scheme, **5,834 hospitals** (including 2,949 government and 2,885 private hospitals) have been empaneled in the state



Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay **Cashless Medical Scheme** implemented for state government employees and pensioners

Under the Mukhyamantri Arogya Swasthya Melas, **13.50 crore** patients have received treatment so far

Teleconsultation services have been arranged for patients in remote areas, benefitting **3.54 crore** patients so far

#### UP AI Mission

Under the UP AI Mission, projects worth approximately ₹2,000 crore will be implemented in phases over the next three years, positioning Uttar Pradesh at the forefront of AI-driven healthcare in the country

Free dialysis facilities made available in district hospitals of all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh

Under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme, **6.81 lakh** TB patients have been registered, and under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana, each patient receives ₹500 per month along with treatment

Under the **Free Diagnostic Service**, CT Scan facilities are available in 74 districts of the state

**From Page One****DMK to hold seat-sharing talks from February 22**

The DMK said that on the one hand, it was engaged in a series of conferences, including membership drives, regional conferences, youth wing conferences, and women's wing conferences, and on the other, the government was implementing welfare schemes to ensure victory in the election. "A committee to prepare the manifesto has been formed, and it is touring the State to elicit opinions and suggestions from various sections of society," the release said.

It added that the party cadre were geared up for the election, and were engaged in field work. "The SIR has been successfully completed. Party workers, MLAs, MPs, district secretaries, party observers, and SLBs have worked effectively to achieve this," the release said, attributing the delay in commencement of talks to this.

Earlier in the day, senior Congress leaders made it clear that time was running out, and an immediate decision was required.

"The election process has changed. The Congress president [Mallikarjun Kharge] is worried that selecting candidates at the last minute and then going to the people won't work. We have had unpleasant experiences in the Bihar and Maharashtra elections," Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president K. Selvaperunthagai said, addressing the media in New Delhi with Girish Chodankar, All India Congress Committee in-charge of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

Mr. Chodankar said the Congress cadre were pained [by the DMK's attitude]. "We are not blaming anyone; we are only presenting the facts. Seventy days have passed since the Congress president formed the five-member committee in November and met the Chief Minister (and DMK leader M.K. Stalin). We are waiting with the hope that they would start negotiations so that we would have an idea about the number of seats we would contest from. We can start preparing. It is saddening that they have not constituted a committee, and have not started negotiations. Elections are approaching, and we need sufficient time," he said. The two leaders met journalists after a meeting with the AICC leadership on the Assembly election. Mr. Selvaperunthagai appealed to Mr. Stalin to immediately form the negotiation committee, get done with the seat-sharing exercise, and move on to the electoral battlefield, instead of starting negotiations at the last minute. He said the delay had disturbed the Congress leaders' plans to tour Tamil Nadu.

When asked why Rahul Gandhi or other Congress leaders were yet to visit Tamil Nadu when BJP leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah had done so, Mr. Selvaperunthagai said, "Rahul ji and Kharge are ready, but we can bring them to Tamil Nadu only after the negotiations are done."

**IN BRIEF****Duraimurugan hospitalised after suffering hip fracture**

Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan has been hospitalised for treatment for a hip fracture. Party sources said he fell at home and experienced severe pain. He was admitted to Apollo Hospitals in Chennai for treatment.

**Sivasankar responds to Union Railways Minister's statement on budget allocation for T.N.****The Hindu Bureau**

S.S. Sivasankar

A day after Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw contended that allocation for Tamil Nadu in the Railways Budget had increased more than 8.5 times since 2014, reaching ₹7,611 crore in 2026-27, State Transport Minister S.S. Sivasankar on Tuesday asserted that sufficient funds had not been allocated for acquiring land for railway projects. Mr. Vaishnaw's statement was a counter to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's remarks over inadequate funds allocation for land acquisition for railway projects in Tamil Nadu.

Denying Mr. Vaishnaw's charge that the DMK government had not extended cooperation to implement railway projects, Mr. Sivasankar alleged that the former had made false statements with an aim of scoring political mileage. Addressing journalists in Tiruchi, he contended that the State government had been according top priority in implementing the rail-

way projects. Mr. Stalin had extended close cooperation to the Centre for acquiring land for railway projects since 2021.

"The State government was supposed to acquire 148 hectares of lands for seven schemes announced by the Railway Ministry since 2021. The State government extended administrative sanction for all of them, and had acquired 73 hectares. As far as the formation of a new broad-gauge track between Morappur and Dharmapuri was concerned, the Railway Ministry had revised the land acquisition scheme due to the law and order issues reported in four villages," he alleged.

Mr. Sivasankar said the

**T.N. likely to become \$150 billion electronics hub by 2030, says State Industries Minister**

He points out that the State's share in India's total electronics exports during FY2025 was around 41% at \$15 billion, and this is likely to have increased to 45% in FY2026. He also expresses concern that the Centre has not yet released State-wise data on electronics exports for the current financial year

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The electronics manufacturing industry aims to hit \$500 billion by 2030, and Tamil Nadu will likely be a \$150 billion market then, State Industries Minister T.R.B. Rajaa said in Chennai on Tuesday.

"Tamil Nadu has around 41% share in India's total electronics exports during the financial year (FY) 2025 at \$15 billion. This is likely to have grown to 45% in FY2026," he said, expressing concern that the Centre has not released State-wise data on electronics exports for the current financial year.

At the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of Source India-Electronics Supply Chain, organised by the Electronic Industries Association of India (ELCINA), Mr. Rajaa said: "We have done everything possible in India. Now, we

**Globally competitive:** Industries Minister T.R.B. Rajaa and other dignitaries at the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of Source India-Electronics Supply Chain held at the Chennai Trade Centre on Tuesday. M. SRINATH

want to go compete with the world, which we have been doing in several sectors for a long time. We have expertise in manufacturing and services, and the next big thing to do is R&D (Research and Development)". He requested the stakeholders present at the event to invest more in R&D.

Sasikumar Gendham,

president of ELCINA, said: "Electronics is no longer just an industry – it is the infrastructure for modern civilisation. From mobility and healthcare to defence, energy, AI and space, it sits at the core of every national priority. As global supply chains are being re-imagined, with reliability and resilience becoming as important as cost, India

stands at a historic inflection point. The question is not whether India can play a global role, but how fast and how decisively we scale."

Mr. Gendham said electronics leadership demanded strong component ecosystems, MSME integration, academia-industry collaboration, and deep supplier develop-

ment. "With established clusters in Chennai, Sripuram, Hosur, Coimbatore, and Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu has built a full-stack electronics ecosystem – from design and components to final assembly and exports," he added.

Atul Lall, vice-chairman and managing director, Dixon Technologies India Ltd. and past ELCINA president, said: "India's electronics manufacturing sector is entering a phase of accelerated growth, driven by scale, policy support and increasing global confidence. The next phase of competitiveness will depend on deeper localisation, strong component ecosystems and continued investment in technology and skills."

A report on the Tamil Nadu Electronics Industry, released at the event, said the State accounted for 28.6% of India's electronics

manufacturing gross sales value, ranking second only to Uttar Pradesh. "However, Tamil Nadu is aggressively investing in the future as it leads in actual asset addition within the electronics industry, with a commanding 47.6%. The State's overall exports in 2023-24 was estimated at \$43.5 billion, with 22% attributed to electronics exports," the report stated. It added: "Tamil Nadu also has 191 units related to electronics manufacturing. With the state having the most units producing mobile handsets and related components, Tamil Nadu's exports are \$14.65 billion. These factors show how the sector has seen a rise of 414% from 2021-22, when electronics exports were a mere \$1.86 billion."

The report also gave some recommendations on creating a dedicated electronics manufacturing promotion agency.

**Women's enrolment in higher education up by 34% due to Pudhumai Penn scheme: CM****The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said here on Tuesday that the enrolment of women in higher education in Tamil Nadu has increased by 34% due to the *Pudhumai Penn* scheme, under which ₹1,000 is deposited monthly to the beneficiary students in colleges.

Addressing an event organised by the All India Association for Christian Higher Education (AIACHE) and Women's Christian College (WCC), Mr. Stalin said: "The enrolment of women has increased by 34% only due to the *Pudhumai Penn* scheme, according to recent data. What else can make me happier? This is no ordinary achievement. If we undertake a study now, it would have in-

**Empowering initiative:** Chief Minister M.K. Stalin interacting with teachers and students at an event in Chennai on Tuesday. R. RAGU

creased even more. About eight lakh girl students have benefited from this programme."

A study by the State Planning Commission had shown that girl students from rural areas benefitted more from the scheme than those from urban areas, the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Stalin said his government realised that its duty was to fulfil the various demands put forth by

the office-bearers of the AIACHE and various minority educational institutions from across Tamil Nadu.

He asked them to be cognisant of the hardships faced by their parents in getting them educated.

these institutions and was acting accordingly. "There are more demands from them [AIACHE]. We will return, so we will certainly fulfil your remaining demands," he said.

Listing his government's measures in school and higher education, Mr. Stalin told students: "There are no shortcuts. Like one of the dialogues by 'Superstar' Rajinikanth, 'One cannot get anything without hard work, and things obtained without hard work will not last.' He asked them to be cognisant of the hardships faced by their parents in getting them educated.

**Ford returning to T.N.'** Automobile major Ford was set to resume manufacturing operations in Tamil Nadu, Mr. Stalin said during the function.

"Next, Ford is about to resume manufacturing. We are now competing not with other States but with other countries. It is only because Tamil Nadu is focusing on education," Mr. Stalin said.

Over the past six months, Mr. Stalin recalled having inaugurated units of VinFast and Tata Motors-Jaguar Land Rover. "There is no history of inaugurating two major car companies within such a short period."

Underlining the industrial profile of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Stalin said the State had emerged as the second-largest economy in the country.

From being among the poorest States in the country in the 1950s, Tamil Nadu has emerged to join States that have minimal poverty, he added.

**DMK should win seats only in single digit: Anbumani****The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

PMK leader Anbumani on Tuesday urged the party's youth wing to work hard to ensure the "DMK does not retain power in Tamil Nadu" after this year's Assembly poll.

Having inaugurated units of VinFast and Tata Motors-Jaguar Land Rover. "There is no history of inaugurating two major car companies within such a short period."

Underlining the industrial profile of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Stalin said the State had emerged as the second-largest economy in the country.

"The National Democratic Alliance, led by the AIADMK, will win in at least 200 constituencies. My desire is the DMK should win seats only in single digit," he added.

**Jana Nayagan row: HC allows production firm to withdraw writ petition against CBFC****Mohamed Imranullah S.**  
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Tuesday permitted the production firm of actor Vijay-starrer *Jana Nayagan* to withdraw a writ petition filed by it on January 6, seeking a direction to the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to issue a U/A 16+ certificate to the movie within 24 hours.

Justice P.T. Asha dismissed the writ petition as withdrawn after Vijayan Subramanian, counsel for KVN Productions LLP, filed a letter before the High Court Registry stating the production firm had decided to accept the CBFC chairman's reference to the revising committee, comprising nine members.

The court's permission to withdraw the petition has cleared the legal hurdles in the way of the CBFC in sending the movie to the revising committee for fresh consideration as to whether the movie must be granted a U (universal),

U/A (under adult guidance), or A (adults only) certification.

The release of the movie, originally planned on January 9, had got delayed by over a month due to litigation. The producer submitted the movie for certification under the talkat procedure on December 18, 2025, and an examining committee comprising five members watched the movie on December 19, 2025.

The producer was informed on December 22, 2025, that the examining committee had recommended a U/A 16+ certification if certain excisions were carried out.

One of the members of the examining committee sent a complaint to the CBFC chairman in Mumbai over the absence of an expert in Army-related issues, despite the movie having several references to the armed forces.

Hence, the CBFC chairman put the process on hold on December 29, 2025.

**Court summons complainant in jewellery theft case related to Sivaganga custodial death****The Hindu Bureau**  
MADRAS

Following the closure of the case relating to alleged theft of jewellery on the basis of which B. Ajith Kumar, a 29-year-old temple security guard, was illegally detained and later died during interrogation, Madurai Chief Judicial Magistrate K. Selvapandi has summoned the complainant Nikitha.

Ms. Nikitha was summoned to appear before the court on March 4. Earlier, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had informed the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court that the jewellery theft connected to the illegal custodial death case of Ajith Kumar in Sivaganga district had been closed.

So far, 10 police personnel have been named as accused in the custodial death case. The CBI has filed a charge sheet and a supplementary charge sheet.

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



remanded in judicial custody. Later, Ramachandran (police driver), was also named as an accused in the case and remanded in judicial custody.

Subsequently, the then Manamadurai Deputy Superintendent of Police N. Shanmugasundaram, the then Thirupuvanam Inspector of Police P. Ramesh Kumar, the then Sub-Inspector Siva Kumar, and the then Head Constable Ilayaraja were additionally named as accused.

Ajith Kumar was taken in for interrogation in connection with the alleged theft. On June 28, 2025, he died during the interrogation.

The State government had transferred the investigation into both cases to the CBI.

**So far, 10 police personnel have been named as accused in the custodial death case. The CBI has filed a charge sheet and a supplementary charge sheet**

On June 27, 2025, Ms. Nikitha from Thirumangalam in Madurai district and her mother visited the temple. She had reportedly handed the car key to Ajith Kumar and asked him to park the vehicle, as she needed to help her mother, who had difficulties walking.

It is alleged that when Ms. Nikitha and her mother returned, they found their bag in the car open and the gold ornaments inside missing.

Ajith Kumar was taken in for interrogation in connection with the alleged theft. On June 28, 2025, he died during the interrogation.

The State government had transferred the investigation into both cases to the CBI.

Veteran journalist P. Ramaiah passes away

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

Veteran journalist and former Member of the Karnataka Legislative Council P. Ramaiah, 92, passed away in Bengaluru at a private hospital on Tuesday night.

He leaves behind wife Jaya and three children. His family sources said that he was hospitalised for the last two weeks. He will be cremated in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

Born on September 12, 1933, he was a native of Bindenahalli, Nagamangala Taluk, Mandy district.

Ramaiah, who joined *The Hindu* in the early 1950s, had served the organisation for nearly half a century, and retired as the Chief of Bureau of Karnataka in 1998. He was later nominated by the then Janata Dal government as MLC and served in the Karnataka Legislative Council till 2004. He headed a committee that recommended measures to strengthen small newspapers in the State.

"He was an all-rounder. His language was simple and straight. He was a very good leader. Ramaiah had vast contacts among leaders across the political spectrum," said A. Jayaram, former Chief of Bureau of *The Hindu*.

Many political leaders condoled his passing away, including Chief Minister Siddaramiah, his deputy D.K. Shiva Kumar, Leader of Opposition R. Ashok, and Union Minister H.D. Kumareshwamy.

## T.N. Idol Wing all set to bring back antique stone pillar from Vienna

The pillar from 18th-19th century is likely to have been stolen from a temple in Tamil Nadu; it is made of light buff granite block usually found in north-western regions of the State; Austrian agencies ready to begin restitution process

**R. Sivaraman**  
CHENNAI

An antique stone pillar, possibly stolen from a temple in Tamil Nadu, has been traced to Vienna in Austria.

Following an alert from Austrian authorities, the Idol Wing-CID of the Tamil Nadu Police has launched steps to bring back the pillar, said to be from the 18th to 19th century.

The officers of the IW-CID have been working to recover stolen idols and artefacts from within the country as well as abroad. During the course of their work, Additional Deputy



Such pillars are commonly found in temples in Tamil Nadu, say experts. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Superintendent of Police, G. Balamurugan, received information that an antique pillar, about half a tonne in weight and featuring a bas-relief (embossed sculpture) of a deity, possibly Lord Vishnu, Garuda, a saint, and a *hamsa* (swan),

had been seized by the Austrian authorities.

The IW-CID got photographs of the pillar from the Federal Ministry of Interior Criminal Intelligence Service, Cultural Property Unit, Austria.

"It appears that the pillar was stolen from a temple in Tamil Nadu," Additional Director General of Police, Idol Wing, D. Kalpana Nayak, said.

Owing to the common nature of the pillar (found in many temples in Tamil Nadu), its exact prove-

nance could not be located. The curator of the IW-CID found that the pillar was made of light buff granite block usually found in north-western regions of Tamil Nadu (Krishnagiri-Dharmapuri belt) or adjoining areas of Tamil Nadu such as Kolar district of Karnataka or Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, Ms. Nayak said.

It could also be from small *mandapas* (pillared halls) usually erected in front of the main shrine, as a smaller temple for Nandhi and Garuda.

Austrian agencies said they were ready to start the process of restitution.

## VACB opens inquiry into installation of new flag mast at Sabarimala temple

**The Hindu Bureau**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

**The court had ordered the Vigilance inquiry and set a 30-day deadline to file its report**

sizeable donations, including gold, for the mast's construction.

The High Court had ordered the Vigilance inquiry and set a 30-day deadline for the agency to file its preliminary report.

The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) appointed by the then Congress-

led United Democratic Front (UDF) government had recommended a new flagstaff for the temple.

The TDB later obtained ritual sanction from then senior Tantri Kandararu Rajeevaru and sought gold and cash donations through a sponsorship routed through Unnikrishnan Potti, now the prime accused in the Sabarimala gold theft case.

The TDB's internal vigilance wing later raised doubts over the maintenance of donation records,

auditing of gold and cash used, and the legality of gifting the Tantri a gold-plated horse statuette atop the flag mast.

In 2025, a High Court-appointed Crime Branch SIT recovered the statuette from Mr. Rajeevaru's residence after he was named an accused in the case.

The Kollam Vigilance Court is scheduled to deliver its verdict on Mr. Rajeevaru's bail plea on February 18, with the SIT opposing bail citing undisclosed bank accounts.

## ED summons actor Jayaram in connection with gold case

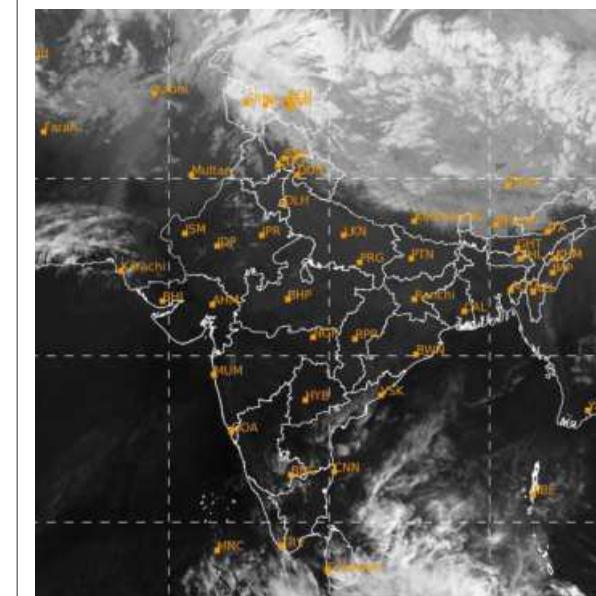
**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOCHI

The ED has issued a summons to actor Jayaram to appear for questioning in connection with the Sabarimala missing gold case at its Kochi office next week.

The move comes in the wake of the actor's association and financial transactions with Unnikrishnan Potti, the prime accused in the case. He was questioned by the special investigation team last month.

## WEATHER WATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



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

**Forecast for Wednesday:** Squally weather with wind speed 35 to 45 kmph gusting to 55 kmph likely to prevail over some parts of south-east and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal adjoining to east Equatorial Indian Ocean

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 28.4...	12.4	...	Kozhikode	... 34.5...	24.9	...
Ahmedabad	... 31.3...	17.0	...	Kurnool	... 34.1...	19.2	...
Aizawl	... 29.0...	13.6	...	Lucknow	... 26.4...	10.0	...
Allahabad	... 28.8...	10.9	...	Madurai	... 32.7...	20.0	...
Bengaluru	... 29.9...	16.4	...	Mangaluru	... 33.0...	22.9	...
Bhopal	... 30.4...	12.8	...	Mumbai	... 31.6...	19.0	...
Bhubaneswar	... 32.3...	15.0	...	Mysuru	... 31.4...	15.6	...
Chandigarh	... 25.8...	9.3	...	New Delhi	... 28.6...	9.2	...
Chennai	... 30.3...	22.0	...	Pathan	... 25.8...	13.1	...
Coimbatore	... 32.4...	19.8	...	Port Blair	... 31.0...	23.6	...
Dehradun	... 25.5...	9.6	...	Puducherry	... 30.0...	21.0	...
Gangtok	... 17.4...	22.0	...	Pune	... 34.0...	18.6	...
Goa	... 32.2...	21.0	...	Raipur	... 31.3...	15.9	...
Guwahati	... 28.6...	13.5	...	Ranchi	... 27.0...	10.0	...
Hubballi	... 33.0...	16.0	...	Shillong	... 18.4...	6.9	...
Hyderabad	... 31.8...	13.5	...	Shimla	... 17.6...	8.0	...
Imphal	... 27.0...	8.9	...	Srinagar	... 6.7...	3.3	...
Jaipur	... 27.3...	14.5	...	Thiruvananthapuram	... 33.6...	23.8	...
Kochi	... 31.0...	25.0	...	Tiruchi	... 30.5...	20.0	...
Kohima	... 21.4...	8.4	...	Vijayawada	... 30.6...	20.0	...
Kolkata	... 28.4...	14.2	...	Visakhapatnam	... 29.4...	20.6	...

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

**Yesterday**  
In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhiwani recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 336 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 26

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**NO<sub>x</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

## IN BRIEF



### Sabarimala Ayyappa temple to open on February 12

The Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala will open for the monthly puja for the Malayalam month of *Kumbham* on February 12. Under the guidance of Tantri Kandararu Mahesh Mohanaru, Melanthi Prasad E.D. will open the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. This will be followed by the opening of the various Upadevatha temples and the lighting of the *aazhi* near the 18 holy steps. The temple will close at 10 p.m. on February 17.

### ED steps into Tirumala laddu ghee adulteration case

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has entered the Tirumala laddu ghee adulteration case, amid growing indications of bribes allegedly paid to certain individuals through hawala transactions. Sources said the ED has registered a case and initiated a probe under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Earlier, a special investigation team (SIT) headed by the CBI, investigated the ghee adulteration case and submitted its report to a court in Nellore. The report pointed to hawala transactions allegedly used as bribes by private dairies to certain mediators involved in securing approval for ghee procurement orders.

### Battle for Cheruvally estate ownership takes new turn

Even as Kerala government moves the High Court challenging a Pala sub-court order that dismissed its ownership claim over the Cheruvally estate, the police have launched a probe into the alleged forgery involved in the sale of the estate two decades ago. The development assumes added significance as the Cheruvally estate has been identified as the proposed site for the Sabarimala airport. The cases stem from a petition filed by Baby Simon Punnakkunnel, a lawyer, in which it was argued that more than 2,000 acres of land owned by the State was illegally transferred to Gospel for Asia through forged title deeds.

## Health first



As part of National Deworming Day, the Tamil Nadu government distributed deworming tablets to students of government schools on Tuesday. As part of the routine, students at the Edayanachathu Government High School, Vellore were explained about the benefits of deworming. C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

## Shivakumar skips Budget meet, attends party talks

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

The power-sharing tussle within the Karnataka Congress appeared to escalate on Tuesday as Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar skipped a pre-Budget meeting of two key departments and travelled to New Delhi, sharpening focus on internal party tensions.

Chief Minister Siddaramiah, responding to questions on the leadership row, reiterated that the party high command's decision would be final. "Why do you keep asking? If Mr. Shivakumar has said something, ask him," he said, adding that he would not visit New Delhi unless formally invited, citing



D.K. Shivakumar

Budget-related engagements in Bengaluru.

Mr. Shivakumar, who has been appointed the Congress election in charge for Assam, said departmental work would not be affected by his absence.

"The Chief Minister is the chairman of the Water Resources Department. Officers are present and everything is planned," he said.

## Karnataka High Court denies anticipatory bail to BJP MLA in realtor murder case

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

Observing that the interrogation of a powerful and influential accused protected by anticipatory bail may not be effective, the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday denied anticipatory bail to BJP MLA Byrathi Basavaraj in connection with the murder of Shivaprasad, alias Bikila Shiva, a realtor with several criminal cases, who was killed on July 15, 2025.

A perusal of the investigation material placed before the court *prima facie* does reveal that there are substantial records which may be required to be confronted to the accused as a part of the investigation.

Such material consists of Call Detail Records (CDRs), reports of enquiry on the complaint of the deceased and photograph of the petitioner along with accused [Jagadish alias Jagga], the court observed. Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav passed the order while

rejecting the petition filed by Mr. Basavaraj. With this order, the interim anticipatory relief granted to him on December 26, 2025 has been cancelled.

Such evidence, no doubt, is a matter to be subjected to further scrutiny, however, the request of the investigating agency for custodial interrogation cannot be brushed aside as the decision about the manner of investigation must be left with the investigation authority and the court cannot sit in judgment over the same, the court said.

The court said that "it could be stated that the CDRs contain information which the petitioner is required to explain. There is

sufficient force in the assertion of the prosecution based on the investigation records that the petitioner has much to explain".

It was contended on behalf of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) that though the petitioner has contended that he has cooperated with investigation, despite his right against self-incrimination, he cannot attempt to mislead the investigating authority. The CID had also claimed that Mr. Basavaraj had "feigned ignorance regarding Jagadish alias Jagga, while the probe records contains material in the form of photograph and CDRs to show that the petitioner is attempting to mislead the investigation".

## No ambulance in A.P. hospital; family takes body home on bike

**Sambasiva Rao M.**  
BAPATLA



## New beginnings

The end of START should prompt discussions on wider and equal terms

**O**n February 5, 2026, the 'New' Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) expired. A symbol of an older era in global geopolitics, where the U.S. and the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were engaged in an escalating spiral of one-upmanship such as 'testing' mammoth nuclear weapons and space races, START represented a pivotal shift in how they approached nuclear competition – from unlimited accumulation towards negotiated reduction. It emerged from decades of arms control efforts and altered the trajectory of the Cold War's final years. The nuclear arms race that dominated the Cold War saw both superpowers accumulate massive arsenals. By the 1980s, they each possessed over 10,000 strategic nuclear warheads – the U.S. with a lopsided advantage. Earlier arms control measures such as the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks, in the 1970s, attempted to limit the growth of these arsenals, but were focused on capping numbers rather than reducing them.

START I negotiations began in 1982 and proved complex. The treaty was not signed until July 1991, just months before the Soviet Union's collapse. It represented the first agreement between the superpowers to actually reduce strategic nuclear arsenals rather than merely limit their growth. The treaty required each side to cut strategic warheads to 6,000 and reduce delivery systems proportionally. This was a significant symbolic and practical achievement – each country would have roughly 30% fewer warheads than existing agreements permitted. Later agreements built on START's framework and reduced deployable warheads to 1,700-2,200 a side, and the New START Treaty (2010) limited each side to 1,550 deployed strategic warheads. Each represented further progress down from Cold War peaks. The New START, with its 15-year lifespan, ought to have been replaced with more ambitious outcomes. But given that global geopolitics seems to be receding into imperialist structures – mercantilist tariff systems and a craving for territories – it is unsurprising that arms-race doctrines too will be resuscitated. U.S. President Donald Trump has stated that any future arms control must include China, given its growing nuclear stockpile, signalling that the U.S. will not be bound by limits if other major powers (such as China) are free to build up theirs. The end of START may have serious consequences for global agreements, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. They are both noble in theory but the first is discriminatory in the way it seeks to rid the world of nuclear weapons. The end of START is an opportunity to restart discussion on more equal terms.

## Takaichi's triumph

Japan should go beyond conservatism and adopt an inclusive agenda

**S**anae Takaichi's landslide victory in Japan's February 8 snap election marks one of the most striking political comebacks in its recent history. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won 316 of 465 seats in Parliament's lower house, delivering its strongest post-war performance. When Ms. Takaichi became Japan's first woman Prime Minister in October 2025, the LDP, which had led Japan for all but four years since 1955, was reeling from back-to-back electoral setbacks and internal scandals. The party had just lost its majority in the House of Councillors, the upper house, raising doubts about its ability to govern. Her immediate challenge was to quickly reverse the LDP's declining fortunes and secure a clear mandate for herself. A conservative nationalist closely aligned with the late former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, she advanced a distinctly Trumpian agenda with Japanese characteristics. She pledged to crack down on immigration and stand up to China's military and economic influence in the region. Her government proposed to make it tougher for foreigners to become citizens and also encourage prospective residents to learn Japanese. She withdrew an unpopular fuel tax and promised more tax cuts. Ms. Takaichi stated that Japan could militarily intervene in the event of a Chinese attack on Taiwan, provoking Beijing to impose restrictions on Japanese seafood imports and limits on critical minerals exports to Japan.

While her victory as the first woman Prime Minister is historic, it is shaped by a paradox: the conservative ideology that defines her politics. She has made repeated visits to the controversial Yasukuni shrine. She opposes same-sex marriage, and many supporters have urged her to amend the Constitution to remove the pacifist clauses. Although Ms. Takaichi enjoys warm ties with U.S. President Donald Trump, she also faces pressure from Washington to move towards a more militarised security posture. But if Ms. Takaichi uses the huge mandate to remilitarise Japan and adopt a more muscular foreign policy, she risks placing herself on the wrong side of history. Post-war peace helped Japan rebuild an economy devastated by conflict and dramatically improve living standards. Rather than issuing provocative statements that risk imperilling Japan's economic ties with its largest trading partner, she should return to the country's long-standing position of studied ambiguity over Taiwan and prioritise regional stability. Her focus should be on revitalising the economy and addressing social challenges, including an ageing population, stagnant wages and persistent gender inequality. The supermajority that she now commands offers her an opportunity to move beyond rigid conservatism and pursue a more pragmatic and inclusive agenda rooted in pacifism.

# The approaching AI surge, its global consequences

**I**f there is a single technology that promises to unravel the present and usher in a new era, the bet would be on Artificial Intelligence (AI). At the very least, AI is set to effect a transformation that is comparable to any previous revolution, not excluding the Industrial Revolution. Impressive Large Language Models (LLMs) are already rolling out faster than one would have imagined possible. Rivalry between the United States and China in this area has become intense and the success of recent Chinese models is having a catalytic effect on the AI industry as a whole. This is, however, only the beginning.

All this has special relevance to a world which Canadian Prime Minister, Mark Carney, described in his address to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos (in January this year), as follows: "... We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition... great powers have begun using economic integration as weapons, tariffs as leverage, financial infrastructure as coercion, supply chains as vulnerabilities to be exploited". Mr. Carney did not, however, touch on potentially the greatest disruptor of all, *viz.*, AI, or refer to the baneful/beneficial influence of AI which is already beginning to impact today's world. When he talked of great power rivalry, and that countries in between have a choice, there was no mention of AI and what impact it would have on today's world, and more so in the future.

### Face the reality

World leaders must, however, wake up to this new reality, and come to terms with a phenomenon in which Open AI is beginning to consume the world. There is little realisation that the transformation that is taking place is almost certain to turn the world upside down. When Mr. Carney stated that 'we are in the midst of a rupture and not a transition', he did not have in mind – and probably realised even less – that it is the advent of AI, rather than other aspects, that is likely to herald the collapse of the international order as we know it.

Few leaders currently understand the extent of the threat posed by AI to the world as we know it. Some industry leaders such as Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella have pointed out that AI was already being used as tools of diplomacy and state-craft, and that nations require to build resilience and sovereign stacks. AI did figure in discussions at the WEF, but the contents of the debate hardly mirrored the dangers arising from unchecked AI. A great deal of the debate turned on how countries were placed to exploit this new phenomenon, with Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw taking time off to rebut the presumption that India was a secondary AI power. Industry leaders, no doubt, increasingly see AI as a strategic enabler, given that digital transformation is helping to reshape competitiveness across different sectors – from fintech to health care. Additionally, there is some



M.K. Narayanan

is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser, and a former Governor of West Bengal

realisation that AI's potential extends to other sectors as well. The judicial fraternity, for one, however, believes that there is a need to be more cautious about the use of AI in court proceedings, and that excessive reliance on AI in court rooms could lead to misjudgment. They point to the dangers of 'hallucinations' which could lead to improper citations and fabricated judgments.

### Marching ahead across domains

All this, however, is but a precursor to what the real potential and danger posed by AI in the world of tomorrow are. As AI proliferates globally, it is already becoming evident that few technologies have the potential to exert the same degree of influence in terms of enhancing information flows, surveillance capabilities, revolutionising of communications, empowering analytical frameworks and the military-industrial segment. No other area of technology seems to have such a profound impact on existing civilisational networks.

In this sense, AI portends a breaching of certain limits that had existed since the Second World War and the overweening threat posed by technology and its utilisation in different domains. What is noteworthy is that AI operates at granular levels – and that the technology itself is undergoing a phased transition. In its present form, AI is already enabling the replication of speech and language, vision and reasoning, but what is little realised is that it is set to achieve new and dangerous heights of capabilities. This is specially so in regard to military and defence applications, for as AI becomes increasingly militarised, warfare itself is bound to – and is already undergoing – a paradigm shift from man to unmanned platforms, and from dependence on human-controlled systems to autonomous ones, that are capable of making their own decisions.

Even as AI is set to become all pervasive, its transformative impact on warfare, especially in the area of the evolution of weapon systems, is what is most worrisome. AI has made possible the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles that are capable of autonomous flight. AI-driven cyber weapons and uncrewed ground vehicles equipped with intelligent navigation and targeting capabilities are already a reality. Both represent a paradigm shift in redefining combat, and employing operations across multiple systems without direct human intervention. As of today, AI offers unprecedented opportunities for the enhanced automation of operational decisions in areas of conflict, and of transforming battlefield dynamics.

Already, the portrayal of Ukrainian soldiers wearing night vision goggles, riding 'Quad bikes' to protect the capital city of Kiev, and launching 'jerry-rigged drones' equipped with small explosives, has become the defining image of future conflicts. Ukraine's success in checking and keeping at bay the mighty Russian Army in the first wave of Russia's attacks on Ukraine,

employing the latest AI technology, marks the most fundamental change in tactics of warfare since the advent of tanks at the end of the First World War. Ukraine's response has demonstrated the value of 'coming age technology', and how their skilful use could undermine conventional military capabilities. It is the hugely asymmetric impact that AI commands, that is both its strength and its danger portent. Though this is not being openly mentioned or touted, the reality is that it represents a colossal transfer of power from the traditional military to others, who have the capacity to develop and utilise AI devices. The real danger is that AI could very soon eclipse the smartest individuals, and nobody can or will know, when they become autonomous, and totally out of human control.

The dystopian impact of a powerful set of technologies which are not under the control of a human body or entity, and of self-sustaining technology, portrays a doomsday scenario. The beginnings of this are already evident, and are set to escalate enormously to the next levels of the concentration of power. There are unlimited possibilities in the doomsday scenario of autonomous drone swarms unleashing attacks on crowds, killing hundreds, if not, thousands. Both the military and security establishments would seek to equip themselves with such devices in a few years. AI would then be well set to become the greatest force amplifier in history. Its impact could range from wars and accidents, to random terror groups, to counter-revolutionary forces, and the like. The blunt truth is that nobody knows when, if how, AI might overtake or eclipse humans, and become an autonomous force for good or evil.

It is also becoming evident that, apart from the battlefield, AI is now becoming an instrument of immense value in different spheres of human activity including diplomacy and intelligence. In that sense, it is no longer merely a tool. Concerns that technologies such as AI would outpace institutions meant to govern them are real, but the most spectacular demonstration of AI is as yet on the battlefield – as seen across western Europe and West Asia. In both sectors, space, cyber and electronic warfare capacities have been woven together to completely transform the nature of warfare itself.

### Need for effective oversight

The *obiter dictum* – given that AI enables rapid data processing and predictive analysis, and also provides opportunities for a variety of options, including crisis response, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution – is that humankind must develop a set of checks and balances to prevent AI from 'running away with the bit in its mouth'. Scientists, political leaders and others must come together to understand the implications of runaway AI technologies and decide how to keep them under control and in a manner that they benefit, rather than become a threat to, humankind.

With AI disrupting global power, warfare and governance, the issue is whether humanity can keep pace with a set of checks and balances in place

## Fighter push – HAL's experience with private enterprise



Manmohan Bahadur

is a retired Air Vice Marshal and a former Additional Director General of the Centre for Air Power Studies

**A**n air force requires three verticals to operate in synchrony for its operational punch – a weapons inventory more potent than its adversary's, professional personnel to operate those weapon systems, and a dependable supply chain to provide the systems in time and of requisite quality.

The fighter aircraft portfolio of the Indian Air Force is a mix of Russian and western machines, with the indigenous Tejas built by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) a new entrant. The repair and overhaul of every fighter jet, irrespective of its origin, is also done by HAL, making the task of India's sole aircraft manufacturer immense. Its order book is overflowing and, with a typical 'government' work culture, its output in terms of timely delivery and quality has been adversely commented on, including by the Comptroller and Auditor General. So, media reports that the development contract for five prototypes of India's Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) would be awarded to one of three private players (HAL has been left out) – thereby creating a second aircraft manufacturer – should be welcome news except that there are some serious professional issues that need to be thought through while the decision-making is ongoing.

### The complexities

Here are six macro points that deserve consideration. First, the three private entities (despite being top industrial players) can be considered start-ups as they have no previous experience in developing a fighter aircraft. The complexities of building a small ship, a helicopter airframe or aerospace parts cannot be compared to the expertise required to make and test a fifth Gen fighter prototype.

Second, taking history as a guide, the HF-24 Marut was designed by HAL's Aircraft Design Bureau and produced on its shop floor. Thus, design, prototype construction, flight testing, upgrades, weapon integration and modifications

were all under one roof. HAL did the series production and provided lifetime spares support; projects such as the trainer aircraft HT-2 and HJT-16 were similar. The Tejas is hybrid as a large part of its design is by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)'s Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) while the series production and lifetime support rests with HAL.

### Singular control

Since HAL and ADA are government agencies, there is an element of singular control by the Ministry of Defence. In the AMCA case, however, with the design agency (ADA) under the government but the executor a private entity, who would have ownership over the project during prototype testing and during production?

Third, HAL has developed the requisite infrastructure, tools, rigs and production facilities over eight decades centred around Bangalore. The IAF has contributed extensively to flight testing, with its test aircrew sharing the workload and personnel moving on deputation. With the IAF's Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment co-located with it, the development phase of all aircraft had concurrent infusion of user inputs.

For Tejas, a full-fledged National Flight Test Centre was established at ADA, with expensive and sophisticated equipment for prototype testing. Many DRDO labs specialising in avionics and electronic warfare are also situated in a 10-kilometre radius of HAL's airfield in Bengaluru. Would the private entity for AMCA put in the huge sums of money required for similar infrastructure at a new place for research and development and the manufacturing centre? The time required can well be imagined.

Fourth, in any aircraft development plan, there are professional differences which get resolved easily when the design and manufacturing agency are the same. In fact, there is close fusion between designers and production engineers, from the design board phase to flight testing, and during production later as upgrades and

modifications take place. Even as prototypes begin to fly, the manufacturing ecosystem begins to get established – with tools, jigs and machinery operationalised to start production as soon as the testing phase is completed. This is a norm the world over. It would be a near impossible task for the AMCA private entity to source land, construct hangars and install manufacturing equipment concurrently for a fifth Gen fighter. In fact, would a private player sink in monies when the contract would be for just five prototypes, and there is no assured production deal that is visible?

Fifth, it takes a year to train test aircrew and a few more to make them experienced enough to start testing a futuristic prototype. India has a single test pilots school that can cater to a limited number of trainees. The private entity would require many from the word go.

Finally, the ADA, its National Flight Test Centre and the IAF's testing establishment are all located at HAL airport, Bengaluru. It makes eminent sense that the private entity also sets up office in these campuses and uses the existing airfield infrastructure. AMCA is a national project. Here is a suggestion, no matter how bureaucratically outlandish it sounds. Can some part of HAL's enormous real estate, hangarage and select facilities (including for flight testing) at Bengaluru be co-opted for the private entity? HAL has been built with public money and, with its restructuring study underway, it is only right that an out-of-the-box approach be adopted in this national endeavour.

### The issue of location

Which brings us to the location of the production factory. The idea of locating strategic infrastructure close to the border should not be repeated as in the C-295 aircraft factory at Vadodara, Gujarat. Production of the AMCA must be in the hinterland, well connected to, and not far from, India's mecca of aviation – HAL's Bengaluru airfield.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Turmoil in Parliament

It is concerning that the Lower House of Parliament remains in turmoil after the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha cited an excerpt from an unpublished book by a former Chief of Army Staff

in his speech. The issue of violent border skirmishes with China, in 2020, does not seem to have gone away and appears to be gaining steam again. The government of the day should come forward to table a factual report on the

fostering border issue and facilitate detailed deliberations by law-makers which will set the record straight. The Treasury benches and the Opposition should both realise that the people's forum needs to function in a

### smooth manner, with discussions on a range of

#### Corrections & Clarifications

The name of the dairy products manufacturer in Erode, Tamil Nadu, is Milky Mist (Dairy Food Limited), and not Misty Milk, as given in the heading and text of an article, "Lessons about job creation from Misty Milk" (Opinion page, February 10).

Telephone: +91-44-28576347/28576300; readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

making the parliamentary system look sorry.

V. Johan Dhanakumar, Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

# Rethinking UGC's new equity regulations

Last month, the University Grants Commission (UGC) (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026, triggered protests by a section of general category students. On January 29, the Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the regulations.

These regulations are necessitated by an undeniable reality. Caste-, gender-, and religion-based discrimination in higher education is persistent and has been increasing in recent times. Grievance redressal mechanisms have been notoriously slow, often discretionary, and at times only symbolic, leaving students from marginalised communities to suffer the consequences in silence. Even the most ardent opponents of these new regulations cannot, therefore, deny the necessity of such an intervention. Why then are there protests?

**A troubling combination**  
The opposition to the regulations stems from an apprehension that some members of historically disadvantaged and marginalised sections may exploit the structural flaws in the regulations – such as the vagueness of the definition of discrimination, the composition of the equity committee, and the procedure to be followed to get grievances redressed – to victimise upper castes. This reflects distrust and fear that measures aimed at providing justice to one section could become unjust for others.

Introduced to tackle caste-based discrimination with unprecedented urgency, the regulations insist on swift redressal. They say complaints must be acknowledged immediately, committees convened fast, and inquiries concluded within rigid timelines. This design rests on the assumption that speed and fairness reinforce one another. Yet justice systems across the world suggest otherwise.



**Sameer Ahmad Khan**

Research scholar at Jamia Millia Islamia



**Furqan Qamar**

Former professor of management at Jamia Millia Islamia

Quick timelines and central monitoring without clear procedural standards create fear. Institutions worry about regulatory penalties they cannot contest. Faculty and students worry about reputational damage from complaints processed rapidly and unfairly. The combination of speed and procedural vagueness is bound to lead to protests.

## Thin process

The new regulations assume that the time taken in exercising due diligence and completing procedural formalities in grievance redressal is tantamount to institutional inertia. They seek to ensure rapid enforcement by threatening higher education institutions with dire consequences. The message is clear. Neutrality is no longer an option. Whether that shift commands legitimacy, however, will depend not on intent alone, but on the architecture of enforcement.

The experience of American universities during the 2010s is instructive. Faced with pressure to act swiftly on campus misconduct, institutions prioritised speed, only to encounter sustained judicial pushback over vague evidentiary standards, unclear rights of response, and reputational harm inflicted before findings were established. The backlash arose because the process was thin.

Clearly, justice that moves quickly but unclearly destroys trust. That risk is magnified by how the UGC regulations distribute authority. They do not specify offences or penalties. Investigation is delegated to internal equity committees, and punishment is imposed through existing institutional service or disciplinary rules. The UGC itself does not adjudicate individual guilt; it penalises institutions for non-compliance. This creates a powerful incentive structure. Faced with the threat of de-recognition or funding withdrawal, universities are encouraged to prioritise visible

action over careful adjudication. In this system, ambiguity creates fear, which rarely fosters justice.

In a complaint-driven enforcement model, the consequences could be even more harmful. The ability to document harm, express it in institutional language, and navigate committees is unevenly distributed: while rural students and linguistic minorities often struggle to translate daily discrimination into administratively legible complaints, those with greater cultural and institutional exposure are better positioned to mobilise the system. As a result, a regime designed to amplify marginal voices ends up privileging the institutionally fluent among them.

## Compliance theatre

These pressures inevitably spill into classrooms and supervisory relationships. Universities operate through constant grading, feedback, and assessment, all of which are inherently subjective. When academic judgment is subjected to regulatory scrutiny without procedural clarity, risk aversion becomes the most logical course. Faculty respond by diluting feedback, avoiding difficult conversations, and sanitising evaluation.

Over time, institutions learn ways to bypass the complexities. Committees multiply, documentation thickens, and compliance becomes performative. Governance scholars describe this as compliance theatre, a phenomenon where organisations learn to demonstrate reform without addressing underlying hierarchies. India's higher education system is uneven across regions and institutions and is vulnerable to this drift.

Justice in universities must not be a race to the first response. It should be a long, difficult conversation. One that demands urgency, yes, but also precision, patience, and the humility to revise.

Justice that moves quickly but unclearly destroys trust

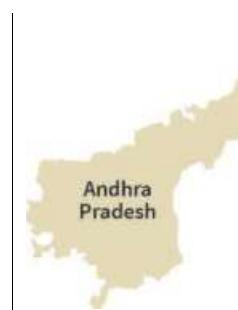
# A tug of war over claiming credit

Both the YSRCP and TDP are eager to stake their claim to development projects

## STATE OF PLAY

### Hareesh P.

hareesh.p@thehindu.co.in



Andhra Pradesh

For a while, allegations of 'vote chor' – the deletion or removal of names from electoral rolls – by the BJP-led Central government and the Election Commission of India dominated the national political discourse. As that rhetoric subsided, a similar narrative began gaining prominence in Andhra Pradesh, with the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) accusing the current government of 'credit chor', or of taking credit for projects and policies laid down during Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure.

During the 2024 Assembly elections, the TDP campaigned hard on infrastructure and investment, claiming that Mr. Reddy's five-year rule had neglected both. Post-election, the new 'double-engine' government went on to showcase Andhra Pradesh as a major hub for investment, highlighting the State's improved infrastructure.

In October 2025, Google announced plans to build a massive one-gigawatt AI data centre campus in Visakhapatnam. The project – Google's largest AI hub outside the U.S. – will cost nearly \$15 billion over five years, ending in 2030. The TDP, led by Information Technology Minister Nara Lokesh, credited the investor-friendly, proactive approach and ease-of-doing-business policies of the Naidu government.

But the YSRCP was not ready to let the narrative slip away. It pointed to the groundwork it laid between 2019 and 2024 – including allotting land to companies such as the Adani Group and providing bu-

reaucratic clearances. It argued that the TDP's claim was an instance of 'credit chor'.

For the YSRCP, claiming the Google deal appears to be less about pride and more about damage control. Under constant attack from the NDA for its policies, such as mandating 75% job reservation for locals, which drew widespread criticism nationally, the party is clearly keen to avoid conceding full credit to the NDA.

The YSRCP also came under attack for failing to develop infrastructure in the State. Pothole-ridden roads became a major poll plank for the NDA. When the first test flight landed at the Alluri Sitarama Raju Greenfield International Airport at Bhogapuram on January 4, both sides once again engaged in a credit war.

In 2019, it was during the TDP government's tenure that the foundation stone for the airport was laid. However, just months later, Mr. Reddy assumed office as Chief Minister. The YSRCP claims this marked a turning point. It asserts that the project gained momentum after the foundation stone was re-laid by Mr. Reddy in 2023. According to the party, land acquisition and key clearances were completed during Mr. Reddy's five-year tenure, paving the way for completion of the airport.

The TDP, however, maintains that the project was conceptualised and initiated during its tenure and that the

remaining processes were carried forward. It points out that TDP MP Kinjarapu Rammoorthy Naidu holds the Civil Aviation portfolio in the NDA government at the Centre.

Even farmer-focused initiatives are caught in the narrative battle. Mr. Reddy claimed that the comprehensive land survey conducted during his tenure enabled the issuance of the new patta passbooks to farmers. But the TDP criticised the YSRCP-issued passbooks for showing Mr. Reddy's photo. Calling it unacceptable, it replaced these with passbooks displaying the State emblem. The TDP asserts that the new passbooks are also error-free – a result of reforms in the revenue system.

What prompted Mr. Reddy to push for the inclusion of his name in the completion of the airport project and the finalisation of the Google data centre deal? It is that the TDP has long accused him of failing to advance projects initiated by the previous TDP government – unlike his father, former Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, and the subsequent Chief Ministers of united Andhra. Mr. Reddy also stalled the Amaravati capital project and slowed the Polavaram Irrigation Project.

The YSRCP aims to shake off the image of having hindered development. It also wants to claim credit for completing two major projects that could transform the State – particularly north coastal Andhra, where the party had performed poorly in the 2024 elections.

While both the YSRCP and TDP are eager to stake their claim to these projects, the timelines provide a clearer indication of who deserves the credit. Ultimately, it will be up to the electorate to decide.

# Why Canada can't leverage oil like China did rare earths

In its escalating tensions with the U.S., Canada will find it difficult to mimic China, whose dominance over rare earths gave it leverage during the tariff war

## DATA POINT

### Nitika Francis

On Monday, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to stop the opening of the new bridge, costing \$4.6 billion and connecting Windsor in Canada and Detroit in the U.S., until his country was "compensated" by Canada "for everything we have given them". This is the latest in a series of threats that Mr. Trump has issued against Canada. In January, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney negotiated a deal with China to lower tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles in return for lower import taxes on Canadian farm products. In response, Mr. Trump threatened a 100% tariff on all Canadian imports.

In fact, Mr. Trump began his second term by making claims on Canada as the 51st State of the U.S. So, the current situation is not a sudden shift in the relationship, but a severe escalation of a strategy that began last year.

It was in this fraught climate that Mr. Carney took a stand against Mr. Trump in Davos. "The rules-based order is fading. That the strong can do what they can, and the weak must suffer what they must," he said. "The middle powers must act together because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu." The question is, can Mr. Carney walk the talk? Does he have strong bargaining chips like China had when the U.S. tried a similar tactic against the country?

When the U.S. waged a tariff war on China, the latter leveraged its dominance over 'rare earths', a critical component in clean energy technologies. It introduced measures that required the Chinese government's approval to export items that contained rare earths. In fact, the U.S. is the second-largest importer of Chinese rare earths, with about 22% of China's exports going to the U.S. in 2024. More importantly, about 35% of

U.S.'s rare earth imports came from China (**Chart 1A and 1B**). Given this high dependency, China used the commodity as a bargaining chip.

Does Canada have a similar bargaining chip? In theory, it does. It is the U.S.'s largest foreign supplier of energy products such as crude oil. Data show that about 60% of the U.S.'s crude oil imports came from Canada in 2024. However, how practical is it for Canada to use this "leverage" to bargain?

Canada has been pumping almost all of its crude oil to the U.S., with 95% of all crude exports in 2024 going to its neighbour (**Chart 2A and 2B**). So, even if it plans to reduce oil shipments to the U.S., it needs to negotiate fresh deals, like the one Ottawa is trying to strike with New Delhi. Notably, in parallel, Trump has claimed that India will be purchasing oil from Venezuela instead of Iran.

But even if Canada manages to secure deals to diversify away from the U.S., finding newer markets is not the only hindrance. The way Canada's oil pipeline is built demands a forced collaboration with the U.S. About 95% of the oil is produced in Canada's western provinces (**Chart 3A**). Meanwhile, a large chunk of its population resides in its eastern provinces (**Chart 3B**). In order for the oil to be transported from the west to the east, it must be transported through pipelines which pass through the U.S., because of geographical hurdles. So Canada's oil network is intertwined with the U.S.'s energy infrastructure.

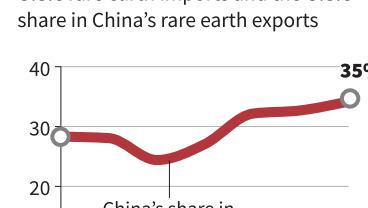
The other bargaining chip could be to threaten stopping exports to the U.S.'s northern States. The States that share borders with Canada are especially heavily dependent on Canada for imports; 90% of Montana's imports and 70% of Maine's in 2024 were from the northern neighbour (**Map 4**).

However, the volume of imports by these States is too small compared to overall U.S. imports to have a significant impact.

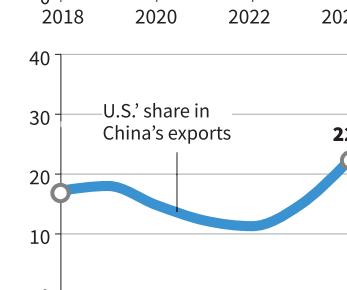
## An American spat

The data were sourced from the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database, the Canada Energy Regulator, the International Trade Administration and Statistics Canada

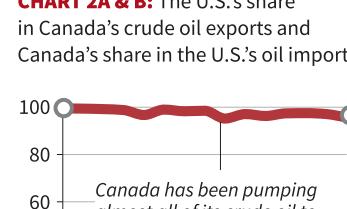
**CHART 1A & 1B:** China's share in the U.S.'s rare earth imports and the U.S.'s share in China's rare earth exports



**CHART 2A & B:** The U.S.'s share in Canada's crude oil exports and Canada's share in the U.S.'s oil imports



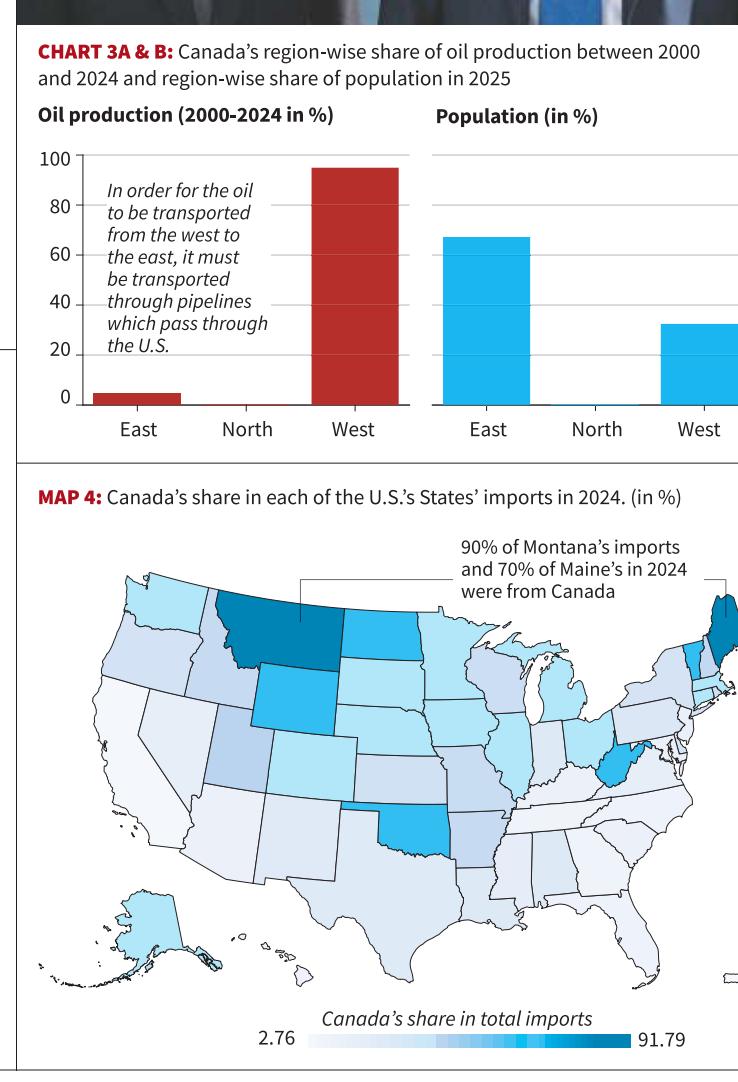
**CHART 3A & B:** Canada's region-wise share of oil production between 2000 and 2024 and region-wise share of population in 2020



**CHART 3A & B:** Canada's region-wise share of oil production between 2000 and 2024 and region-wise share of population in 2020



**MAP 4:** Canada's share in each of the U.S.'s States' imports in 2024. (in %)



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

**The Hindu.**

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 11, 1976

## Welcome to Australian tourists

Madras, Feb 10: "Madras is a colourful city, though we find a lot of poverty around". This was the comment made by some of the Australian tourists who had come here aboard the P and O luxury liner, Oriana, touching Madras for the first time on its Indian Ocean cruise. They were part of the 1,500 Australians, young and old, who made the best use of the ten-hour halt in the city, sight-seeing, shopping or walking along the beach. About 300 of them made a dash to Mahabalipuram to see the shore temple and other monuments.

Quite a few visited the restaurants. A couple of crew members, who had eaten biryani at a restaurant, said it was good, but they missed the 'chappathi' and 'pappadam' that were served along with this dish in restaurants in England. "We have 'pappadam' aboard the ship", they said. The affluent Australians were free with their money and one of them had paid Rs. 60 to a porter.

The visitors were given a traditional welcome with Nadaswaram music by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department and the Tourism Development Corporation when the ship berthed in the port in the morning. A caparisoned elephant garlanded the Captain of the ship. The State police played the band much to the enjoyment of the tourists who started dancing. Mr. C. Ramachandran, Managing Director, TNTDC, received the Captain Mr. S.F. Wacher, and the Deputy Captain, Mr. Peter Love.

The Government of India Tourist Office had also made special arrangements for the city tour of the visitors.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 11, 1926

## The Colour Bar Bill

Bombay, Feb. 10: The Imperial Citizenship Association has telegraphed to the Viceroy, stating that the passing of the Colour Bar Bill by the South African Assembly provides an appropriate occasion for the exercise of the power of veto vested in His Majesty, and beseeching His Excellency to urge His Majesty's Government to take the necessary steps to prevent thereby a catastrophe, dangerous alike to the Indians in South Africa and to the integrity of the Empire.

**From Page One****Label photorealistic AI content, says Centre**

Platforms will be required to seek disclosures from users in case their content is AI-generated. If such a disclosure is not received for synthetically generated content, the official said, firms would either have to proactively label the content or take it down in cases of non-consensual deepfakes.

The amended rules mandate that AI-generated imagery be labelled "prominently". While the draft version specified that 10% of any imagery would have to be covered with such a disclosure, platforms have been given some more leeway, the official said, since they pushed back on such a specific mandate.

**Safe harbour**

"Provided that where [a social media] intermediary becomes aware, or it is otherwise established, that the intermediary knowingly permitted, promoted, or failed to act upon such synthetically generated information in contravention of these rules, such intermediary shall be deemed to have failed to exercise due diligence under this sub-rule," the rules say, hinting at a loss of safe harbour.

The rules also partially roll back an amendment notified in October 2025, which had limited each State to designating a single officer authorised to issue takedown orders. States may now notify more than one such officer—an "administrative" measure to address the need of States with large populations, the official said.

**SC to hear plea against Assam CM's hate speech**

The petition by the CPI(M) sought the registration of an FIR into instances of alleged communal speeches attributed to Mr. Sarma and a recent social media post, since deleted, depicting him discharging a firearm toward an animated image of two visibly Muslim men positioned within the crosshairs of the weapon, accompanied by textual phrases like 'point-blank shot' and 'no mercy'.

Chief Justice Kant agreed to give a date for hearing to advocate Nizam Pasha, who made the oral mentioning of the petition for an early date.

"Since assuming office, Respondent No. 4 (Sarma) has, on numerous occasions, delivered public speeches and made statements – both within and beyond the territorial limits of the State – which have been widely disseminated across print, electronic, and digital media platforms. These statements, viewed cumulatively, constitute ex facie hate speech inasmuch as they degrade and demean a minority, propagate false and stigmatising stereotypes, incite social and economic boycott, and encourage conditions of exclusion and violence against the community," the petition stated.

The social media post, circulated in the public domain as a video, on February 7, 2026 from the "official handle of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Assam on X...," has been the most blatant and disturbing manifestation of the pattern complained of", the petition said.

"The final frames in the sequence culminate in a stylised portrait of Respondent No. 4 depicted in cowboy attire, accompanied by additional textual slogans translating to 'Foreigner-free Assam', 'Community, land, roots first', 'Why did you go to Pakistan', and 'No forgiveness for Bangladeshis'. When viewed in its surrounding factual and political context, the cumulative symbolic and visual rhetoric embodied in the material serves to reinforce and amplify a climate of hostility, exclusion, and intimidation directed against the minority community," the petition said.

The petition reminded that national deliberations had been undertaken to combat communalism, regionalism, and divisive tendencies, and on the strength of the recommendations of the National Integration Conference, the Constitution (Sixteenth Amendment) Act, 1963 was enacted.

MNS officers to be eligible for re-employment benefits

**Saurabh Trivedi**  
NEW DELHI

The Union Government has notified the Ex-service-men (Re-employment in Central Civil Services & Posts) Amendment Rules, 2026 under Article 309 of the Constitution, formally expanding the definition of ex-servicemen to include personnel of the Military Nursing Service (MNS).

According to the Ministry of Defence, the amendment revises Rule 2(c)(i) to explicitly cover those who have served in any rank – combatant or non-combatant – in the Regular Army, Navy or Air Force, as well as the Military Nursing Service of the Indian Union. The change removes a long-standing ambiguity over the eligibility of MNS officers, who are commissioned officers, for re-employment benefits available to other veterans.

MNS personnel are now entitled to the same re-employment provisions as other ex-servicemen.

**Internet curbs imposed as violence continues in Ukhrul**

Internet services suspended for five days in the district in Manipur amid reports of armed groups opening fire; Chief Minister appeals for peace while legislators led by Deputy CM visit Litan area

**The Hindu Bureau**  
GUWAHATI

Internet services were suspended in the Naga-majority Ukhrul district of Manipur for five days as violence between the Kuki-Zo and Naga tribal groups continued for the third consecutive day on Tuesday.

Local people said miscreants torched nine or 10 houses on Tuesday morning, escalating the tension between Kuki-Zo and Naga villagers in the Litan area, located midway between Imphal and Ukhrul.

There were reports of armed miscreants opening fire, presumably to scare villagers away.

Many villagers in the conflict zone have abandoned their houses for safer places, according to officials.

N. Ashok Kumar, Manipur's Home Commission-



Security forces deployed following a clash between the Tangkhul and Kuki communities in the Litan area in Ukhrul on Tuesday. ANI

er-cum-Secretary, issued an order suspending "Internet/data services, including services through broadband, VPN, and VSAT" in Ukhrul district for five days from 11.30 a.m. on Tuesday.

This was a preventive and precautionary measure given the volatile law and order situation and

rik Suraksha Sanhita, and the deployment of several companies of Central armed forces.

Chief Minister Yunnan Khemchand Singh appealed to the two communities to maintain peace and harmony, while a team of legislators led by Deputy Chief Minister Losi Dikho visited the Litan area to assess the situation. The team also held meetings with the leaders of the two communities, calling for restraint.

"The situation is under control along the main roads, but the interior areas, difficult to access, remain tense," a district official said, declining to be named.

Meanwhile, the Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust appealed to both Tangkhul and Kuki communities to exercise restraint and maintain peace.

Himanta files ₹500-crore suit against 3 Cong. leaders

**The Hindu Bureau**  
GUWAHATI

The war of words between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress in Assam has reached the court and police station ahead of the Assembly election, likely by April.

On Tuesday, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma filed a ₹500-crore defamation suit against three Congress leaders, including Jorhat MP Gaurav Gogoi. Around the same time that he announced this on social media platforms, Congress MLAs Sibamoni Bora and Diganta Barman lodged a police complaint against him over a controversial AI-generated video.

"Today, I have filed a defamation case seeking ₹500 crore in damages against Congress leaders Jitendra Singh, Bhupesh Baghel, and Gaurav Gogoi for making false, malicious, and defamatory allegations against me through a press conference," Mr. Sarma posted on X.

**Centre sidesteps query on Agniveers' career progression**

**Vijaita Singh**  
NEW DELHI



Rahul Gandhi

The Union Home Ministry on Tuesday evaded a response to a pointed question from Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha on why it – and not the Ministry of Defence – has been assigned the responsibility of coordinating the career progression of Agniveers, despite their service in the armed forces.

Mr. Gandhi sought to know whether the Home Ministry had been tasked with coordinating the post-service career progression of Agniveers, and whether the government had assessed possible overlap or coordination challenges between the Home and Defence Ministries in managing the transition of ex-Agniveers. He asked for details of the specific activities and programmes that the Home Ministry would oversee for them.

In a written reply, Minister of State for Home Nitayand Rai said, "The distribution of subjects among Ministries/ Departments has been specified in the

Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961. As per the amendment issued by the Cabinet Secretariat notification No.S.O.2701(E) dated 16.06.2025, the subject of 'coordinating activities for further progress of Ex-Agniveers' is allocated to the MHA."

The reply added, "A dedicated ex-Agniveer wing and an ex-Agniveer cell have been created within the MHA for smooth coordination, monitoring, and formulation of rehabilitation policies for ex-Agniveers."

The Agnipath Scheme was launched on June 14, 2022, to recruit soldiers, airmen and sailors into the three services for a four-year tenure.

**Special revision: Assam voter count decreases by 2.43 lakh in final poll roll**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
GUWAHATI



As many as 7.87 lakh additions and 10.26 lakh deletions were recorded during the special revision of electoral rolls in Assam. ANI

The voter count in Assam has dropped by 2.43 lakh after the conclusion of the special revision of electoral rolls, data released by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) has revealed.

A total of 29,646 booth-level officers were engaged across Assam for the special revision, which differed from the special intensive revision (SIR) conducted simultaneously in 12 other States and Union Territories.

The final electoral roll was published on Tuesday.

According to a statement issued by the CEO's office, the total number of voters decreased by 2,43,485 from 2,52,01,624 published in the integrated draft voter list on December 27, 2025, to 2,49,58,139 in the final list. "This represents a 0.97% decrease compared to the draft voter list," the statement read.

The final voter list includes 1,24,82,213 male voters, 1,24,75,583 female voters, and 343 third-gender voters.

Poll officials said 7.87

SC tells EC to consider inputs to curb poll spending

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Election Commission (EC) to consider suggestions made in a writ petition to frame a standard operating procedure to trim election expenditure.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said the suggestions made by petitioner Prabhakar Deshpande were "worth consideration".

Mr. Deshpande, an IIT graduate, had sought directions for the poll panel to formulate a plan of action against erring candidates and to re-examine the cap on election expenses to ensure democratic credibility.

**EC defends regulations**  
While the EC defended its existing oversight mechanisms, including the deployment of independent expenditure observers from the All India Services, the Bench noted that the petitioner's grievances regarding the effectiveness of these measures were filed in the larger public interest.

**Gym trainer gets wave of support after news of decline in membership**

**Ishita Mishra**  
NEW DELHI

Help has poured in for Deepak Kumar, now popularly known as Mohammed Deepak, after news of a sharp decline in membership at his gym went viral following a Republic Day incident in Kotdwara, Uttarakhand. Social media was abuzz with users from across the country showing interest in becoming a member of the gym.

Mr. Deepak came into the national spotlight after he confronted a mob of right-wing members accused of harassing a 71-year-old Muslim garment seller and pressuring him to change the name of his shop.

The episode unfolded on Republic Day, when



Deepak Kumar

traveled. Footage of the incident later circulated widely online, with particular attention on a clip in which he introduced himself by saying, "Mera naam Mohammed Deepak (My name is Mohammad Deepak)."

**Testing his resolve**  
Since then, Mr. Kumar has been facing protests, online and offline harassment and an FIR lodged by the police. His wife and daughter have also fallen ill after witnessing the chaos around them.

Above all, Mr. Kumar's long-running gym, Hulk, situated in the Jhanda Chauk area in Kotdwara, previously had around 150 members. The membership has declined to 15-20 now, said Deepak Singh, a

trainer at the gym and owner's namesake.

Recalling how the gym, which had once been alive with sweat-drenched men occupying the floors, he said the place was now covered in darkness most of the time as many people had stopped coming.

"Police keep sitting outside the gym all the time. The members are fearful that if something will happen some day, they all will be in trouble," Mr. Kumar said.

**Human rights body could function as RTI panel, moots SC**

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday mooted whether the Chairpersons of Human Rights Commissions of States with low traffic of Right to Information (RTI) appeals could be given additional responsibility of acting as Chief Information Commissioners (CICs) till there is an increase in workload.

"Suppose it is just 100 appeals pending in a State Information Commission... Any institution you create is a burden on the public exchequer. Taxpayers' money must be spent on development activities or something... Why not in such States, as an ad-hoc me-

chanism, the power of the Information Commissions be given to the State Human Rights Commissions?" Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, heading a three-judge Bench, asked advocates Prashant Bhushan and Rahul Gupta for the petitioners.

The court was hearing a petition filed by petitioners Anjali Bhardwaj, Commodore Lokesh Batra (retired) and Amrita Johri, seeking timely and transparent appointments to the Information Commissions under the RTI Act.

The Chief Justice said the "ad-hoc mechanism" could continue till the number of RTI appeals increases in "due course of time".

**ED summons Anil Ambani, wife again**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summonses to the chairman of the Reliance Group Anil Ambani and his wife Tina Ambani for recording their statements in connection with an alleged money laundering case, according

to sources in the agency.

The agency had asked Ms. Ambani to join the investigation on Monday. However, she did not turn up. The ED has now summoned her on February 17, and Mr. Anil Ambani on the following day.

The ED has alleged fraudulent diversion of public money by Reliance Group.



**APPEAL**  
Sarvesh is one year baby suffering from 'B Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia'. He needs to undergo Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. The total expenditure is Rs.8,00,000/- His father is a sales person and their family cannot afford this huge expenditure. Donations sent by Ch.D.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch.D.D.M.O NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, 160182010063310, IFSC No. CNRB0016018) favours WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT. Your e-mail ID is requested.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Cordel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pyroto Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401/ 7338978027. E-mail ID: womenwelfaresyndicate@gmail.com. Website: www.womenwelfaresyndicate.org.

WWS

M CH-CHE

General backs publisher's statement on his memoir

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Amidst a controversy over his book *Four Stars of Destiny*, former Army chief General M.M. Naravane (retd.) on Tuesday backed Penguin Random House India's (PRHI) contention that the book has not been published so far.

In its statement, PRHI said it held the sole publishing rights to the book.

"No copies of the book either in print or digital form have been published, distributed, sold, or otherwise made available to the public by Penguin Random House India," it said.

Sharing the statement on social media, Mr. Naravane said, "This is the status of the book."

The statements came after the Delhi Police registered an FIR over the alleged illegal circulation of the unpublished manuscript in digital and other formats.

General Naravane's clarification followed remarks by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who earlier in the day, cited a December 2023 social media post by the former Army chief stating that the book was "available now", to counter the publisher's claim that the memoir had not yet been published.

"The point I am making is either Mr. Naravane is lying – and I believe the former Army chief; I don't think he will lie – or Penguin is lying. Both cannot be telling the truth," the Congress leader had said.

After Mr. Gandhi's remarks, PRHI said an announcement about a book or its availability for pre-order should not be interpreted as publication.

# Opposition MPs submit notice seeking removal of LS Speaker

Notice has 120 signatures, including of SP, DMK MPs; it cites Speaker's prevention of Rahul's speech, 'arbitrary suspension' of MPs, false allegations about protest against PM; House allowed to function after submission, discussion on Budget taken up

**Sandeep Phukan**  
**Sobhana K. Nair**

NEW DELHI

**O**pposition parties belonging to the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) on Tuesday submitted a notice to the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha, seeking the removal of Speaker Om Birla for allegedly conducting the business of the House in a "blatantly partisan" manner.

The notice to bring a resolution for the removal of the Speaker cited four specific reasons, including not allowing Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi to complete his speech on the Motion of Thanks to the President on February 2. "This is not an isolated instance. The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha is almost invariably not allowed to speak," the notice said.

The notice, with nearly 120 signatures, was submitted to Lok Sabha Secretary-General Utpal Kumar Singh by Congress chief whip K. Suresh and whip Mohamed Jawed on behalf of several Opposition parties, including the Congress, Samajwadi Party, and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). However, the Trinamool Congress did not sign the notice.

Soon after the submission of the notice against the Speaker, the Opposition agreed to let the House function. The discussion on the Budget started in the second half of the day. Mr. Gandhi is likely to take part in the



**Big move:** Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi with floor leaders of the INDIA bloc parties during a meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday.

discussions tomorrow.

Mr. Birla has directed the Secretary-General to take appropriate action of "examining and processing" the notice, according to the rules, sources said.

At least two Lok Sabha members have to sign the notice to move a resolution for the removal of the Speaker and a minimum of 14 days' notice has to be given before the resolution can be taken up by the House.

Under Article 94C of the Constitution, the Speaker can be removed from office by a resolution passed by the House through a simple majority. Article 96 of the Constitution allows the Speaker to respond to the notice for removal but the charges against her/him will have to be specific.

**'Arbitrary suspension'** Apart from Mr. Gandhi's speech, the notice said that on February 3, eight Oppo-

sition MPs were "arbitrarily suspended" for the entire Budget session and were "being penalised merely for exercising their democratic rights".

On February 4, a BJP MP was permitted to make "wholly objectionable and personalised attacks" against two former Prime Ministers, without being reprimanded even once for disregarding established conventions and norms of propriety, the notice said, referring to Nishikant Dubey's remarks. "In spite of our request, no action has been taken against this particular MP, who is a habitual offender," it said.

Referring to the Speaker's statement that he had "concrete information" that Congress members might move towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi's seat and carry out "some unexpected act", the notice termed these remarks "blatantly false allega-

tions" and his decision to make these observations from his Chair as "indicative of an abuse of this constitutional office".

"While we hold the Speaker, Lok Sabha, in personal regard, we are pained and anguished at the manner in which he has consistently prevented opposition members of Parliament from raising issues of legitimate public concern," the notice said.

**BJP slams notice** The BJP on Tuesday slammed the Opposition for submitting the notice and said the time has come for India to "impeach" Mr. Gandhi and the Congress from politics.

"Those who have been impeached of their consciousness are the ones who want to impeach all the constitutional posts of India," BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra told presspersons. (With PTI inputs)

**Birla to stay away from Lok Sabha proceedings**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will not preside over the business of the House until the Opposition's notice for a motion seeking his removal is disposed of, sources said on Tuesday, citing "moral grounds" for the decision.

The Speaker has already directed the Lok Sabha Secretary-General to examine and process the notice as per rules.

Countering the Congress claim that the Speaker's charges against its women MPs were baseless, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju posted video footage from February 4 on X, showing women MPs of the principal Opposition party surrounding the Prime Minister's front row seat in the Lok Sabha.

If the ruling party had not restrained its members, Mr. Rijiju said, there would have been "very ugly scenes". Congress Party is proud of the most degrading behaviour by their MPs!! If we had not stopped all BJP MPs and allowed the Women MPs to confront Cong. MPs, it would have led to very ugly scene.

We have very high consideration, to protect the dignity & sanctity of the Parliament," he said.

**Removal of Speaker is last option, need restraint: Trinamool**

**Sobhana K. Nair**  
NEW DELHI

**Abhishek calls for a 'constructive approach'; slams govt. for dysfunction in the Lok Sabha**

suggestion, he replied, "We are more tolerant... otherwise what is the difference between BJP and us?"

Reiterating the party's preference for restraint, he said, "Our approach has always been constructive and calibrated. Instead of trying to flex muscles, we want to give an opportunity to the Chair. If our issues are not addressed in three days, we can always move an impeachment motion."

**Functioning of House**

He also criticised the Union government, holding it directly responsible for the dysfunction in the Lok Sabha. "We want the House to function properly, but it appears the Union government does not. The House has been adjourned twice, and the Speaker has not come to the House. From 2 p.m. yesterday until 11 a.m. today, the House remained adjourned. If you truly intend to ensure the House functions properly, why would you adjourn it for such a long period?" he asked.

According to sources, the Trinamool believes pressure should be escalated step-by-step rather than taking a maximalist position. They also fault the Congress for making unilateral decisions. This stand-off, one MP said, is proving costly for other members who are unable to secure time to speak in the House.

## 'One-sided' deal will flood Indian markets with U.S. products, say MPs

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties said in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday that the India-U.S. interim trade deal was "one-sided" and would open up the Indian markets to the United States at the cost of farmers.

Participating in a discussion on the Union Budget in the Lok Sabha, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said it was not a "deal" but "dheel (concession)". Mr. Yadav said the trade agreement was one-sided and it would hurt the farming community owing to agricultural imports from the U.S.

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said the trade deal looked more like a "pre-committed purchase



these decisions be taken sovereignly in India or in the White House," he added.

**'Dent prospects'**

Mr. Yadav said the India-U.S. interim trade agreement will damage the prospects of the industry and push back the "Made in India" and "Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)" initiatives of the government. The SP chief said the deal would flood Indian markets with U.S. agricultural produce and the farmers would have nothing to grow in their fields.

He said the Union Budget was "directionless".

Mr. Tharoor said that at a time when India's total bilateral trade with the U.S. stood at roughly \$130 billion and the trade surplus

was nearly \$45 billion, the government had surprisingly promised to buy \$500 billion worth of U.S. goods over five years.

He said the government's claim that India had secured a "better deal" than China, Vietnam, or other Asian economies did not withstand scrutiny as, though India may have obtained tariff reductions of one or two percentage points, no East Asian economy had agreed to deliberately dilute its trade surplus with the U.S. through guaranteed purchase commitments.

Accusing the ruling party of practising "subscription-based federalism", Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee alleged that West Bengal was neglected in the Budget.

Before moving the petition, senior Opposition leaders, including Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party; K.C. Venugopal and Gaurav Gogoi of the Con-

## Cong. likely to focus on U.S. trade deal during discussion on Budget

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress is likely to step up pressure against the Narendra Modi government over the India-U.S. trade deal, with the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, likely to focus on it when he takes part in the discussion on the Union Budget on Wednesday.

The Lok Sabha, which has been paralysed since February 2, started functioning on Tuesday, after the Opposition submitted a notice to move a resolution against Speaker Om Birla.

Before moving the petition, senior Opposition leaders, including Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party; K.C. Venugopal and Gaurav Gogoi of the Con-



**Pressure point:** Suspended Lok Sabha members during a protest on Parliament premises in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

Budget discussion. Earlier, Mr. Banerjee pointed to a poster of the Trinamool Congress; and T.R. Baalu of the DMK met Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju to end the stalemate, but were unsuccessful.

The Opposition agreed to allow normal functioning since it wants to raise crucial issues during the

claimed the trade agreement had sacrificed India's strategic national interests and exposed the betrayal of the Modi government.

"Fine print of the Indo-U.S. trade deal has exposed how PM Modi mortgaged India's national interests," Mr. Kharge alleged, terming it "trapped surrender".

He said the White House fact sheet now listed "India's commitment to stop purchasing Russian Federation oil" as a condition for the removal of an additional 25% tariff, even though the joint statement had not mentioned it. Why had the Centre agreed to such "erosion of sovereignty", Mr. Kharge asked.

He alleged that the Centre had "back-stabbed" farmers by opening agriculture to foreign goods.

## Take action against Opposition: BJP MPs

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Several women MPs of the BJP have urged Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to take the "strongest possible" action under the rules against Opposition members who allegedly committed "heinous acts" in the House, and brought democratic institutions to "disrepute" on February 4.

Expressing gratitude to the Lok Sabha Speaker for upholding and protecting the dignity, decorum, and

## 'Best possible' deal amid shifting global order: Misri

**Sobhana K. Nair**  
NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, chaired by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, held a marathon three-and-a-half-hour meeting on Tuesday to examine the recent trade agreements signed by India with the United States and the European Union, amid mounting political scrutiny over their implications for farmers, energy security and regional trade.

Briefing the panel, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said given the "shift

ed global paradigm", the trade agreement with the United States represented the best possible outcome India could have secured. He repeatedly assured members that farmers' interests would be protected and would not be compromised under the deal.

Mr. Misri faced sustained questioning on India's continued imports of Russian oil, particularly in the backdrop of recent statements from Washington. He told MPs that the government had chosen not to react to the U.S. executive order issued by President Donald Trump

and was instead sticking strictly to the details contained in the trade agreement signed between the two countries.

The remarks came days after Mr. Trump issued an executive order withdraw-

ing punitive 25% tariffs on Indian goods, while claiming that India had already begun scaling back purchases of Russian oil and warning that the tariffs could be reimposed if such imports increase.

According to sources present at the meeting, Mr. Misri did not offer a definitive response on whether India had made any formal commitment to the U.S. on ending Russian oil purchases, reiterating instead that India's decisions would continue to be guided by national interest.

Responding to questions on the U.S. expecta-

**PM CARES not above scrutiny: CPI(M) MP**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Contesting the directions from Prime Minister's Office to the Lok Sabha Secretariat that no questions on PM CARES Fund should be admitted, since the fund is entirely made up of voluntary public contributions, CPI(M) MP John Brittas has said such a stance is not legally sustainable.

He urged the Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan to "summarily" reject such directions.



CM YK

## IN BRIEF



## Death toll in Meghalaya coal mine blast rises to 30

The death toll in the illegal rat-hole coal mine blast in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district on February 5 rose to 30, with three more in hospital, officials said on Tuesday. Raju Tamang, 34, who was undergoing treatment at the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences in Shillong, died on Monday night. Two others – Nimauddin and Ramcharan Baishnab – died at the Silchar Medical College and Hospital in southern Assam's Barak Valley. "We have disbursed ₹24 lakh as compensation to the families of eight victims. The compensation for the other affected families is in process," Meghalaya government said.

## French President Macron to undertake key visit to India

French President Emmanuel Macron will undertake a three-day visit to India next week to attend the AI Impact Summit and hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to boost ties in key sectors such as trade and defence. Mr. Macron will begin his visit from Mumbai on February 17 where he and Mr. Modi will inaugurate the India-France Year of Innovation. The two leaders are expected to hold bilateral talks in Mumbai. "Both leaders will hold discussions on strengthening bilateral cooperation across a wide spectrum of areas as enshrined in the Horizon 2047 Roadmap," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. Mr. Macron will participate in the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi on February 19. PTI

## EC extends Bengal SIR deadline after court order

## The Hindu Bureau

KOLKATA  
The Election Commission on Tuesday extended the deadline for hearing of notices under the special intensive revision in West Bengal to February 14. The final electoral roll will be published on February 28, instead of February 14.

This came after the Chief Electoral Officer of West Bengal sent a formal request to the EC for an extension, citing pending work.

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the EC to extend the SIR deadline by at least a week. "Since the process of scrutinising documents is likely to take longer than anticipated, we direct that at least one week beyond 14.02.2026 be granted to the EROS/AE-ROs," the court order said.

## Netflix tells HC that controversial title of film will be changed

## The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Netflix India on Tuesday informed the Delhi High Court that the Manoj Bajpayee-starrer *Ghooskhor Pandat* will be renamed. The court was dealing with a petition seeking a stay on the release of the film on account of its "offensive" and "defamatory" title.

"The producer has taken a conscious decision in light of the concern that has arisen to change the title of the film from '*Ghooskhor Pandat*' to an alternative title which more accurately reflects the film's narrative and intent," the court recorded in the order.

Netflix's senior counsel said the film, which is in the editing stage, is a fictional police drama, and the title led to "unintended interruptions" which did not align with the film's content.

The court was informed that all promotional material had been taken down.

In view of the stand taken by Netflix, the court closed the proceedings on the petition, observing that "nothing more was required to be adjudicated".

Petitioner Mahender Chaturvedi, an acharya by vocation, claimed that the "malicious" association of "pandat" with corruption and bribery was an attack on the reputation and dignity of his community. He sought a stay on the release and streaming of the film.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

## Nistula Hebbar

NEW DELHI

A casual observer of statements coming out of Uttar Pradesh cannot be blamed for assuming, for a minute, that he or she may have stepped back into the early 2000s.

On one side, you have Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader Mayawati endorsing the Supreme Court's stay on the UGC regulations on equity, saying that the rules would stoke social tension, reflecting general category anxieties. On the other side, former Union Minister Kalraj Mishra, who served as Governor of Rajasthan till 2024, has re-emerged to address the UGC issue.

With regard to Ms. Mayawati, her statements, first



Protesters raise slogans against the UGC equity norms in Lucknow on January 29. SANDEEP SAXENA

on the UGC regulations on equity and later on the film title *Ghooskhor Pandat* (corrupt pandat) are reminiscent of her "sarv samaj" push of the mid-2000s, when she secured an absolute majority in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly. This is being seen as a bid to go back to a playbook that had worked for her in the past, where she went from being a Bahujan Samaj (Dalit) leader to a Sarv Samaj leader (a leader of all communities). This follows years of growing political marginalisation, often accompanied by legal stressers, and the emergence of the BJP as the dominant party in Uttar Pradesh, with its salami slicing of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) vote, targeting non-Yadav OBCs, and the Dalit support base through non-Jatav votes.

This marginalisation has grown to such an extent that, come November

## Retired IPS officer is Home Ministry's new Northeast Adviser

Vijaita Singh  
NEW DELHI

Ajit Lal will head Naga talks and pursue dialogue with Kuki Zo and Meitei groups in Manipur

peace talks but also continue the dialogue with the Kuki-Zo and Meitei insurgent groups in Manipur.

He replaces A.K. Mishra, a retired IPS officer and former Special Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), who was appointed the Northeast adviser in 2021.

Mr. Lal, 73, was appointed JIC chief under the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) in 2011 for a period of three years which ended in July 2014. After the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in May 2014, the Home Ministry, under then-Home Minister Rajnath Singh, recommended Mr. Lal's name as the interlocutor for the Naga peace talks.

The NSCS, which reports to the National Security Adviser under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), however, overruled the Home Ministry's recommendation and instead appointed Mr. Ravi as the interlocutor. He continued in the position till September 2021, when he was appointed Tamil Nadu Governor.

In his new role, Mr. Lal will not only lead the Naga

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

</div

## IN BRIEF



## Govt. to sell up to 5% stake in BHEL at ₹254 a share via OFS

The government will sell up to 5% stake in Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL) via an offer for sale (OFS) beginning on Wednesday at a floor price of ₹254 a share, an official said. "Government offers to disinvest 3 per cent equity in the BHEL with an additional 2 per cent as green shoe option," DIPAM Secretary Arunish Chawla said on X. The issue will open for non-retail investors on Wednesday, while retail investors will get to put in price bid on Thursday. PTI

## NMDC increases iron ore prices by ₹100 a tonne

State-owned miner NMDC has increased iron ore prices by ₹100 a tonne effective February 10. Consequent to the revision, the price of Baila Lump is ₹4,700 per tonne and Baila Fines ₹4,000 for the same quantity. These are FOR prices exclusive of royalty, DMF, NMEDT, cess, Forest Permit Fee, transit fee, GST, environmental Cess and other taxes, NMDC said in a filing on Tuesday. The miner reported a consolidated net profit of ₹1,747.01 crore for the December quarter.

## RCPL acquires Southern Health Foods for ₹156 crore

Reliance Consumer Products Ltd. (RCPL) has acquired Southern Health Foods Private Ltd. for an aggregate cash consideration of ₹156.42 crore from existing shareholders. Consequently, SHFPL has become a wholly owned subsidiary of RCPL effective February 9, 2026, RIL said in a statement. SHFPL was incorporated on April 16, 2012. The company, represented by its flagship brand Manna, is a manufacturer of wide-ranging healthy foods for over two decades.



SC warned Meta could face a complete ban on data sharing.

## SME Forum urges SC not to bar data sharing by Meta, cites harm to them

**Aroon Deep**  
NEW DELHI

The Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Forum has intervened in the Supreme Court, praying Meta-owned firms not be prohibited from sharing user data with each other, arguing such a ban would "cause substantial harm and hardship" to SMEs.

The intervention, viewed by *The Hindu*, reacts to the SC's oral observations on February 3, where the court warned Meta could face a complete prohibition on sharing user data across platforms.

The applicant's members, particularly MSMEs, would be directly and substantially affected by such orders or directions, as restrictions on data sharing for advertising would undermine their ability to

**Meta's plea over fine**  
The intervention comes in the context of Meta's appeal against a fine and conditions imposed on the firm by the Competition

Jan. auto retail sales rise 19% to cross 27 lakh units, led by 2-wheelers

**Lalatendu Mishra**  
MUMBAI

Overall vehicle retail sales in January grew 18.61% year on year (YoY) to 27,22,558 units, led by growth in two-wheeler (2W), commercial vehicle (CVs) and three-wheeler (3W) sales, according to data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) on Tuesday.

FADA said the near term outlook was positive.

The growth was powered by continued post-GST momentum, healthy rural cashflows on the back of harvest and weddings, and sustained demand visibility across mobility and freight.

Category-wise, two-wheelers grew 20.82%, passenger vehicles (PVs) 7.22%, CVs 15.07%, tractors 22.89% and three-wheelers by 18.80%. On the other hand, construction equipment continues to remain under pressure at a negative sales of 21.09% YoY, indicating a high-base impact and segment-specific recalibration.

Two-wheelers led the charge with 18,52,870 units (20.82%), with the rural share at 56% (urban 44%). Rural volumes stayed robust with a growth of 19.77% YoY, supported by Pongal/Makar Sankranti, marriage-season footfalls and better affordability.

"We are also seeing a clear revival in urban markets," said FADA president C.S. Vigneshwar.

## Indian exporters perturbed by U.S.-Bangladesh trade pact

Bangladesh must use U.S.-sourced raw materials to avail zero tariff, but Indian sector stakeholders feel the time taken to receive U.S. cotton, its transport and storage, could reduce its cost advantage

**M. Soundariya Preetha**  
COIMBATORE

**T**he U.S.-Bangladesh Agreement on Reciprocal Trade has led to concerns among Indian textile and apparel exporters who were looking forward to a competitive advantage over Bangladesh with the 19% tariff on goods from that country, as Indian merchandise would be taxed a tad lower at 18%.

According to the U.S.-Bangladesh Agreement, the U.S. will establish a mechanism that will allow for certain textile and apparel goods from Bangladesh to receive zero reciprocal tariff based on the use of U.S. cotton or MMF yarn.

India exported \$1.47 billion worth cotton yarn (570 million kg) to Bangladesh, which is the biggest destination for Indian yarn, in 2024-2025. It also shipped 12-14 lakh bales of



Top destination: India exported \$1.47 billion worth cotton yarn to Bangladesh in 2024-2025. SIVA SARAVANAN S

cotton to Bangladesh last year. Almost 20% of Bangladesh's garment and 26% of India's cotton apparel exports are to the U.S.

## Immediate impact

"I fear that the immediate impact will be on Indian cotton yarn as Bangladesh can buy U.S. cotton and spin at its textile mills," said Chandrima Chatterjee, secretary general of

the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry.

"How will the U.S. determine traceability of the raw material? As Bangladesh is very strong in apparels, we may stand to lose," said K.M. Subramanian, president of the Tiruppur Exporters Association.

"Bangladesh has to buy MMF yarn or cotton from the U.S. for the reciprocal tariff of 19% to be waived.

But, the MFN rate will continue. The time taken to receive the U.S. cotton and the transport and storage costs should be taken into consideration. Further, not all products can be made from American cotton. So, the product mix should change and supply chain should be realigned in Bangladesh," said Siddhartha Rajagopal, executive director of the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council.

"There is an Executive Order by the U.S. government issued last April that says that the ad valorem rates of duty applies only on the non-US component of a product, when there is at least 20% value addition," said A. Sakthivel, chairman of the AEPC. "We will appeal to the Indian government to ask for a provision similar to the one given to Bangladesh for Indian apparel exporters too," he said.

## Lupin settles infringement row with Astellas

**N. Ravi Kumar**  
HYDERABAD

Generic drugmaker Lupin has settled with Astellas Pharma a patent infringement dispute relating to overactive bladder drug Mirabegron.

The company and its wholly owned U.S. subsidiary Lupin Pharmaceuticals

Inc. have entered into a settlement and license agreement with Astellas resolving the pending litigation and allowing Lupin to continue to sell Mirabegron.

Under the terms of the agreement, Lupin will pay Astellas \$90 million, which includes a prepaid option payment of \$75 million, and a prepaid per unit li-

cence fee for each unit of Lupin product sold from the date of the settlement through September 2027. The settlement terms are confidential, Lupin said in a filing on Tuesday.

Lupin had in April 2024 launched Mirabegron Extended-Release Tablets, 25 mg, a generic equivalent of Astellas Pharma Global De-

velopment Inc.'s Myrbetriq Extended-Release Tablets, 25 mg, in the U.S. following approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Citing then current industry sales numbers, it had had then said Mirabegron Extended-Release Tablets, 25 mg had estimated annual sales of \$1,019 million in the U.S.

## MARKETS

## MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	84,274	-0.25
US Dollar	90.56	0.11
Gold	1,60,700	1.38
Brent oil	68.91	0.24

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	22,28,40	-21.70
Adani Ports	15,54,70	-7.00
Apollo Hosp	72,19,00	8.00
Asian Paints	23,93,60	-23.80
Axis Bank	1,356,70	-15.30
Bajaj Auto	97,74,00	184.00
Bajaj Finance	96,56,00	-17.55
Bharti Airtel	43,73,30	0.00
Bharti Airtel	20,11,30	-26.90
Cipla	1,342,10	-0.40
Coal India	430,95	-0.75
Dr Reddys Lab	1,256,00	-19.50
Hindustan Unilever	40,20	DE*
Eicher Motors	7,296,00	100.50
Etemal Ltd.	30,38,00	14.95
Grasim Ind	2,953,90	-27.60
HCL Tech	1,573,10	-28.90
HFDC Bank	932,40	-4.85
HFDC Life	7,03,95	-3.95
Hindalco	968,90	4.65
Hind Unilever	2,453,60	18.60
ICICI Bank	14,06,50	10.20
IntGlobeAvi	4,960,40	-3.70
Infosys	1,497,80	0.60
ITC	321,40	1.39
Jio Financial Servic- es Ltd.	270,20	0.95
JSW Steel	12,44,10	-0.90
Kotak Bank	42,93,30	0.50
L&T	4,169,00	55.40
M&M	3,675,80	66.20
Maruti Suzuki	15,146,00	168.00
Max Healthcare	1,021,50	-11.50
NestleIndia	1,308,60	13.00
NTPC	3,66,90	5.00
ONGC	272,15	5.55
PowerGrid Corp	294,35	4.60
Reliance Ind	1,458,50	-3.10
SBI Life	20,18,30	-5.70
State Bank	1,144,10	1.90
Shriram Finance	1,048,60	-14.10
Sun Pharma	1,707,80	3.20
TataConsumerPro- duct	1,152,20	-15.00
Tata Steel	20,08,1	6.01
TCS	2,984,60	36.40
Tech Mahindra	1,644,60	-22.90
Titan	4,269,10	11.30
Tata Motors PV	379,35	1.95
Trent Ltd.	4,184,40	13.20
UltraTech Cement	1,302,30	-25.00
Wipro	321,47	1.39

DE: Demerged Entity

## Happiest Minds Q3 net falls 19.6%

IT firm Happiest Minds Technologies has reported a 19.56% decline in consolidated net profit to ₹40.3 crore in the October-December quarter, primarily weighed down by impact of the new labour code. PTI

## Budget ups limit but NRIs hold 0.6% of NSE firms

**Ashokamithran T.**  
MUMBAI

Non-resident Indians (NRIs) held less than 1% of shares of NSE listed companies in the last three fiscal years even as Union Budget 2026-27 doubled investment limit for them to 10% from the existing 5%, according to data from Prime Database.

As of Q3FY26, NRIs owned just 0.62% of NSE-listed shares. The most the cohort held in the more than 2,600 companies of the largest index in India was just 0.64% in Q1FY25 and the smallest share was in Q3FY22. The composition did not change despite changing quarterly returns of the Nifty 500 index in the past three years.



A file image of the National Stock Exchange building.

Further, none of the Nifty 50, which is the 50 most representative companies of corporate India, were in the list of 20 companies with the most NRI

shareholding.

Foreign investment limit by NRIs is delineated under the Portfolio Investment Scheme brought in under the Foreign Exchange Management Act in 2000. The limits were fixed at 5%/NRI and 10% for all NRIs put together.

**Limits raised**

Investments above 10% were allowed up to 24% with RBI approval. Under the Union Budget 2026-27 the limits were increased

to 10% and 24% respectively without any need for an approval to promote "ease of doing business."

While this does create opportunities for NRIs to invest, experts sound cautious.

"Generally we believe it is unlikely individual NRIs will hold 5% or 10% of a company," said Nitin Jain, CEO and director, Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Singapore.

"However, the increase in the aggregate holding of NRIs up to 24% should be seen as a good move as it will provide for more headroom for aggregate participation in Indian companies by NRIs," Mr. Jain said.

Members of the diaspora are often seen being enthusiastic during PM Narendra Modi's foreign visits. On the contrary, data relating to their economic interest in India is in contrast to this vocal support.

NRIs often maintain a strong cultural connection

with India, but investment decisions are shaped more by regulatory complexity, tax compliance norms and risk-adjusted returns, said Srinath Sridharan, strategic adviser to business families and boards.

"For many older emigrants, navigating India's compliance environment and governance variability can appear less predictable compared with mature markets such as the U.S. or the U.K. Younger emigrants, meanwhile, frequently find more attractive dollar-denominated opportunities abroad," Mr. Sridharan added.

**Safer bets**

Further, Indian equities may not always emerge as the most efficient near-term choice in an increasingly competitive global landscape where investors are constantly scanning for safer and more compelling bets across markets.

However, Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) and retail investors have largely kept the markets afloat.

On the policy intent behind the move, Former Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said the policy announcement was to "give feelers" to the diaspora that Indian stock markets are more open now.

**WASHINGTON**

**Trump threatens to block opening of new Detroit-Canada bridge**



U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday threatened to block the opening of a new Canadian-built bridge across the Detroit River, demanding that Canada turn over at least half of the ownership of the bridge and agree to other unspecified demands in his latest salvo over cross-border trade issues. AP

**LONDON**

**'Putin thinks he can outsmart the U.S. during Ukraine peace talks'**



Russian President Vladimir Putin has no desire to halt Russia's almost 4-year-old invasion of neighbouring Ukraine and thinks he can "outsmart" the United States during talks with Washington about how to end the war, said Kaupo Rosin, the head of Estonia's foreign intelligence service. AP

**ISLAMABAD**

**Pak's apex court allows lawyer of Imran's party to meet him in jail**



Pakistan's Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed Salman Safdar, lawyer of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, to meet incarcerated former Prime Minister Imran Khan in prison and submit a report about his "living conditions". It will be the first meeting with Mr. Khan by anyone since December 2. PTI

**WASHINGTON**

**U.S. set to repeal climate finding in huge regulatory rollback this week**



The Trump administration plans to repeal this week the Obama-era endangerment finding that underpins federal greenhouse gas rules. The expected move, called the largest U.S. deregulation act, would end vehicle emission standards but exclude power plants, facing possible legal and environmental challenges. Reuters

# 'Will hand over power to elected govt. fast,' says Muhammad Yunus

The Chief Adviser asks voters to support the July Charter in a referendum, which seeks to amend the Constitution; the proposed changes will impose limits on the powers of the Prime Minister and grant certain powers to the presidency

**Kalol Bhattacharjee**

DHAKA

The February 12 election is not just a routine political event but a moment when the people of Bangladesh will determine the course of their collective destiny, Chief Adviser of the interim government Muhammad Yunus said on Tuesday. In a nationally televised address that came hours after political campaign ended on Tuesday, Mr. Yunus called for citizens to vote in favour of the popular referendum on the 'July Charter' that will bring substantial changes to the Constitu-



Muhammad Yunus attends an event to announce the July Charter outside Bangladesh's parliament in October 2025. AP

tion. Polling will be 'inclusive' as 51 political parties will contest for power, he said, adding that the interim government will "fast" hand over power to the elected government.

"The task of the interim government will end with the election of a new government. We will return to our respective profes-

sions after handing over power with joy and pride to the new elected government," said Mr. Yunus.

He said the impact of the referendum on adopting the principles of the July Charter will influence a generation and called upon voters to come out and vote in favour of the Charter.

"A vote for the referendum is not just a seal on paper. It will determine the direction of education, employment and justice system in the coming days," said Mr. Yunus. The proposed changes will impose limits on the powers of the Prime Minister, and give certain powers to the Presi-

dent, who is currently a titular figure in the state structure of Bangladesh. The interim government has announced four days holiday for the election.

Meanwhile the interim government on Tuesday announced that the family of Dipu Chandra Das, who was lynched and burnt on December 18, 2025 in Mymensingh by a mob, will get 25 lakh Taka (₹18.5 lakh) as assistance for the construction of a house by the Das family.

That apart, the father and wife of late Das will get 10 lakhs Taka each and a fixed deposit amount of 5 lakh Taka will be dedicated to Das's child.

# Israel PM, Trump to meet as Iran tensions stay high

**Agence France-Presse**

JERUSALEM



Benjamin Netanyahu returned to office a year ago.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday the top priority in his talks with U.S. President Donald Trump would be the ongoing negotiations with Iran, as he presses for a tougher U.S. approach to Tehran's ballistic missile programme.

So far, Iran has rejected expanding the scope of its talks with the U.S. beyond the issue of its nuclear programme, though Washington also wants Tehran's ballistic missile programme and its support for regional militant groups on the table.

The two leaders are to meet in Washington on Wednesday, their sixth such encounter in the United States since Mr. Trump

growing international outrage over Israeli measures to tighten control of the occupied West Bank by allowing settlers to buy land directly from its Palestinian owners.

However, it remains unclear whether the issue will be raised in their talks, despite Mr. Trump's past opposition to any annexation of the West Bank.

"On this trip we will discuss a range of issues: Gaza, the region, but of course first and foremost the negotiations with Iran," Mr. Netanyahu said, in a video statement before his departure.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson warned on Tuesday that Mr. Netanyahu's visit would have a "destructive" influence on diplomacy that is "detrimental to the region".

# Takaichi's win could mean more tensions with China

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

**Suhasini Haidar**

NEW DELHI

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's landslide victory in the snap polls she had called for could mean more tensions with China and hold out hope for closer India ties in the Indo-Pacific, say experts.

In particular, the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) record performance winning two-thirds of the Japanese House of Representatives will accrue to Ms. Takaichi personally, given the LDP's poor performance in the past. Ms. Takaichi, who first came to power after an intra-party election in October 2025, was preceded by Shigeru Ishiba, Fumio Kishida and Yoshihide Suga, all of whom served as PM for two-three years.

"The win is entirely due to PM Takaichi's personal popularity," said former Ambassador to Japan Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa, comparing the "drubbing the LDP had got" in 2024 elections to the latest polls where the LDP won 316 of 465 seats. "As a protege of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe she can be expected to carry on his legacy and that means focus on the Indo-Pacific and valuing close ties with India," Ms. Wadhwa told *The Hindu*.

In particular, Ms. Takaichi's personal style in international engagements won her many voters, Tomohiko Taniguchi, professor at Japan's Keio University and an adviser to Shinzo Abe, said.

"The way she smiled with Donald Trump, the way she embraced the Ita-



**Popular choice:** Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi enters the Prime Minister's Office in Tokyo on Tuesday. AFP

lian Prime Minister, and the way she sat down at the drum set with the president of South Korea—all this set her dramatically apart from her three immediate predecessors: Suga, Kishida, and, worse still, Ishiba, none of whom learned how to connect with ordinary people," he added, pointing to Ms. Takaichi's "viral" social media content.

The Japanese PM will now be watched most closely for whether she sets out mend fences with China, or step up the country's security policies to counter its maritime neighbour with whom tensions have been high since November, when Ms. Takaichi's comments on Taiwan set off a series of economic sanctions by China.

**Defence spend**

"[PM] Takaichi can certainly increase the defence budget – something China may not welcome. Yet, the relationship between Xi and Takaichi could well improve, simply because Xi tends to show due respect to leaders who have proven themselves strong and resilient," Mr. Taniguchi said.

Beijing will also watch closely to see if Ms. Takaichi

China to offer support for 'reunification forces' in Taiwan

**Reuters**  
BEIJING

China will offer firm support for "patriotic pro-reunification forces" in Taiwan and strike hard against "separatists", the top Chinese official in charge of policy towards the democratically-governed island said in comments published on Tuesday.

China, which views Taiwan as its own territory despite the objections of the government in Taipei, has ramped up its military and political pressure against the island as Beijing seeks to assert its sovereignty claims.

Addressing this year's annual "Taiwan Work Conference", the ruling communist party's fourth-ranked leader Wang Huning said officials must advance the "great cause of national reunification", the official state-run *Xinhua* news agency said.

**'Safeguard peace'**  
It is necessary to "firmly support the patriotic pro-unification forces on the island, resolutely strike against 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces, oppose interference by external forces, and safeguard peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait", *Xinhua* paraphrased him as saying.

While the report made no mention of the use of force, China has never renounced using military means to bring Taiwan under its control, the Chinese Defence Ministry struck a stronger note commenting on Taiwanese military deployments.

**THE HINDU Youngworld**  
NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY  
SPECIAL ISSUE DATED 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

**Sir C.V.Raman's connection**   **Science Superpowers**   **Weapons that use Light & Sound**  
**Pea Plant Secrets**   **Everyday Science**   **Student Contributions**  
**Science in Architecture**

**FOLLOW US ON** @thehinduyou

**PRE-BOOK YOUR COPY WITH YOUR NEWSPAPER AGENT TODAY**

**Collector's Edition**  
@ Rs. 20  
Per Copy

**For Print Subscription, visit [www.thehindu.com/youngworld](http://www.thehindu.com/youngworld)**  
**For further queries, call 1800 102 1878**  
**For bulk bookings, email [reach.youngworld@thehindu.co.in](mailto:reach.youngworld@thehindu.co.in)**

**SCAN TO SUBSCRIBE**

# Sport

## COIN CALL

We are Pakistan and we do things differently, says skipper Agha



We are Pakistan, we do things differently to the world [when asked why the team wanted to bat first]. We are comfortable with chasing as well. Our top-three batters will probably go in the same order but we are flexible after that. There is always room for improvement — captain Salman Agha after the win over the USA.

## OPENING SALVO

Seifert and Allen record highest stand in T20 World Cup history



Kiwi openers Finn Allen and Tim Seifert etched their names in the record books when they stitched an unbeaten 175-run partnership against the UAE, making it the highest in a T20 World Cup game. They beat the unbroken 170-run stand set by England's Alex Hales and Jos Buttler against India in the 2022 T20 World Cup semifinals.

## LESSONS TO LEARN

We have to work out how to restrict rival batters: Waseem



I think we have to work out how to restrict the opposition batters. It is about how we have to bowl, which lines and lengths we have to bowl to those batters. We will look to improve on those aspects in the upcoming games — UAE skipper Muhammad Waseem after his side's defeat to New Zealand.

## INJURY WOES

Hasaranga ruled out of the WC, Hemantha named replacement



Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga (in pic) has been ruled out because of a hamstring injury sustained in the opening match against Ireland. Dushan Hemantha has been named as replacement. New Zealand's Michael Bracewell has also been ruled out for the remainder of the T20 World Cup after re-injuring his left calf.

# Farhan, Shadab shine in Pakistan's easy win

The former top-scores with a 41-ball 73 to power the 2009 champion to 190 against USA while the latter proves his value with an all-round show

## T20 WORLD CUP

**Sahil Mathur**  
COLOMBO

The USA's batting faltered again as Pakistan's spin-heavy approach turned out to be the difference in their T20 World Cup Group A clash at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) here on Tuesday.

Pakistan's spinners, led by Usman Tariq's three-for and Shadab Khan's two for 26, who earlier hit a 12-ball 30, helped the team defend 190 by 32 runs to notch up its second successive win.

### Spinners to the fore

Pakistan played with just one fast bowler, Shaheen Afridi, while the spinners shared the remaining 16 overs, picking up seven of the eight wickets as the USA managed only 158 in its failed pursuit.

Bowling under lights, the tweakers weren't afraid to toss the ball up and were rewarded.

For the USA, only Shayan Jahangir (49) and Shubham Ranjane (51) consistently found the middle of the bat in an otherwise poor display.

Earlier, Pakistan's top-order feasted on indiscipline to power the side to



**Blazing away:** Farhan smashed six fours and five sixes in his breezy knock. AP

190 for nine. Saim Ayub set the tone early, skipping down the track to launch Saurabh Netravalkar for a six in the opening over. The bowlers struggled to settle on a consistent length as Sahibzada Farhan (73) slashed, pulled and punched to find the fence regularly.

The momentum stalled briefly when Shadley van Schalkwyk rolled his fingers, drawing Ayub into a slash to short third. Skipper Salman Agha followed soon after, pulling straight to deep square leg.

But Farhan continued to attack the spinners, who

kept a flatter trajectory throughout, bringing up a 27-ball fifty. Babar Azam (46) began quietly but shifted gears after his first boundary off his 19th delivery. The 81-run stand ended with Babar's dismissal, which triggered a collapse. Pakistan lost seven wickets for 53 before its spinners came to the forefront.

**The scores:** Pakistan 190/9 in 20 overs (Sahibzada Farhan 73, Babar Azam 46, Shadab Khan 30, Shadley van Schalkwyk 4/25) bt USA 158/8 in 20 overs (Shayan Jahangir 49, Shubham Ranjane 51, Usman Tariq 3/27, Shadab 2/26).  
**Toss:** USA; **PoM:** Farhan.

## ICC-PCB dialogue took place as part of a broader engagement

**Amol Karhadkar**  
MUMBAI

The International Cricket Council, early on Tuesday, confirmed that Pakistan will honour its commitment of playing all the matches, including the marquee clash against India in Colombo on February 15, at the ongoing T20 World Cup.

"The dialogue between ICC and PCB took place as part of a broader engagement with both parties recognising the need for constructive dealings and being united, committed and purposeful in their aspirations to serve the best interests of the game with integrity, neutrality and cooperation," read an ICC statement.

"In that prevailing spirit, it was agreed that all members will respect their commitments as per the terms of participation for ICC events and do all that is necessary to ensure that the ongoing edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup is a success," it added.

**Affirmation**  
The statement was an affirmation of the PCB's commitment to play all the games in the tournament, as stated in the Members' Participation Agreement that is signed between the ICC and each of the 12 ICC full members.



It was agreed that all members will respect their commitments as per the terms of participation for ICC events and do all that is necessary to ensure that the T20 World Cup is a success

Ever since the Government of Pakistan had last week directed the Pakistan team to not take the field against India in a bid to support Bangladesh, the global cricket ecosystem was in a fix over the fate of the big game that is the epicentre of cricket's finances.

Earlier, BCB president Aminul Islam had requested the PCB and its chief Mohsin Naqvi, also an influential minister in Pakistan, to play against India.

Over the last couple of days, ICC directors Imran Khwaja (Singapore) and Mubashir Usmani (UAE) held multiple rounds of meetings in Lahore with Naqvi, PCB officials and Islam who had travelled from Dhaka.

A separate ICC statement said that Bangladesh will host an additional ICC event prior to the 2031 World Cup.

## Cricket economics trumps the complexities of sub-continental politics

**K.C. Vijaya Kumar**

In the wee hours of Tuesday, phones buzzed in specific offices at Dubai, Delhi, Mumbai and Islamabad, and a seemingly amicable solution was arrived at.

The ICC T20 World Cup's top-billed clash featuring India and Pakistan in Group A, will indeed happen as scheduled at Colombo on February 15.

While questions will swirl around the placement of India and Pakistan in the same group in ICC events, it has to be conceded that it is a commercial decision that helps the official broadcaster and the ICC rake in the moolah. The historical angst underpinning Indo-Pak encounters adds another distinct layer too, even if the jingoistic promotional campaigns deserve the dustbin.

The earlier state of limbo about this overhyped clash was caused by an over-reaction from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) which stated that since Bangladesh was removed from the championship, Salman Agha's men will not play against the Men in Blue!

The historical truth of Bangladesh being carved out of Pakistan in 1971 was conveniently forgotten in



**Uncertainty ends:** After a lot of back and forth, it has been decided that Agha & Co. will play India in Colombo on Sunday. GETTY IMAGES

the quest for a new brotherhood.

That Bangladesh queered the pitch too by demanding a neutral venue away from India, at the last-minute, had already worsened the drama. And Dhaka's strident move was provoked by the BCCI instructing Kolkata Knight Riders to axe pacer Mustafizur Rahman from the Indian Premier League. This was seen as Delhi's way of staging a cricketing protest over the violence against the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh.

It was this move that drew instant reactions from the Bangladesh Cricket Board and the PCB. Soon, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and their respective cricketing boards and governments, got embroiled in a convoluted mess of injured sensibility and over-reactions that catered entirely to their domestic political domains.

**Carrot of sops**  
The medley of rescue efforts involved the Sri Lankan Government, the alleged ICC carrot of sops to Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the stick of penalties. Truth be told, cricket did not win. But what is definite is that the complexities of sub-continental politics again played second-fiddle to the commercial judgement of going ahead with the game. All other lines in press-releases, are just platitudes.

# Kiwi openers Seifert and Allen hammer UAE into submission

**S. Dipak Ragav**  
CHENNAI

One of the areas where associate teams often fall short against established sides is their inability to compete hard in all facets of the game for the entire duration of a contest.

New Zealand taught UAE a tough lesson in just that as it made short work of a 174-run target with a 10-wicket win in a T20 World Cup Group D game at the MAC Stadium on Tuesday.

Openers Tim Seifert (89 n.o.) and Finn Allen (84 n.o.) thrashed a hapless bowling attack all over the park to finish off the chase in just 15.2 overs and help the Kiwis post their second win in Group D.

On a pitch that offered true bounce and carry, the UAE pacers were guilty of bowling too full, and the duo wielded their willows like axes, depositing innocuous deliveries into the stands with disdain.

Seifert kept it simple, targeting the straight boundaries and smashing left-arm pacer Muhammad Roshid for 19 runs in the sixth over to bring up his half-



**Going berserk:** Seifert and Allen carted the UAE bowlers to all parts of the ground. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

century off just 23 balls. Allen, not to be left behind, also hit cleanly through the line and reached his landmark off just 27 balls.

The 75-minute carnage from the openers took all the fizz out of an otherwise decent batting performance from the Middle Eastern country.

**Waseem on song**  
Opting to bat, skipper Muhammad Waseem led from the front with an unbeaten half-century (66 n.o.) and carried his bat through to guide his team to 173 for six.

## 'Allen and I will remain aggressive'

**Tarun Shastry**  
CHENNAI

New Zealand openers Tim Seifert and Finn Allen set the MA Chidambaram Stadium alight with their attacking display, which sent the UAE players on a leather hunt. The duo's fearless show meant the Kiwis romped home with ease.

Seifert reflected on the team's positive start to the tournament and the aggressive approach adopted by the pair. "It's a nice way to start. The main thing is that we've won two games," Seifert said. "Finn and I are going to continue playing the same way. Some days it will come off, and some days it won't. For us, it's about enjoying our cricket, putting pressure on the bowlers, and having fun."

Allen highlighted the importance of game awareness during chases. "We try to get ourselves into good positions. We spoke about picking our moments. The surface was getting better as the game progressed, and we focused on rotating the strike as well, which we did quite well."

## De Leede steers the Dutch to victory against Namibia

**Vivek Krishnan**  
NEW DELHI

Bas de Leede's unbeaten 72 (48b, 5x4, 4x6) led the Netherlands to a seven-wicket win against Namibia in a T20 World Cup Group-A encounter at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Tuesday.

In response to Namibia's 156 for eight, the Dutch side took 18 overs to ease to the target.

Having lost to Pakistan in the opening match, Scott Edwards and Co. have got off the mark in the marquee event.

While Max O'Dowd departed early in the chase, de Leede took firm control at No. 3 to ensure there were no jitters in the Netherlands camp.

**Redemption**  
It was redemption for de Leede, whose notorious record of the most expensive figures in ODI history - 10-0-115-2 - came against Australia in the 2023 World Cup at this very ground.

Belonging to a cricketing family, the 26-year-old, whose father Tim de Leede represented the country in three ODI World Cups, got



**Match-winner:** De Leede ensured the Netherlands had a walk in the park. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

going with a six off Max Heino in the fifth over.

If Louren Steenkamp had held on to Colin Ackermann's catch off J.J. Smit in the 10th over, the Netherlands may have had to work harder for victory. But the reprieve - he was on 13 at the time - allowed Ackermann to forge a 70-run stand with de Leede for the third wicket.

The latter hit the winning runs, deftly steering a full ball for four through short third, in the company of Edwards.

"Coming from a cricketing family in the Netherlands, it is really special to be able to perform and

## 'Great that the Pakistan game is back on'

**Vivek Krishnan**  
NEW DELHI

Assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate weighed in on the news that the India-Pakistan clash in the T20 World Cup will go ahead.

"First of all, I think it's great that the game is back on. We kind of never changed our preparation that the game wasn't going to happen, we were always under the impression that something would transpire and we would play."

"We got confirmation early this morning that the game was going to go ahead and we'd like to have another chance to play against a quality side," said ten Doeschate here on Tuesday.

In the lead-up to Thursday's clash against Namibia, the Men in Blue trained under lights at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

An indisposed Jasprit Bumrah, who missed the USA match, and Washington Sundar, who has recovered from a rib injury, were back in training. However, Abhishek wasn't part of it. "Abhishek has a few tummy issues, but we hope he'll be available".

hopefully make my family proud," de Leede said.

Earlier, Jan Frylinck and Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton lent some solidity to Namibia's innings with a 50-run stand off 41 balls. However, the tempo of the partnership may have hindered the African side, which added 91 runs in the last 10 overs, from achieving a more robust total.

**The scores:** Namibia 156/8 in 20 overs (Jan Frylinck 30, Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton 42, Logan van Beek 2/13, Bas de Leede 2/20) lost to the Netherlands 159/3 in 18 overs (Bas de Leede 72 n.o., Colin Ackermann 32).

**Toss:** The Netherlands. **PoM:** Bas de Leede.

# West Indies hopes for a 2016 encore against England

Head coach Sammy says the Hope-led side is ready to challenge the best; Brook's men, meanwhile, will look to sharpen their execution after surviving a major scare against Nepal



**Power-packed:** West Indies will have high expectations from Shepherd. EMMANUEL YOGINI

## T20 WORLD CUP

**Amol Karhadkar**  
MUMBAI

**A**s the West Indies and England prepare to face off at the Wankhede Stadium on Wednesday, memories of March 2016 come rushing back.

### Gayle storm

Back then, West Indies launched its World T20 campaign with a thumping win over England, powered by Chris Gayle's six-hitting spectacle – a victory that set it on course for a title-winning run that culminated in another triumph over the same opponent in the final.

## Today's matches

**South Africa** vs **Afghanistan**  
Ahmedabad, 11 a.m.  
**HEAD-TO-HEAD**

Played: 3  
South Africa 3 | Afghanistan 0

**Australia** vs **Ireland**  
Colombo (RPS), 3 p.m.  
**HEAD-TO-HEAD**

Played: 2  
Australia 2 | Ireland 0

**England** vs **West Indies**  
Mumbai, 7 p.m.  
**HEAD-TO-HEAD**

Played: 38  
England 19 | West Indies 18  
NR 1

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1, 2 & JIOHOTSTAR

field. We try to control the things that are within our power... Mumbai has been a place that has been kind to us in the World Cups, so we look forward to it."

England, meanwhile, will look to sharpen its execution after surviving a major scare against Nepal on Sunday.

### Valuable experience

Veteran Jos Buttler, 24 runs shy of becoming the fourth batter to complete 4,000 T20I runs, felt the narrow escape could prove valuable.

"If you can hold your nerve and manage to still execute skills... that's probably good learning for the group," Buttler said, as England seeks to turn lessons into momentum.

tition. West Indies, meanwhile, begin once again as underdogs.

But head coach Darren Sammy – the title-winning captain in 2012 and 2016 – believes the Shai Hope-led side is ready to challenge the best.

"I remember coming in to 2016, some of the names

that my cricketers were called. Some of the battles we had to fight.

"To this day, 10 years later, we are still fighting it," Sammy said, adding that he would speak more openly about those challenges after the tournament. But we won't let that affect what we bring on the

## South African batters are familiar with the Afghan spinners and are ready for them, reckons Miller

**N. Sudarshan**  
AHMEDABAD

There are seemingly no more secrets in international cricket. David Miller and Rashid Khan, who are set to face-off in the South Africa-Afghanistan Group D encounter at the Narendra Modi Stadium here on Wednesday, may very well attest.

Miller and Rashid played together for Gujarat Titans for three seasons in the IPL here. Rashid is a regular in the SA20, and he and Miller played each other in the 2023 ODI World Cup at this very ground.

Yet, for all the familiarity, cricket retains a glorious uncertainty – the pitch. And this being a day

game that starts at 11 a.m., there is great intrigue.

"No one around the world will tell you how the wicket will behave before the game," Rashid said on Tuesday.

"Everyone gives their point of view. Sometimes it's a 250 wicket, and sometimes 150. If you put those things in the mind it affects you mentally."

"Nowadays, I'm hearing a lot of discussion about the wicket. We are not really discussing the skills that we have. And we bring those skills into the game," he added.

In Sunday's five-wicket defeat to New Zealand, Rashid & Co. couldn't tie down the Kiwi batters. But against the Proteas, they

may be encouraged by how Canada left-arm spinner Ansh Patel kept the South Africans on a leash during Monday's contest and picked up three wickets.

"I think all our guys are really good at playing spin," insisted Miller. "Afghanistan has got some really good spinners, but a lot of us have played with them and against them for a number of years now."

"With all due respect, Canada, we've never... we didn't know how the players play. So we were assessing that out for the first time. But Afghanistan, we know what to expect."

There are no more secrets, are there? Wednesday will tell.



**Big challenge:** Rashid & Co. will be eager to bounce back after the loss to New Zealand. VIJAY SONEJI

## We want to be positive: Aussie skipper Marsh

**Sahil Mathur**  
COLOMBO

Tim David won't be available for Australia's opening T20 World Cup fixture against Ireland, but is expected to be back in contention over the next few days, captain Mitchell Marsh said on Tuesday, the eve of the Group-B clash here at the R. Premadasa Stadium.

David injured his hamstring during the Big Bash League (BBL) in December and has been on the road to recovery since.

Conditions will likely dictate much of this contest.

The venue has aided spinners heavily, while the pacers have taken the pace off and used cutters to make an impact.

"We want to be positive in the way we go about things. These conditions are about being really clear on how you're going to approach it: applying what's in front of you," Marsh said.

Ireland coach Heinrich Malan, too, added that it has reflected on using similar tactics post the loss against Sri Lanka.

"I think we learned a little bit from the way they went about their business at the back end, taking all the pace off the ball."

"Hopefully, tomorrow, on a surface that's probably going to be a little bit slower than the one we played on the other night, it's something we've added to the thinking of our seamers and some of our spinners."

## Nagal battles his way into the second round

### CHENNAI OPEN

**C. Shyam Sundar**  
CHENNAI

It was as if Sumit Nagal had gone missing for the best part of the opening set. The India No. 1 quickly fell behind 0-5 as Great Britain's Felix Gill punched above his weight, hitting crisply from the baseline and coming up with fine volleys when he needed to in their Chennai Open ATP Challenger contest at the SDAT tennis stadium.

The eighth seed Nagal swiftly turned things around and stepped up his return game to race to a 5-0 lead in the second set before Gill could get himself on the board.

After exchanging breaks early in the decider, Nagal, coming into the tournament after two losses in the Davis Cup tie against



**Moving up:** Sasikumar was one of three Indian winners on the day.

R. RAGU

the Netherlands, ran away a winner.

Sidharth Rawat joined his compatriot in the round-of-16 with an upset 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 win over fifth seed Rio Noguchi of Japan.

Sasikumar Mukund was the other Indian winner on the day as he edged out Nitin Kumar Sinha 7-6, 6-4.

Lorenzo Carboni (Ita) bt S.D. Prajwal Dev 6-2 (retd.).

Sasikumar Mukund bt Nitin Kumar Sinha 7-6, 6-3.

Eric Vanshelboim (Ukr) bt Aditya Vishal Balsekar 6-0, 6-0.

## Djokovic helped revive my career, says Gomez

**C. Shyam Sundar**  
CHENNAI

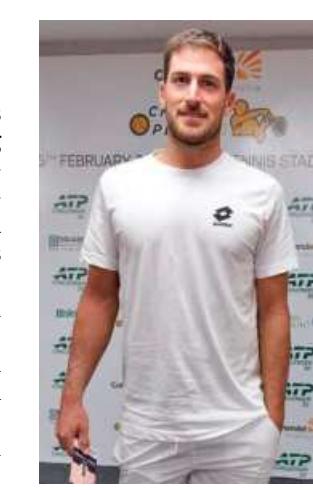
Federico Agustin Gomez is happy just to be playing tennis again. Having battled depression and mental health issues, the World No.196 is trying to work his way up the rankings.

Even as he struggled with lack of motivation, the 29-year-old found an ally in 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic, whose words of wisdom helped.

"Novak has been helping me a lot. We do a lot of training together. He gave me some advice on the way I could tackle different scenarios," said Gomez, who is here to play in the Chennai Open ATP Challenger.

"One thing he told me consistently was to find my way."

Regular interactions with the Serbian legend



provided a fillip to the lan-

ky Argentine.

In May, he made his Grand Slam debut at Roland Garros as a lucky loser and beat American Aleksandar Kovacevic, the then World No.76.

Back in 2019, after gradu-

ating from the University of Louisville with a degree in sports administration,

Djokovic and I do a lot of training together. He gave me some advice on the way I could tackle different scenarios

Gomez took up a coaching job as he didn't have the funds to become a full-time professional.

Three years later, he was back on court as a player, thanks to help from a friend, in an effort to revive his career.

He achieved his career-best rank (133) last year, and is aiming to crack the top-100 to be able to compete in the Slams.

"It feels good to be working with tennis. Tennis has been my whole life for the past 20 years or more."

"And I'm also happy that I gave myself a chance after coaching".

## Bengal completes formalities in style

### RANJI TROPHY

**Y.B. Sarangi**  
KALYANI

Bengal outplayed Andhra by an innings and 90 runs to continue its winning momentum and advance to the Ranji Trophy semifinals in style on Tuesday.

**The scores:** Andhra – 1st innings: 295. Bengal – 1st innings: 629.

Andhra – 2nd innings: C.R. Gnaneshwar b Jaiswal 20, Abhishek Reddy b Akash 5, Shaik Rasheed st. Gundhi b Shahab 8, Ricky Bhui c (sub) Subham b

Shahbaz 30, Nitish Reddy c & b Shahbaz 90, K.V. Sasikanth lbw b Jaiswal 0, Saurabh Kumar c Abhimanyu b Shahbaz 1, K.S. Raju c Chatterjee b Majumdar 25, T. Vijay c (sub) Rahul b Sumanta 46, K. Saiteja (not out) 0, K.S. Bharat (absent hurt) 0; Extras (b-4, lb-5, nb-9, w-1): 19; Total (in 72.2 overs): 244.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-16, 2-43, 3-45, 4-92, 5-93, 6-96, 7-153, 8-238, 9-244.

**Bengal bowling:** Mukesh 9-2-23-0, Akash 8-2-13-1, Jaiswal 15-3-42-2, Shami 3-1-7-0, Shahbaz 24-3-72-4, Sumanta 5.2-0-35-1, Majumdar 8-1-43-1.

**The semifinals:** Feb. 15 to 19: Uttarakhand vs. Karnataka (Lucknow); Bengal vs. J & K (Kalyani).

### RANJI TROPHY

**Y.B. Sarangi**  
KALYANI

Bengal outplayed Andhra by an innings and 90 runs to continue its winning momentum and advance to the Ranji Trophy semifinals in style on Tuesday.

**The scores:** Andhra – 1st

innings: 295.

Bengal – 1st innings: 629.

Andhra – 2nd

innings: C.R.

Gnaneshwar b Jaiswal 20,

Abhishek Reddy b Akash 5,

Shaik Rasheed st. Gundhi b

Shahab 8, Ricky Bhui c (sub) Subham b

Shahbaz 30, Nitish Reddy c & b

Shahbaz 90, K.V. Sasikanth lbw b

Jaiswal 0, Saurabh Kumar c

Abhimanyu b Shahbaz 1, K.S.

Raju c Chatterjee b Majumdar 25,

T. Vijay c (sub) Rahul b Sumanta

46, K. Saiteja (not out) 0, K.S.

Bharat (absent hurt) 0; Extras

(b-4, lb-5, nb-9, w-1): 19;

Total (in 72.2 overs): 244.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-16, 2-43, 3-45, 4-92, 5-93, 6-96, 7-153, 8-238, 9-244.

**Bengal bowling:** Mukesh 9-2-23-0, Akash 8-2-13-1, Jaiswal 15-3-42-2, Shami 3-1-7-0, Shahbaz 24-3-72-4, Sumanta 5.2-0-35-1, Majumdar 8-1-43-1.

**The semifinals:** Feb. 15 to 19:

Uttarakhand vs. Karnataka (Lucknow); Bengal vs. J & K (Kalyani).

**Special awards:** Best batter: Adil Asrani (Heartfulness); Best

bowler: Dhanush Karthik (Heartfulness); Best fielder: Advaith (Chettinad Vidyashram); Best all-rounder: Aadhars (Chettinad Vidyashram).

**Suleymanov reclaims lead**  
Heartfulness International School CBSE 147/5 in 30 overs (R. Adhav 53, Roshan Sathish 48 n.o.) bt Chettinad Vidyashram, R.A. Puram, 72/9 in 30 overs (H. Harshan 3/5).  
**The results (final):** Heart

# Dhakshineswar Suresh – making rapid strides

The 25-year-old boasts of a proud 4-0 Davis Cup record in just two ties; he owns a style that is very much in vogue in the modern-day game – big serve followed by a crushing forehand

## TENNIS

**N. Sudarshan**  
AHMEDABAD

**F**ollowing India's 3-2 victory over the Netherlands in the Davis Cup Qualifiers first round in Bengaluru on Sunday, there was a light-hearted, friendly, kerfuffle about Dhakshineswar Suresh's height.

The ATP website said – and still says – it was 6'5" while the 25-year-old insisted it was 6'6".

For the media personnel caught in between, it was a choice between an authoritative source and a champion's words. What was indisputable, however, was the fact that Dhakshineswar had grown, may be not in the eyes of the ATP data manager but certainly in front of the Indian sporting audience.

He won all three of his rubbers, boasts of a proud 4-0 Davis Cup record in just two ties and is the toast of the nation.

"It's a different feeling when you're playing for your country," he said, after the win. "You're not just playing for yourself. I played some different tennis in these matches, and I'm really proud of that."

There is both familiarity and novelty to Dhakshineswar. He owns a style that is very much in vogue in modern-day tennis – big serve followed by a crushing forehand.

Not for nothing does 2022 Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios – alongside whom Dhakshineswar competed in the World Tennis League exhibition last year – call him "my bro". But it is a style not very common in India. In re-



**Toast of the nation:** Dhakshineswar has grown in stature following his exploits. K. MURALI KUMAR

cent times, Rohan Bopanna had it, Ramkumar Ramanathan to a much-lesser degree, and not many others.

Dhakshineswar was also a largely unknown name in the country other than in the tennis-following circles. The Dindigul-born lad was a promising junior, but his career was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. And his ongoing education at the Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, Un-

ited States, has meant that he is not a regular on the Tour and is only ranked 470.

#### Fledgling career

After a wildcard appearance at the 2018 Chennai Challenger, he has featured in just 12 matches at that level, and has a solitary appearance at a Tour event. Only after he graduates this summer is he likely to play a full schedule.

"He has the game to be

in the top 100, no doubt, but he has to stay healthy and get stronger physically," Zeeshan Ali, former India Davis Cup coach, told *The Hindu*.

"Bangalore's altitude helped him, but when you play at sea level and on slower courts, you need to generate your own pace. That's the next step."

Knowing Dhakshineswar, he is not the kind to miss out on an opportunity to grow.

**Villarreal moves to the joint third spot**

## EURO LEAGUES

**Agence France-Presse**  
BARCELONA

Villarreal routed Espanyol 4-1 in the LaLiga on Monday, drawing it level on points with third-placed Atletico Madrid.

Goals by Georges Mikautadze, Nicolas Pepe and Alberto Moleiro, bolstered by an own goal by Jose Salinas, brought the Yellow Submarine to 45 points. But Leandro Cabrera's late consolation goal for the visitors stopped Villarreal from leapfrogging Atletico into third place.

Two goals from on-loan Donyell Malen drove Roma to a 2-0 win over Cagliari on Monday, lifting it level with fourth-placed Juventus in Serie A.

**The results:** Serie A: Atlanta 2 (Krstovic 13, Zappacosta 25) bt Cremonese 1 (Thorsby 90+4); Roma 2 (Malen 25, 65) bt Cagliari 0. LaLiga: Villarreal 4 (Mikautadze 35, Salinas 41-og, Pepe 50, Moleiro 55) bt Espanyol 1 (Cabrera 88).

## LIVE TELECAST

**Table tennis:** WTT Star Contender, WTT Global YouTube channel, 10 a.m. & 5 p.m.

**Men's T20 World Cup:** Star Sports 1, 2 & JioHotstar, 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.

**Premier League:** SS Select 1, 2 & JioHotstar, 1 a.m. (Thursday)

CHENNAI METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD					
NOTICE INVITING TENDER THROUGH E-TENDER					
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING					
e-bids is invited from the eligible bidders for the following work as per the procedure of CMWSSB under two cover system conforming to the Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tenders Act, 1998 and Rules 2000.					
Sl. No.	Name of work and Tender No.	Bid Security	e-Bid Submission Closing Date	e-Bid Opening Date	
1.	Providing water supply scheme to the left out streets/ Areas 1, and newly formed streets: Part 1 in Areas II, XI, XII, XIV and XV, CNT/WSS/INCB/MWB/37/16/2025-26	Rs.6.60 lakhs	26.02.2026 upto 3.00 p.m	27.02.2026 after 3.00 p.m	
2.	EMD by online transfer only through tender Portal. The tender shall submit scanned copy of online transaction statement towards EMD as part of Tender document.				
3.	Availability of tender documents and e-bid submission is permitted through tender portal / website : <a href="http://www.tntenders.gov.in">www.tntenders.gov.in</a> . For all other details refer tender schedule in the website from 12.02.2026.				
SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (Contracts & Monitoring)					
DIPR/853/TENDER/2026					

THE ODISHA STATE POLICE HOUSING & WELFARE CORPORATION LTD.	
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)	
JANAPATH, BHONIAGAR, BHUBANESWAR - 22, Ph: 0674-2541545, 2542921, E-mail: ophwc.od@odnic.in, Website: <a href="http://www.ophwc.com">www.ophwc.com</a>	
e-procurement notice No.-27/OPHC/2025-26	
<b>INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)</b>	
The Chief Engineer (OSPH&WC), Odisha, Bhubaneswar invites Percentage rate bid in Double Cover system in <b>ONLINE MODE</b> only, for the works as detailed below:	
1 Nature of work	Building works
2 No. of Works	16 Nos.
3 Value of Tender	Rs. 2.09 Cr. to Rs. 10.75 Cr.
4 Class of Contractor	'B' Class to 'Spl' Class
5 Cost of Bid document (To be paid online)	₹ 11,800.00
6 Availability of Bid Documents in the website	Dt. 12/02/2026 to Dt. 27/02/2026 up to 5.00 P.M
7 Last date/time of Receipt of Bids in the Portal	Dt. 27/02/2026 up to 5.00 P.M
8 Date of Opening Bid	Dt. 02/03/2026 at 10.30 A.M
9 Date of Technical Presentation (among qualified bidders only)	Date & Time will be notified after opening of the technical bid.
*The Bidders have to participate in <b>ONLINE</b> bidding only. Further details can also be seen from the website: <a href="https://tendersodisha.gov.in">https://tendersodisha.gov.in</a> . Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation order shall not be published in Newspaper and can only be seen on the said website.	
*The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids and terminate the tender process without assigning any reason thereof.	
Sd/-Chief Engineer (OSPH & WC) N.B. - The quoted rate should be all inclusive but excluding G.S.T. as applicable Under works contract. OIPR-12001-12118/1/25-26/0001 N.B. - The quoted rate should be all inclusive but excluding G.S.T. as applicable Under works contract. OIPR-12001-12118/1/25-26/0001	

TAMILNADU INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED (TIDCO)	
19-A, RUKMANI LAKSHMIPATHI ROAD, EGMORE, CHENNAI – 600 008 CIN-U65993TN1965SGC005327	
No. TIDCO/FTO/KOIVILPATTI/2025-26/1	Date: 11.02.2026

TIDCO, a Government of Tamil Nadu enterprises, intend to select a Concessionaire for establishment of Flying Training Organisation (FTO) at Kovilpatti on 'DBFOT' basis for a period of 31 years. In this context, TIDCO invites interested firms to submit proposals for development of FTO as detailed in the tender document.

Interested firms can download the tender from the website <https://tidco.com> and <https://tntenders.gov.in> with free of cost. The last date for submission of Proposals/Bids is at or before 15.00 Hours IST on 26.02.2026, through <https://tntenders.gov.in>. The Technical Proposals/ Bids will be opened at 17.00 Hours IST on 26.02.2026.

**MANAGING DIRECTOR**  
**Tamilnadu Industrial Development Corporation Ltd**  
19-A, Rukmani Lakshmipathi Road,  
Egmore, Chennai – 600 008.  
E-mail: [cmd@tidco.com](mailto:cmd@tidco.com), Website: <https://tidco.com>

DIPR/864/Tender/2026

## Sport



**Big factor:** Boon starred with a hat-trick for Belgium.

BISWARANJAN ROUTH

## Gritty Belgium turns the tables on Argentina

## FIH PRO LEAGUE

**Uthra Ganesan**  
ROURKELA

tinued his momentum with a cheeky overhead shot into the net with four seconds to go for the first quarter.

A penalty corner strike in the 24th minute made it 3-1 to Argentina, but Belgium came up with frequent attacks. The flanks opened up and the Belgians, playing with black armbands as a mark of respect for the death of Thibault Stockbroekx's father, were only denied by an acrobatic goalkeeper Tomas Santiago.

There was only so much he could do against a side that kept finding ways to breach the defence. Boon rounded off the scoring with a penalty stroke two minutes from time.

Tomas Domene struck the first blow for Argentina in the second minute and Nicolas della Torre doubled the lead seven minutes later. Veteran Boon, fresh from his HIL exploits, con-

**The result:** Belgium 5 (Boon 15, 30 & 58-ps, Hellin 32, Hendrickx 53-ps) bt Argentina 3 (Domene 2-pc & 24-ps, Della Torre 9-ps).



Costantini. R. RAVINDRAN

## Would love to continue till LA28: Costantini

**K. Keerthivasan**  
CHENNAI

Massimo Costantini, the National head coach of the Indian table tennis team, is quiet yet firm in his methods and has the results to show for his coaching style and technique.

Now in his third stint, 'Max', who will turn 68 next month, hinted that he would love to continue till the 2028 Los Angeles Games though his contract is up for renewal this May.

"I would like to build a better set of coaches and players with a strong mentality and create a better team environment.

"I think my legacy was there in 2018. I want to leave an even better one. That's my dream," he told *The Hindu* at the WTT Star Contender on Tuesday.

Max felt it would be tough for the Indians to do well here. "It's more challenging for the girls. The Japanese are very good and next only to the Chinese."

The coach said it felt great to see Manav Thakkar finally showing his potential at the international level. "I see that after so many discussions and analyses of his game, I think he has now found his game. He has developed his speed and timing, which

**Important results (qualifying second round): Men:** Umesh Kumar bt Rajeev Chikanbaran (Nepal) 6-11, 11-3, 11-5, 11-8; Balamurugan Rajasekaran bt Neel Mulye 11-5, 13-11, 11-9.

**Women:** Naisha Rewaskar bt Palak Ghia 11-3, 11-8; Gunjan Sahu bt Hardee Patel 12-10, 8-11, 11-9, 12-10; Nithya Mani bt Pritha Vartikar 11-9, 9-11, 9-11, 11-5, 11-8.

INDIRA GANDHI MEDICAL COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE					
(A Government of Puducherry Institution)					
Vazhudavour Road, Kathirkamam, Puducherry - 605 009.					
Ph: 0413-2277545, 0413-2277289 Website: <a href="http://www.igmcri.edu.in">www.igmcri.edu.in</a>					
WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR THE POST OF SENIOR RESIDENT ON REGULAR SCALE AND ON TENURE BASIS					
Eligible candidates who fulfill the NMC criteria are invited to attend the Walk-in-interview for the post of Senior Resident on Regular Scale and on Tenure Basis on 18.02.2026 at 10.00 a.m. onwards along with filled in application form and copies of the testimonials.					
The details regarding eligibility criteria such as age limit, educational qualification, experience, pay and other conditions etc., can be viewed on the official website <a href="http://www.igmcri.edu.in">www.igmcri.edu.in</a> . The prescribed application form can be downloaded from the website.					
No.183(9)IGMC&RI/Acad/Estd.II/SR/Recr./2026/ DIRECTOR i/c					
No.806/DIP/AD/Press/2026-26					

**THE HINDU**

# BRIDAL mantra is back

**AFTER 11 YEARS, REIMAGINED FOR MODERN WEDDINGS**

**Flip through 112 pages**

of inspiration for a contemporary wedding that still pays homage to tradition and to you.

From sculptural body armour for brides and tech-driven celebrations to offbeat honeymoon escapes, after-party kulchas and groom glow-ups, this edition pushes past the predictable.

We also bring you designer-led styling advice and smart budgeting tips. Because a great wedding should look incredible, be fun, and make financial sense.

Scan QR code or visit publications. [thehindugroup.com](http://thehindugroup.com)

For bulk booking and enquiries, contact us at [bookstore@thehindu.co.in](mailto:bookstore@thehindu.co.in) or 1800 102 1878

## LIVE TELECAST

**Table tennis:** WTT Star Contender, WTT Global YouTube channel, 10 a.m. & 5 p.m.

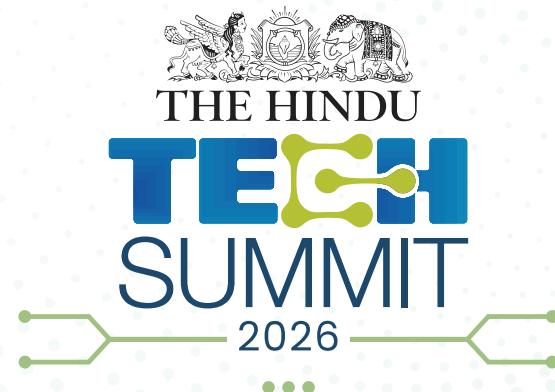
**Men's T20 World Cup:** Star Sports 1, 2 & JioHotstar, 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.

**Premier League:** SS Select 1, 2 & JioHotstar, 1 a.m. (Thursday)

CYK



Presents



Co-Presented by



# Continuity Unbroken: Building the Architecture of Resilience in a Connected World

This summit brings together visionary leaders, educators, and technologists to explore how learning, innovation, and governance converge to build a future that is stronger, smarter, and truly connected. Join us as we celebrate the power of education and the promise of innovation to create a resilient world.

FEBRUARY 12 & 13, 2026, CHENNAI

## Chief Guest



Inaugural Address by  
**Dr G Viswanathan**

Founder & Chancellor,  
Vellore Institute of Technology

## Guest of Honour



Special Address by  
**Mr Raju Vegesna**

Chairman and Managing Director,  
Sify Technologies Limited

## DAY 01

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

### Inauguration

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

### From Classroom to Cosmos

**Dr Sekar Viswanathan**, Vice-President, VIT

In conversation with **Ms Ramya Kannan**,  
Chief of Bureau (Tamil Nadu), The Hindu

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

### Resilience by Design: Embedding Continuity into Organisational DNA using ISO 22301 & 27031

**Mr Sivaramakrishnan**, CISO, M2P

**Mr Santhosh Murthy Neriyenuri**, Sr. Director, Operations,  
Kellogg Brown and Root Company

**Mr Gokulavan Jayaraman**, Infosec Leader, Mahindra Group

**Mr Saravanakumar R**, Senior Director, Tech Risk Management, Sutherland

Moderated by **Mr Suresh Vijayaraghavan**, CTO, The Hindu

12:30 PM - 1:00 PM

### Powering India's AI Future: Data Centres, Capital, and the Race to Scale

**Mr Raju Vegesna**, Chairman and Managing Director, SIFY Technologies Ltd.

In conversation with **Mr John Xavier**, Tech Editor - The Hindu

## 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM LUNCH

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

### Cyber Resilience in an AI-driven World: Balancing Risk, Recovery, and Privacy

**Mr Manjunath Prasad**, Head IT, TVS Mobility Pvt Ltd

**Mr Balaji T K**, AVP Engineering, Epimoney Pvt Ltd - FlexiLoans

**Mr Vinod R**, Director-Platforms Solution, Sutherland

**Dr Ramkumar Dilli**, Chief Information Officer & Head of Security, Myridius

Moderated by **Mr Nagaraj**, VP - Data & Analytics, The Hindu

3:00 PM - 3:30 PM

### Data Privacy & Security in Biometric Travel Platforms

**Mr Suresh Khadakbhavi**, CEO, Digi Yatra Foundation

In conversation with **Mr L V Navaneeth**, CEO, The Hindu Group

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

### The Role of Technology in Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery

**Mr Roopesh Kumar**, Head, Data Center Projects, SIFY Infinit Spaces Ltd.

**Mr Sendil Kumar Venkatesan**, CTO, Shriram Capital

**Mr Amrish Kumar Jain**, Chief Information Officer, Tally Solutions

**Mr Santhosh TG**, Chief Digital Officer, Switch Mobility

**Mr Suraj Ramesh**, Senior Principal Product Manager, Oracle India Pvt Ltd.

Moderated by **Mr Suresh Vijayaraghavan**, CTO, The Hindu

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

### Resilient GCCs: Continuity and Compliance at Global Scale

**Mr Kalilur Rahman**, Sr GCC Advisor

**Mr Santhosh Kumar M**, Sr Director - Digital - KBR

**Dr Deepak Kota**, Director, Global IT Support, Mars Snacking

**Mr Harsha Ram G**, Business Head, Network Services, Sify Technologies Ltd.

Moderated by **Mr John Xavier**, Tech Editor - The Hindu

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

### Governance, Risk and Intelligence: The Next GRC Framework

**Mr Sakthi Balan Muthaiah**, Professor, Shiv Nadar University

**Mr Gowdhaman Jothilingam**, Global CISO and Head of IT,  
Latent View Analytics Ltd.

**Mr Vennimalai Sundaresan**, Vice President - Data Governance,  
Standard Chartered

**Dr Balakrishna Kanniah**, VP - IT, IS and Digital, Alten India pvt Ltd

Moderated by **Mr Koushik Ramani**, Managing Partner, NetworkGain



Scan here or visit  
[newsth.live/THTS2026](http://newsth.live/THTS2026)  
to register and secure your invite.  
Registration subject to confirmation.

Associate Partners



Realty Partner

TV Partner

Digital News Partner

Knowledge Partner

Industry Partner

Eco System Partner

Gift Partner



GETTY IMAGES

# There's growing belief cricket too can thrive in Italy

Its players, who have come together from different parts of the globe for a common cause, feel the individual journeys have shaped the team's identity; skipper Wayne Madsen says his side is finding ways and methods to win games in the T20 World Cup

## S. Prasanna Venkatesan

When Italy walked into this T20 World Cup, it did not arrive with the certainty of a system or the confidence of history. It arrived carrying something more fragile and more powerful - belief stitched together from astroturf pitches, time borrowed from work, long-distance flights, family histories, and quiet sacrifice.

For most of the squad, this World Cup is not the next step in a linear career. It is an interruption to ordinary life. They have come here from jobs. From club cricket played on astroturf surfaces. From countries that raised them in cricket cultures far removed from the one whose colours they now wear.

"The guys have trained well. We've had a couple of good wins against Ireland (in a T20 series) and Namibia (T20 WC practice match), and we're starting to build a lot of confidence in the group," said skipper Wayne Madsen ahead of the tournament. Confidence, for Italy, is not bravado. It is something accumulated slowly, almost cautiously. "We're finding our ways and methods to win games," Madsen added.

The word journey is not an affectionate here. It is literal. Italy's preparation was deliberate, detailed, and unusually introspective for a team still building its identity.

"We've got our coaching staff who've been fantastic. The work they've put in has been meticulous - in terms of the teams we're going to be playing against, and our own skills and preparation. All of them (John Davison, Kevin O'Brien, and Dougie Brown) have got a lot of experience being underdog players in World Cups and performing. So, it's great to sort of lean on their knowledge," said the 42-year-old.

What stood out, though, was a decision that signalled self-awareness. "In preparation for coming here, we made use of a sports psychologist as well," said the captain. "The pressures of playing in big stadiums, in front of a lot of fans, is going to be new to a lot of our players."

Andy Hooton, a sports psychologist Madsen works at Derbyshire, came on board after conversations that began in November. "Davo (head coach Davison) and I spoke about it. He (Hooton) has been with us probably for the last couple of months. In the last month, particularly, we've had a lot of chats around the mental side of this World Cup - what it's going to be for individuals and the team as well," said Madsen.

For Italian cricket, it was unfamiliar territory. "As far as I'm aware, it's something new for the team," Madsen admitted. But the need was obvious. "We



felt it was really important, in particular for our guys who are not involved in professional set-ups, to be able to deal with pressure in these situations," he said.

That line - not involved in professional set-ups - defines Italy's World Cup more than any tactical plan. "Probably half of our squad," Madsen said, pausing to calculate, "Or maybe even just over half, have jobs outside cricket. We've got a handful of professionals. But we've also got guys who are juggling jobs and have sacrificed so much to be able to come here to this World Cup and perform on this stage."

Those individual journeys, he believes, have shaped the team's identity. "The journeys of the individuals in this group bring us together. What it means for us - that togetherness is really there. The bond we have as a group of Italians is really special," he said.

### Time to adapt

It is not a bond forged by central contracts or shared academies. It is built by necessity. If emotional adaptation has been a challenge, technical adaptation has been just as stark. "There is club cricket in Italy, but none of it is on natural turf pitches. Everything is astroturf. All the pitches are astro," he said. For players raised entirely on artificial surfaces, adapting to natural turf is not a minor adjustment. "It's a big adjustment when we go to tournaments," Madsen said.

To bridge that gap, Italy's home-based players went to Sri Lanka for six weeks before travelling to Dubai. Astroturf, Madsen felt, offers a sharper, higher bounce and a different trajectory. Natural turf demands recalibration. "They trained outside as a group to make sure they were ready, and had adapted to the different

bounce," he said.

The absence of infrastructure is something Italy's Australia-bred pacer Thomas Draca spoke about with urgency rather than frustration. "There are 10 clubs currently," Draca said. "But it (club cricket) is nowhere near Australia or England or India. I don't think we have a turf square."

For him, the World Cup is not just about competition. "If we can get funding and grow the game, that's what's most important. That's the legacy we want to leave," Draca said.

Anthony Joseph Mosca's journey to this World Cup began far from Italian club grounds. He and his brother Justin Mosca, Italy's opening pair, are from Australia, but their roots remain firmly Italian. "Our parents and grandparents were born in Italy. For many of us in this team, our families are from Italy. We have a lot of Italian heritage (in the team). So, Italian was the first language in some of our households," Anthony said.

He grew up playing grade cricket in Sydney, admiring and wanting to emulate Ricky Ponting's pull shot and Damien Martyn's cover drive. He didn't fully grasp the scale of Italian cricket until just before COVID. "The federation contacted Ben Manenti. And Benny passed on my name and my brother's," he recalled. Though the pandemic paused his travel, the commitment remained. "They told us the steps it would take to get to this level and we were prepared to take that on."

### Two sets of brothers

That journey has been eased by familiarity. Alongside his sibling are the Manenti brothers, Ben and Harry - friends first, teammates later. "We played cricket together back in Australia. We

played at the same grade club in Sydney. For the last 15 years, we've been close mates - brothers, not by blood."

For Anthony, the weight of Italy's history-making World Cup qualification settled in one simple truth: it made his mother happy. It brought pride to her voice, a smile to her face, and tears to her eyes. In that moment, history felt human. "At the qualifiers in the Netherlands, mum sent a video through. All the parents had to send videos to the players about how proud they were. And it brought a tear to my mom's eye. Once dad passed away, life was tough for her. I know she's very happy now. She's got a smile on her face to see the two boys playing here in the World Cup," Anthony said.

His teammate Draca is out to make his "uncle", the great Dennis Lillee, proud. Draca is running in this T20 World Cup with a chain once worn by Lillee. "He's actually given me his World Series chain. It's got his Test cap and his signature on it. He gave it to me for my 21st birthday. In this World Cup, I'll be wearing it, and I want to do him proud," said the 25-year-old.

Lillee is not a footnote in Draca's story; he is the axis. "Dennis is probably the reason why I've continued to play. And the reason why I want to bowl fast. I wouldn't be here without him," Draca said.

Draca's commitment is tied to clarity about his role. Italy has options in medium pace. "So, my role in the team is to bowl fast. Trying to bowl up around 140 kph, that's my role. That's my attribute." Pace, for Draca, is not flourish; it is function. That function has been sharpened by intent. In the months leading into this World Cup, Draca put his bowling through a deliberate rebuild, chasing pace not as an impulse, but as preparation. "I worked with Shahbaz Choudhry, a fast-bowling coach in the UK. Over the last four months, with Dennis' involvement as well, Shahbaz has rebuilt my action. I started off in the low-80s (mph), and recently I've been bowling around 88 or 89 (mph). All the hard work we've done over the last four or five months was preparation for this tournament," Draca said.

For Draca, who was longlisted for the IPL 2025 mega auction, this World Cup offers a chance to align fortune with a dream he has carried for years - "to play for Mumbai Indians, to play with Hardik Pandya." Hardik, he said, is his "hero."

For Italy, this World Cup is not an arrival. It is an argument. "Cricket (in Italy) will grow with this exposure," Madsen said. "It's nowhere near football, but this helps." What Italy carries in this tournament is not illusion, but intent. And belief - belief that cricket can belong in Italy too.

## THE GIST

Madsen believes that the experience of the coaching staff is coming in handy

Anthony Mosca grew up playing grade cricket in Sydney, wanting to emulate Ponting's pull shot and Martyn's cover drive

Draca, who revealed that Hardik is his hero, dreams of playing for Mumbai Indians in the IPL

# SCIENCE

# Global warming and pollution are stripping vibrant colours from nature

Climate change is turning seas greener, forests browner and coral reefs whiter; as habitats grow warmer and more polluted, insects and birds are altering their pigmentation, reshaping how they adapt to their surroundings, tolerate heat and even how successfully they mate

Nivedita S.  
CHENNAI

**T**he colours of the natural world are not what they once were. More than half of the oceans have become greener over the last 20 years, and forests are turning brown prematurely. Various species of flora and fauna have also been changing their colours to adapt to rising temperatures, loss of habitats, and pollution.

This ecological discoloration is a direct consequence of climate change.

Living creatures are coloured a certain way for their survival and reproductive needs. Colours help escape predators, attract mates, and manage heat, among other functions.

A study published in *Biodiversity and Conservation* found that rising deforestation in the Amazon is causing butterflies to lose their bright displays. Butterflies in areas with human disturbance also sported a less diverse palette on the wings than those in the deeper, untouched parts of the forest. The researchers also found that areas with large-scale deforestation lacked the most colourful butterflies: less bright butterflies were able to camouflage better to escape predators and adapt to the loss of natural vegetation.

#### Becoming lighter

These changes echo one during the Industrial Revolution, when engine smoke and soot darkened the barks of trees and rendered the natural camouflage of lighter peppered moths ineffective. Over time, the darker peppered moths – which used to be rare – became more common in urban areas.

"In theory, the main adaptive pattern of colour change in relation to global warming would be a reduction in the deposition of melanin pigments," Kaspar Delhey, an ornithologist at the Monash University, told *The Hindu*.

Eumelanin produces dark brown/black shades and pheomelanin produces yellow and red hues. They are the two main types of melanin pigments in animals. When their bodies produce less melanin, they become lighter.

In a 2024 study in *Ecology and Evolution*, scientists also reported that several insects, including ladybirds and dragonflies, in the temperate northern hemisphere are turning lighter due to frequent heatwaves.

"Colour changes can have clear thermoregulatory benefits: lighter colour under warmer conditions can prevent overheating and allow insects to remain active for longer periods, while darker insects heat up faster in colder regions," Md Tangigul Haque, researcher at Macquarie University and one of the authors of the study, said.



**Grim shades:** Coral bleaching seen in formations along the Great Barrier Reef off Australia. AFP

The finding is in line with Bogert's rule: that animals in colder regions will be darker and those in warmer regions will be lighter. It is mainly applicable to cold-blooded animals. On the other hand, Gloger's rule applies to warm-blooded creatures, saying animals are darker in areas with high humidity and rainfall and lighter in colder, drier regions.

In a 2024 study in *Molecular Ecology*, scientists found that, thanks to milder winters, the brown morph of the tawny owl was found to be more dominant than the grey one in Europe. This was because the darker colour protected better against UV radiation.

Aside from climate change, rapid urbanisation and pollution are changing colours in the wild. In a 2024 study of 547 bird species in China, scientists found those in cities were darker and duller while rural areas abounded (relatively) in the more colourful birds. The authors speculated that heavy metals like lead could bind with melanin to produce darker plumage in urban areas.

Changes in pigments of plants also affect animals. Carotenoids afford plants red, yellow, and orange hues, and draw animals to consume them. Scientists have noticed that urban plants produce this pigment less. A 2020 study in *Current Biology* reported that flowers were altering their UV-related pigments to prevent being damaged by sunlight. These pigments are not visible to the human eye; they are intended for pollinators instead, and by changing them the plants could become less 'attractive'.

"Colour changes that improve survival

**The changes echo one during the Industrial Revolution, when engine smoke and soot darkened the barks of trees and rendered the natural camouflage of lighter peppered moths ineffective, leading to the darker peppered, moths, which used to be rare, becoming more common**

might reduce mating success or involve other fitness costs," Dr. Haque said. This affects reproduction in particular, with animals shifting their courtship timing to cooler periods, he added.

#### 'Underwater forest'

A striking example of ecological discoloration in India is underwater. In February 2025, scientists reported coral bleaching events in the Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Gulf of Kachchh. When corals suffer heat stress, they expel symbiotic algae and turn white. Such bleached corals face a higher risk of starvation and disease.

"A healthy coral reef is like an underwater forest," Thinesh T., assistant professor at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman and one of the authors of the study,

said. "When corals bleach or die, reefs lose their complex structure that provides shelter and breeding areas for many marine organisms. Fish and invertebrate populations decline, while algae and other stress-tolerant organisms often take over. This reduces biodiversity and

disrupts the balance of the marine ecosystem."

A burgeoning population of algae is also rendering the oceans greener.

"Algal blooms can reduce water clarity and block sunlight, making it harder for corals and seagrasses to photosynthesise. When blooms die and decompose, they can also lower oxygen levels in the water, harming fish and other marine life," Dr. Thinesh said.

#### A positive effect

Given the cascading effects of colours, minimising their change has become an important thrust of climate action. However, experts have flagged a large knowledge gap thanks to a lack of studies in the southern hemisphere and tropical areas and that large geographic surveys are required to establish the current trends.

"By successfully implementing strategies from both field- and lab-based monitoring, we can guide interventions; for example, preserving microhabitats such as shaded areas may help dark-coloured insects avoid overheating," Dr. Haque said.

On the bright side, the study in the Amazon also found that forest areas that had regenerated naturally had a positive effect on the colours of butterfly species. In India, experts have said, regulating coastal development, improving water quality, and tracking stress indicators will minimise coral bleaching. Put another way, it is still not too late to restore the world's true colours.

(nivedita.s@thehindu.co.in)

## THE GIST

Aside from climate change, rapid urbanisation and pollution are changing colours in the wild

A 2024 study in *Ecology and Evolution* reported that several insects, including ladybirds and dragonflies, in the temperate northern hemisphere are turning lighter due to frequent heatwaves

A striking example of ecological discoloration in India is underwater, where coral bleaching events are posing an existential threat to a vibrant ecosystem

On the bright side, a study in the Amazon found that forest areas that had regenerated naturally had a positive effect on the colours of butterfly species

## BIG SHOT



**Nature's spotlight:** An aurora borealis, also known as the 'northern lights', illuminates the sky over houses in Kapisillit, Greenland on January 20. REUTERS

## QUESTION CORNER

### Get the rocket ready



**Q: What is a wet dress rehearsal?**

**A:** A week ago, NASA found a hydrogen leak during a wet dress rehearsal of its

Artemis II mission. A dress rehearsal in rocketry is a full run-through of activities that will happen on the day of launch, to validate people, hardware, software, and timelines as an integrated system.

A dry dress rehearsal practices the countdown and important operations without loading cryogenic propellants into the rocket. Instead, the team will power up vehicle and ground systems, verify its communications equipment, simulate critical events, and validate decision-making and handoffs between launch control, engineering, range safety, and, if applicable, crew operations. Many of the testing steps use simulated sensor inputs. These rehearsals are useful to reveal logical problems in the flow of events without risking fuel leaks.

A wet dress rehearsal is the same concept taken to the closest safe approximation of launch day, and with the vehicle being fuelled with its actual cryogenic propellants (typically liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen for large rockets). The team will cool the fuel feed lines, load the tanks, pressurise them, monitor leak



NASA's SLS rocket and Orion spacecraft seen at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida on January 17. NASA/JOEL KOWSKY

detectors, and execute the countdown into its final stages. These rehearsals also keep the tanks full as the propellant warms and boils off, then execute a stop just before ignition, followed by draining and returning the vehicle to a stable configuration. Wet rehearsals are important because only they can reveal events that happen in cryogenic conditions, e.g. leaks in seals or in the connections between the rocket and ground equipment.

**For feedback and suggestions**  
for 'Science', please write to  
[science@thehindu.co.in](mailto:science@thehindu.co.in) with the subject 'Daily page'

# Text & Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

**India's expected coal consumption over the next 25 years**

**2.62** In billion metric tonnes. India's coal consumption, with no major new decarbonisation measures, is expected to peak at 2.62 billion metric tonnes in 2050, more than double the current 1.26 billion. It is expected to peak in 2050 before collapsing by 2070. REUTERS

**The amount owed by the U.S. to the United Nations**

**4** In \$ billion. The U.S. owes nearly \$4 billion to the United Nations. This includes \$2.196 billion for its regular operating budget and \$1.8 billion for far-flung peacekeeping operations. Unless its financial rules are overhauled or all 193 member nations pay their dues, the UN faces imminent financial collapse. PTI

**Value of health grants to Democrat States which are to be cut**

**600** In \$ million. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is expected to cut about \$600 million in public health grants to Minnesota, California, Colorado and Illinois because they do not align with the priorities of the White House. REUTERS

**The trips expected during China's Lunar New Year**

**9.5** In billion. The Chinese government estimates that 9.5 billion trips will be made ahead of the Lunar New Year festival. Hundreds of millions are expected to travel to their hometowns. Some 540 million of those trips will be made via train, and 95 million by air. The rest will be on road. PTI

**Entrepreneurs provided with loans through PM-SURAJ**

**1.39** in lakh. The entrepreneurs were provided with ₹1,389.61 crore in loans through the PM-SURAJ portal in the 2024-25 fiscal against a target of extending benefits to one lakh entrepreneurs. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Follow us  [facebook.com/thehindu](https://facebook.com/thehindu)  [x.com/the\\_hindu](https://x.com/the_hindu)  [instagram.com/the\\_hindu](https://instagram.com/the_hindu)

## A reckoning for India's aviation sector

India's aviation sector faces urgent challenges as operational failures and safety incidents threaten IndiGo and Air India. With profits declining and rising passenger dissatisfaction, the industry must address systemic vulnerabilities ahead of the entry of new regional players

### FULL CONTEXT

**Deepanshu Mohan**  
**Anvita Tripathi**

The past year was marked by sustained turbulence in India's civil aviation sector, with multiple failures, whose scale and frequency paint a grim picture for the duopoly (IndiGo and the Air India group), both now bracing for thumping losses, with profits plunging drastically, according to recent numbers. The year witnessed a series of breakdowns from the June 2025 Ahmedabad crash to mass cancellations and prolonged flight delays generating unrest, not only among stranded passengers, but across the aviation market at large.

The December IndiGo disruption emerged as the first failed stress test, the scale of which now threatens to weigh heavily on the country's largest carrier, with it being ranked in the bottom layer of most indexes. What appeared to be an airline-specific failure has now revealed itself as a system-wide constraint coming into view. And as the system attempts to correct itself after this exposure, the emergence of new regional players receiving No Objection Certificates (NOCs) demands regulatory caution: without targeted structural correction, these entrants risk merely redistributing fragility rather than absorbing shocks or easing the sector's mounting operational strain.

India's commercial aviation sector stands as the world's third-largest domestic market, operating over 840 aircraft and carrying more than 350 million passengers annually. Yet this scale has been achieved through an expansion that is increasingly overstretched. As airlines prepare for the upcoming peak travel season amid tighter duty-time enforcement and fleet expansion, the December disruption now reads less as an aberration and more as a warning – making it imperative to evaluate what needs correction.

#### India's pilot bottleneck

The December disruption brought into sharp view the mechanics of vulnerability within India's aviation system. IndiGo entered Phase-2 of the implementation of the Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms with 5,038 pilots operating a fleet of more than 360 aircraft, translating into a pilot-to-aircraft ratio of roughly 14, well below the global benchmark of 18-20 considered necessary for fatigue-mitigated operations. This mismatch exposed the limits of an operating model calibrated for sustained high utilisation.

The new FDTL framework, which reduced permissible night operations, extended mandatory rest periods, and tightened cumulative flight-hour ceilings, rendered IndiGo's published schedules legally untenable without adjustment. Even with the flight time capped at 60 hours over a seven-day period, substantially higher than the 40-hour weekly standard widely regarded as healthy across sectors, the rules proved incompatible with existing crew strength.

While India's aviation expansion has intensified demands for pilots, training capacity has failed to keep pace. Parliamentary disclosures estimate a requirement of 7,000 pilots between 2024 and 2026, rising to 25,000-30,000 over the next decade. In contrast, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued only over 5,700 Commercial Pilot Licences (CPL) between

### Plummeting hopes

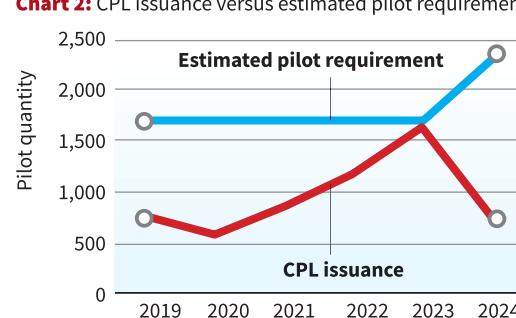
India's commercial aviation sector stands as the world's third-largest domestic market, carrying more than 350 million passengers annually. Yet this scale has been achieved through an expansion that is increasingly overstretched

**Chart 1:** Pilot to aircraft ratio (number of pilots per available aircraft)

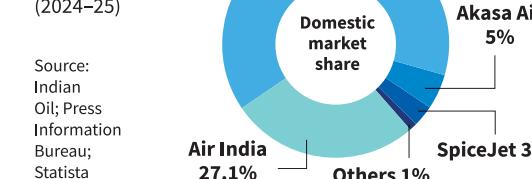
**Pilot to aircraft ratio (global norm is 18-20)**



**Chart 2: CPL issuance versus estimated pilot requirement**



**Chart 3: Domestic market share of Indian airlines (2024-25)**



2020 and 2024, a figure further diluted by attrition and type-rating constraints.

Industry norms indicate that 15-16 pilots are required per narrow-body aircraft, yet trainer shortages, simulator constraints, regulatory bottlenecks, and high training costs have rendered pilot supply relatively inelastic. Airlines have increasingly relied on foreign aircrew, with around 236 temporary approval licences issued in 2025. However, these remain a limited and expensive stopgap.

Regulatory capacity has further compounded the strain. Nearly half of the DGCA's sanctioned technical positions remain vacant even as fleet size and passenger volumes expand. Recent disruptions have been managed through schedule exemptions rather than strict enforcement, reflecting a shift towards ad hoc crisis management and underscoring deeper fragilities in India's aviation oversight framework.

#### India's aviation duopoly

The degree of concentration in India's domestic aviation market materially alters both the nature of competition and the system's operational resilience. DGCA data for 2024-25 show that IndiGo commands approximately 63% to 65% of domestic passenger traffic, while the Air India group accounts for a further 27% to 28%, together forming a duopoly controlling nearly 90% of the market. At this level of concentration, IndiGo ceases to function merely as a competing airline and instead assumes the role of a systemically significant carrier, whose operational decisions have direct implications for national connectivity, fare stability, and service continuity.

Empirical evidence from cancellation episodes indicate that disruptions of dominant airlines lead to a contraction in aggregate capacity rather than a redistribution of passengers to competing carriers. Data show that IndiGo operates as the sole carrier on about 60.4% of all

routes. Therefore, operational stress at IndiGo does not merely displace traffic across the network; it results in the outright loss of connectivity on a large share of domestic sectors, with few or no viable alternatives for passengers.

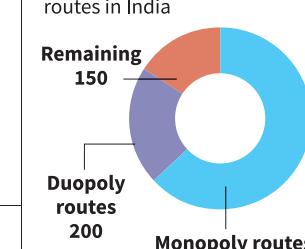
#### New regional players

In December 2025, the Ministry of Civil Aviation issued NOCs for the operational launch of three regional airlines – Shankh Air, Al Hind Air, and FlyExpress – all aimed at enhancing regional connectivity and serving previously unattended routes. Al Hind Air will operate regional connections from Kochi, Shankh Air will begin services from the upcoming Noida International Airport linking regions in Uttar Pradesh, and FlyExpress will function as a low-cost passenger and cargo carrier in Telangana.

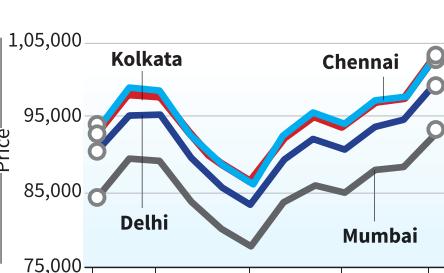
These new entrants offer a ray of hope for de-concentration and improved regional connectivity, particularly under the UDAN scheme, which had operationalised 625 routes and 85 airports by 2025, including 102 new routes in the Northeast, targeting 1.5 crore commuters in the first phase itself. Yet, Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities still rely on only one or two airlines with limited frequency, and any disruption in IndiGo's operations could lead to route cancellations, rendering air transport inaccessible for a sizable portion of the population.

The vulnerability of past regional airlines underscores that challenges in India's aviation sector remain significant. The market has witnessed the failures of several carriers, including Paramount Airways (2010), Kingfisher Airlines (2012), Jet Airways (2019), TruJet (2022), and Go First (2023), while Vistara failed in 2024 and was subsequently acquired by Air India. These failures were driven by intense cost competition, weak demand in smaller markets, poor management, and infrastructural limitations at regional

**Chart 4: IndiGo's monopoly and duopoly control over 950 routes in India**



**Chart 5: ATF prices across major cities**



**Complete chaos:** Passengers distressed over flight cancellations at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Shamshabad, Hyderabad on December 5, 2025. NAGARA GOPAL

### THE GIST

The December IndiGo disruption emerged as the first failed stress test, the scale of which now threatens to weigh heavily on the country's largest carrier, with it being ranked in the bottom layer of most indexes.

DGCA data for 2024-25 show that IndiGo commands approximately 63% to 65% of domestic passenger traffic, while the Air India group accounts for a further 27% to 28%, together forming a duopoly controlling nearly 90% of the market.

In December 2025, the Ministry of Civil Aviation issued NOCs for the operational launch of three regional airlines – Shankh Air, Al Hind Air, and FlyExpress – all aimed at enhancing regional connectivity and serving previously unattended routes.

airports. A persistent structural challenge was the volatility of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices, which are closely tied to the U.S. dollar, exposing airlines to global market fluctuations.

For emerging players to survive and meaningfully contribute to market de-concentration, active policy support beyond initial NOCs will be essential.

This includes the effective implementation of UDAN subsidies, preferential slot allocation at congested airports, coordinated development of Tier-2 and Tier-3 airport infrastructure, and potentially fuel hedging mechanisms or tax relief on ATF to offset price volatility.

**The need for a systemic solution**  
The rising frequency of safety incidents indicate that India's aviation system is operating beyond its safe design limits. By late 2025, the DGCA had issued 19 safety violation notices citing breaches of FDTL norms, lapses in quality assurance, unauthorised cockpit access, and aircraft operated with expired emergency equipment.

Globally, airlines maintain 20-25% spare crew capacity to absorb shocks; Indian carriers operate at near-total utilisation, allowing minor disruptions to cascade across networks. In this context, crisis management cannot substitute for structural reform.

With India accounting for 4.2% of global air traffic, and domestic demand set to rise sharply by reaching 715 million by 2030, failure to address these constraints risks converting India's aviation growth into a recurring crisis borne ultimately by passengers.

**Deepanshu Mohan** is professor and dean, O.P. Jindal Global University and is a Visiting Professor and Research Fellow at LSE and University of Oxford. With contributions from Anvita, Saksham Raj, Srisonita, and Suryakanth from Centre for New Economics Studies.

## CACHE



**Changing priorities:** The SpaceX headquarters in Hawthorne, California, U.S., on June 5, 2025. REUTERS

## What explains SpaceX and Blue Origin stepping up their moon plans?

The simplest explanation for the pivot is that it improves the rate at which SpaceX can learn the technologies it most needs to mature. Another possibility is that in the current environment, lunar missions are also accompanied by external demand and more legible milestones

### Vasudevan Mukunth

**T**wo of the world's most visible private space companies are shifting their attention and resources to moon missions even as both continue to speak about longer term ambitions to Mars and beyond. For many years, the public identity of SpaceX has been fused with settling humans on Mars. Its founder and CEO Elon Musk has repeatedly argued that a self-sustaining settlement on Mars would reduce the risk if a catastrophe on the earth ends human civilisation. He and SpaceX have also presented the Starship programme as the transport system that could render large-scale interplanetary travel feasible.

Blue Origin, founded by billionaire Jeff Bezos, has projected a different long-term vision: of building industrial capacity in space so that heavy industry can move off the earth. In recent years, it has focused on developing its New Glenn heavy-lift rocket and a lunar lander for NASA's Artemis programme. It has also been flying customers on short suborbital trips aboard its New Shepard rocket.

**What have the companies decided?** While SpaceX has also been central to NASA's Artemis plans to the moon, now, however, the company is describing the moon as its immediate next priority in its sequence of major goals. The company has reportedly told investors that it is targeting an uncrewed lunar landing by March 2027 and that Mr. Musk has decided to focus on building a "self-growing city" on the moon. He also said on X that this can be achieved in under 10 years even while claiming that plans for a Mars city could still follow in roughly five to seven years.

While the moon and Mars are both interplanetary bodies, missions to the

former are easier for many reasons. The moon is under a week away by rocketflight; the distance is low enough for communications to be near-real-time; and the orbits of the earth and the moon are such that there are roughly three opportunities to launch to the moon every month. Going to Mars is much less forgiving. The most fuel-efficient launch opportunities come around roughly once every 26 months; the travel time is in months; and failing to get to the red planet on one attempt will mean a multi-year delay before the next comparable chance. Mr. Musk has in fact leaned into these differences to justify SpaceX pivoting to the moon.

To be noted is the fact that SpaceX is approaching an IPO and Mr. Musk has already merged it with xAI, another company he founded to use AI to advance "scientific discovery and gain a deeper understanding of our universe". So Mr. Musk's claims are being subjected to more scrutiny than before, with investors and the general public also on the watch for inflated promises and hype.

Late last month, Blue Origin also announced that it would hold its suborbital space tourism programme for at least two years and reallocate its resources to accelerating its "human lunar capabilities", including development work tied to the company's contract to build a lunar lander for NASA.

**Why have they decided this?** In the U.S., NASA's priorities have become a political fight. Some leaders want it to fly to the moon first while others talk up Mars. When the U.S. Senate pressed NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman on whether pushing to go to Mars first would weaken the agency's moon programme, including Artemis, he replied that NASA could pursue both and tried to assure lawmakers that he supports the current

moon plan and that he isn't taking directions from Elon Musk (SpaceX is one of NASA's biggest contractors). Mr. Isaacman has also flown twice on privately funded SpaceX missions that he organised and paid for, Inspiration4 and Polaris, which makes him both a customer and a high-profile partner of SpaceX. Mr. Musk had also pushed for Mr. Isaacman's nomination, and senators explicitly asked Mr. Isaacman whether he had discussed how he would run NASA with Mr. Musk. While he answered that he had not, the fact that this was asked in a confirmation hearing says the suspicion of undue influence existed.

The simplest explanation for the pivot is that it improves the rate at which SpaceX can learn the technologies it most needs to mature. Another possibility is that in the current environment, lunar missions are also accompanied by external demand and more legible milestones. Mr. Musk's remarks come as the competition between the U.S. and China to return humans to the moon has intensified. As a result, being able to go to the moon has become a marker of geopolitical leadership and, importantly, a top priority for NASA.

Blue Origin, on the other hand, has two big problems it needs to solve to get to the moon: it needs to prove it can execute such complex, human-rated systems and it needs a near-term programme with real deadlines and external accountability. And its contract to build a lunar lander for NASA gives it both. Moon work is also more politically tractable than suborbital tourism, and if it succeeds, Blue Origin can buy credibility with NASA and with the broader space community.

**Shouldn't they have seen NASA's plans coming?** Curiously, NASA's focus vis-à-vis humans

in space has been about getting to the moon first.

Should SpaceX and Blue Origin not have seen this coming instead of making a hard turn towards the moon within a month of each other?

Perhaps the surprise isn't that they both had plans for the moon but that they both kept centring their timelines and product narratives on getting humans to Mars for such a long time.

There's no need for public narratives to be the same as internal ones. SpaceX's brand has been built on getting to Mars and Mr. Musk has repeatedly used Mars dates as a way to signal the company's ambitions, to attract talent, and to keep public attention on Starship. Internally, however, the company has been deeply embedded in moon-related work thanks to NASA contracts. And now, SpaceX and Mr. Musk are aligning internal and external narratives and clarifying – or perhaps admitting – that the next major milestone is in fact a lunar landing, and that Mars will only come later. In other words, SpaceX and Blue Origin may have known the moon would be the next stop, just that they didn't want it to be the headline as well.

In sum, delays in NASA's Artemis schedule, tougher political oversight, and more geopolitical pressures have pushed NASA leaders to speak more loudly and more often about a moon-first agenda. Lawmakers in Congress, especially the Senate committees that authorise and fund NASA, have pressed Mr. Isaacman and other senior officials to defend the Artemis programme and explain how NASA will beat or match its international rivals, but especially China, in returning to the moon.

As that pressure increased, NASA could have signalled to its contractors that lunar milestones would define their success for now.



### FROM THE ARCHIVES

## Know your English

### S. Upendran

"What's the matter with Sujatha?"

"She asked the clerk to disperse the money, but he just laughed."

"That was sensible of him."

"What do you mean sensible of him? Do you know that the daily wage people haven't been paid for quite some time."

"...that's all the more reason why the money shouldn't be scattered."

"Scattered? What do you mean? We don't want the money to be scattered."

"...but that's what Sujatha asked the clerk to do. The word 'disperse' means scatter."

"It does?"

"Here are a few examples with the word disperse. The strong wind dispersed the clouds."

"Usually when Sachin Tendulkar comes, the close-in fielders disperse."

"That's a good example. When Sachin gets out, the crowd begins to disperse."

"That's true. As soon as he gets out, I switch off the TV."

"Many of my friends do that too."

"But tell me, when you start paying people, what is it called? It sounds like 'disperse', but it...."

"...the word that you are thinking of is 'disburse'. The first syllable 'dis' rhymes with miss, kiss, and hiss. The second syllable 'burse' sounds like purse, and...."

"...nurse!"

"Exactly! Remember, in both disperse and disburse, the stress is on the second syllable. When you disburse money, you pay it out."

"I know that! At the beginning of every month, our Principal makes sure that teachers' salaries are disbursed."

"The Chairman has disbursed over fifty lakhs from the fund."

"At the end of the day there was nothing left to disburse."

"Good. Hey, why don't you go get your racquet? We can play some table tennis."

"I can't. Gopa has borrowed my racquet."

"Not again! Why do you allow that guy to fast-talk you into doing such things?"

"Fast-talk me into doing things? What do you mean?"

"When you fast-talk someone into doing something, you use deceitful talk to get someone to do something."

"In other words, you lie to them."

"I guess you could say that. The Minister tried to fast-talk the Manager into lending him more money."

"My father's boss tried to fast-talk him into becoming the Chairman of the Garden Committee."

"Good Lord! He doesn't know a weed from a plant."

"That's what my father told him."

"Good for him."

"In a movie that I saw recently, the villain fast-talks the heroine into helping him rob a bank."

"She gets caught, I suppose?"

"That's right."

"And like most heroines, she is unwilling to take her medicine, right?"

"Take her medicine? What are you talking about? The heroine wasn't sick. She was..."

"No, no! When you say that someone is ready to take his/her medicine, it means he/she is willing to accept punishment. He/she is willing to submit himself/herself to something unpleasant."

Published in The Hindu on July 20, 1999.

### THE DAILY QUIZ

With India co-hosting the ICC T20 Men's world cup, here is a quiz on international tournaments and competitions hosted by the country

### Vignesh P. Venkitesh

#### QUESTION 1

In which men's team sport did India win gold in the first Asian games held in New Delhi?

#### QUESTION 2

Australia beat Germany in the final of this World Cup held in India in 2010. Name the sport.

#### QUESTION 3

Name the player who won his first title beating Viswanathan Anand in the World Chess Championship 2013 held in Chennai.

#### QUESTION 4

Who won the race when India last hosted a Formula 1 race? Also, name the circuit used for the race.

#### QUESTION 5

After hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2008 in New Delhi, India is preparing to host the Games again in the coming year. When will the games take place and in which city?



#### Visual question:

Name this Manchester City and England star who won the golden ball when England won the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup, the only FIFA event to be held in India. AP

#### Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

1. *Foe* is a metafictional rewriting of this famous novel. Ans: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*

2. In *The Master of Petersburg*, the author employs this real-life Russian writer as the protagonist. Ans: Fyodor Dostoyevsky

3. Mr. Coetzee was the first author to be conferred with the \_\_\_\_\_ twice. Ans: Booker Prize

4. This character created by Coetzee delivers lectures comparing animal slaughter to the Holocaust. Ans: Elizabeth Costello

5. *Summertime* marks the final instalment in a trilogy. Name the other two books. Ans: *Boyhood* (1997) and *Youth* (2002)

6. Coetzee became only the second South African, after \_\_\_\_\_, to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature. Ans: Nadine Gordimer

7. The title of the author's first book. Ans: *Dusklands*

Visual: This Coetzee novel was adapted for the screen. Ans: *Waiting For The Barbarians*

**Early Birds:** Sunil Madhavan| Anil Warrier| Soumendra Banerjee| M. Suresh Kumar| Tito Shiladitya

### Word of the day

#### Pugnacity:

a natural disposition to be hostile

#### Synonyms:

aggressiveness, belligerence

#### Usage:

He is legendary for his pugnacity.

#### Pronunciation:

newsth.live/pugnacitypro

#### International Phonetic Alphabet:

/pʌg'næsɪtɪ/

For feedback and suggestions for

Text & Context, please write to

letters@thehindu.co.in

with the subject 'Text & Context'