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IN BRIEF



SRM students win big at Formula Bharat competition

A race car designed and developed by the students of SRM Institute of Science and Technology has won laurels at the recently held Formula Bharat national automobile design competition. The 28-strong Team Camber Racing bagged first prize in at least seven categories at the competition, making it one of the most successful teams in the combustion engines category at the competition. The car was designed and manufactured at the institute's laboratory by the students under the guidance of K. Kamalakannan, head, Department of Automobile Engineering, and M. Jerome Stanley, Assistant Professor, Department of Automobile Engineering. Apart from the dynamic categories such as endurance, skidpad, autocross, acceleration, engineering design, and fuel economy, the vehicle also won first prize in the sustainability and best practices category.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carry explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (February 4, Wednesday), the following articles are available:

- Space budget recovers but misses crucial private sector reforms [newsth.live/spacebudgetexp](#)
- Indian scientists make affordable dipstick test to track AMR in sewage [newsth.live/dipsticktest](#)

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.

Young adults in India at risk of lung cancer, say doctors

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Cancer incidence is on the rise among young adults, aged between 15 and 39 years, with lung and colorectal cancers affecting the majority, said oncologists at a webinar organised jointly by *The Hindu* and Kauvery Hospital, on the eve of World Cancer Day.

Speaking at a webinar on 'Recent Advancements in Cancer Treatment', the oncologists said that one in nine Indians was likely to develop cancer in their lifetime. "The risk factors were driven by diet, lifestyle, and exposure to environmental pollution," they said.

All the panellists from Kauvery group of hospitals in Tamil Nadu – A.N. Vaidhyswaran, senior consultant and director of Radiation oncology; Sathish Kumar Anandan, senior consultant, surgical oncologist and robotic surgeon; and M. Mangai Suseela, medical oncologist – em-



Panellists said people should seek doctors' advice instead of trusting WhatsApp messages on alternative therapies

phasised that maintaining a healthy diet, exercising, and seeking early regular check-ups were crucial to treating cancer.

Dr. Mangai said that immunotherapy and targeted therapy are the major advancements in medical oncology today. "Coupled with early screening and detection, 30% to 50% of cancers are curable and preventable (depending on location, stage)," she said.

Dr. Vaidhyswaran said, "The affordability of cancer treatment depends on the stage it is detected in – if diagnosed earlier, then patient outcome is better and treatment cost is less," he said.

Dr. Sathish explained how robotic surgery has been a game-changer in faster recovery and shorter hospital stay for patients. "The surgical scars are not visible, there is no high stress to the body or hernial pain. The high-definition precision robotic surgery helps to preserve organs and avoids adjacent organ injury," he said.

The panellists said that despite advancements in cancer treatment, emphasis on early detection remained. They also appealed to the public to seek proper oncological advice from doctors instead of succumbing to WhatsApp messages promoting alternative therapies and medicines.

YouTube link: newsth.live/THKACY

Timings CHENNAI		
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 04		
RISE 06:35	SET 18:11	
20:29	08:15	
THURSDAY, FEB. 05		
RISE 06:35	SET 18:12	
21:19	08:53	
FRIDAY, FEB. 06		
RISE 06:34	SET 18:12	
22:06	09:30	

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

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

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
31°C The weather will be dry. Day will be slightly warm. Night will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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Senior citizen dies after being knocked down by stray bull

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A 65-year-old man died after being knocked down by a stray bull in Nolambur on Monday.

A senior official of the city police said T. Balaraman was a resident of Venugopal Street in Mogappair West, and had come to visit his mother residing on Union Road of Chinna Nolambur. On Monday, he was walking on the street when the bull attacked him. He sustained injuries from the bull's horns. The residents took him to a private hospital where he was declared brought dead.

Nolambur police sent the body to Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital for post-mortem, and filed a case against the bull's owner, Madhan of Maduravoyal.

New anicut on Cheyyar river to improve irrigation and meet drinking water needs in 2 districts

Residents of Uthiramerur taluk say the river is a significant source of irrigation; work on constructing the anicut is in the final stages, with revetment and desilting of supply channels being carried out by the Water Resources Department

WATER WATCH

K. Lakshmi
CHENNAI

The stretch of the Cheyyar river in Kanchipuram district is set to get its third storage structure this month. Though the district received near-normal northeast monsoon rainfall, localities near the river report a better groundwater table as water flow persists near the upcoming Silambakkam anicut.

The work to build the ₹35.21 crore structure in Uthiramerur taluk is in the final stages of completion and revetment work and desilting of supply channels are being carried out by the Water Resources Department (WRD). Once completed, it would improve irrigation, support drinking water needs and recharge groundwater in parts of Kanchipuram and Arasanipalai, Punai, and Pudupalamay in Tiruvannamalai district.

The new anicut is being constructed between Uthiramerur anicut and Venacheri anicut at the 171st



Supply boost: Officials of the WRD said the structure, which would divert water for irrigation, would feed Vayalathur river channel and tanks like Magalar and Arasanipalai.

km of Cheyyar river in Kanchipuram. The 475-metre-long structure with a height of 1.5 metres would help irrigate an area of nearly 1,623.54 acre in villages, including Magalar, Silambakkam, Oghukrai, and Vengaram in Kanchipuram and Arasanipalai.

It is one of the five anicuts which was proposed to be built in the State in 2022, and for which work began in June 2023.

The Cheyyar river is a major tributary of Palar river that originates in Javadhu Hills, Tiruvannamalai and merges with Palar at Thirumukkodal.

Officials of the WRD said the structure, which would divert water for irrigation, would feed Vayalathur river channel and tanks like Magalar and Arasanipalai. It is one of the five anicuts which was proposed to be built in the State in 2022, and for which work began in June 2023.

The work was delayed for two years due to continuous flow in the river, and the existing anicuts re-

corded surplus flows last year too. Groundwater around the new structure has improved and is available at a depth of 10-15 feet.

The water stored and diverted through the structure will also recharge 132 wells in the neighbourhood," said an official.

Residents of Uthiramerur taluk said the river was a significant source of irrigation and drinking facilities. Uthiramerur and Madurantakam tanks that have good storage aided ground

water recharge.

V.K. Perumal of Vedapalayam, said many farmers cultivated mainly paddy and horticulture crops. "Water is available at a depth of 10-15 feet in areas close to the river and tanks, though monsoon rainfall was lower. I am able to irrigate my fields more frequently. But villages to the west of Uthiramerur tank and some taluks face the risk of shortage as many water bodies have lower storage."

Villagers' demand

Farmers in villages like Kaliyampundi said supply channels to tanks in villages like Perunagar must be desilted to carry Cheyyar water to more villages. They also sought new storage structures at Venkudi and Vishav villages across the Palar in Kanchipuram district.

Officials said though the district received normal monsoon rainfall, the Cheyyar and Palar rivers, which aid drinking water requirements in Chennai's periphery, retained flow for nearly three months due to good rain upstream.

Doctors' body urges CM to implement salary parity

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Legal Coordination Committee for Government Doctors (LCC) has appealed to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M.K. Stalin to implement Government Order (G.O.) 354 ahead of the sixth memorial day of late Lakshmi Narasimhan, a government doctor who led the doctors' movement.

G.O. 354 mandates time-bound, person-oriented promotions, and salary parity for government doctors. S. Perumal Pillai, president, LCC, pointed out, government doctors dedicate their professional lives to public service, and their demands must be viewed as efforts to improve healthcare. The LCC emphasised that doctors are not seeking fresh pay revisions but only the implementation of G.O. 354, an existing government order that has remained pending.

Stating that nearly 19,000 government doctors in Tamil Nadu continue to await implementation of the order, the committee urged the Chief Minister to intervene and direct the Health Department to act on the issue. The committee further said doctors' salaries should be viewed as an investment in public health.

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IN BRIEF



Sea trial of new ferry to Kanniakumari soon: E.V. Velu

Minister for Highways and Minor Ports E.V. Velu on Tuesday said tourists in Kanniakumari would soon be able to use a new ferry service to visit the Tiruvalluvar statue. Speaking to reporters after visiting the Synergy Shipyard in Goa, where three ferries are being built for use in Kanniakumari at a cost of ₹1.50 crore, he said the sea trial of the ferry named after former Chief Minister K. Kamaraj would be held shortly. "We expect it to be delivered to Kanniakumari by month-end," he added. Each ferry would have the capacity to accommodate 150 passengers. In December 2024, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin had announced that three ferries would be procured, and they would be named after K. Kamaraj, G.U. Pope, and Marshal Nesamony.

TNSCST wins first prize at Kerala Science Congress

The Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology (TNSCST) has bagged the first prize at the national science expo organised as part of the 38th Kerala State Science Congress. The TNSCST won under the 'Other State Councils' category in recognition of its comprehensive, integrated, and outcome-oriented inter-disciplinary programmes catering to students, researchers, academicians, scientists, entrepreneurs, and grassroots innovators, according to a press release. The TNSCST stall at the exhibition showcased its activities such as GI-registered products, SC/ST cell, women entrepreneurship development programmes, and services provided by the patent information centres, intellectual property facilitation centres, and technology transfer facilitation centres, the release added.

Murals showcasing Tamil culture to lend artistic touch to Madhya Kailash flyover

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Even as the 'L' shaped ₹60.68 crore, 652-metre-long flyover at the Madhya Kailash junction is nearing completion, the space below is getting landscaped with murals, plants, pathways, seating arrangements, and lighting.

Artist P. Justin and his team have been working day and night to finish the 20 murals, including those of musical instruments like the Yaazh, Veena, mirandam, and figures of Jallikattu, Therukoothu, Oyilatam, and Karagattam.

The murals made with a mixture of cement, lime and marble dust, are coming up on seven-foot-tall and four-foot-wide walls built with wire cut bricks that have a neat finish. The walls have been placed in such a manner that motorists coming from both directions can see one side.

"The mix used in the figurines will ensure that they don't develop cracks and last long. We now have to give a rough stone finish



Beautification drive: Artworks being installed under the Madhya Kailash flyover in Chennai. R. RAVINDRAN

and top that off with colour that will give an antique look," said Mr. Justin.

Sources in the Highways Department said that the murals were chosen from the arts - literature, music, and theatre (iyal, Isai, Natam) reflecting Tamil culture.

These will add another touch of art to OMR that already has a lot of wall art like on the facades of MRTS stations, the pillars of the elevated tracks that also form part of the parks formed by the Greater

Man booked for killing newborn puppy

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Royapettah Police registered a case against a man who killed a newborn puppy on Tuesday.

The police said a 23-year-old woman of P.V. Koil First Street in Royapettah had been feeding stray dogs for many years. On Monday, a stray dog gave birth to five puppies at the

house of Shankar, who lives in the same area. Enraged by this, Shankar threw a puppy to the ground, killing it. On hearing the puppy's cries, the woman rushed to the spot and saw Shankar throwing it into a garbage bin.

The woman alerted the Blue Cross and the Royapettah police. Based on the complaint, the police have registered a case.

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E-Tender Closing Date : 24.02.2026
1. Name of the work with its location : Transportation of Raw/Fabricated materials such as bridge girders, slabs, glued joints etc by Plant Depot, DDU. 2. Approx. cost of the work : Rs. 3,79,74,989.00. 3. Earnest Money : Rs. 3,39,900.00. 4. Date and time for Closing of e-tender : 24.02.2026 at 12:00 Hrs., 5. Website particulars of e-tendering : www.ireps.gov.in
Chief Workshop Manager/BW Plant Depot, ECR/DDU
PR/1730/DDU/Mech/T/25-26/32

HERITAGE AND HISTORY

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A space meant to store records has now become an interesting science park with STEM activities including a gyroscope, large-sized periodic table, and a touch screen teaching the human anatomy, at the Connemara Public Library, located inside the Government Museum campus in Egmore.

Thanks to judicious use of existing space, the School Education Department and the Public Works Department have been able to add more sections inside the art-deco building that was recently restored at a cost of ₹4.58 crore.

The own-book reading section, that allows people to bring their own books to read, and a civil service section, where students preparing for competitive exams can read in peace, are attractions for college students. Aravindan, a student preparing for his chartered accountancy exam, said he liked the ambience.

The peppy children's



Extensive facilites: The School Education Department and the Public Works Department added more sections inside the art-deco building after the restoration. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

books section features interesting decor that young children will find comfortable for curling up with a book from the wide variety on display in the stacks. At the science park, children can learn how fibre optic cables work, check if their pronunciation in Tamil and English is correct, and solve mind puzzles.

"The human anatomy exhibit is a huge hit with the children," said a staff at the section. The building also has a new conference hall, a new elevator, and toilets that have been spruced up.

The heritage section located at the back, which has government records, census records, and rate

books, continues to attract research scholars. D. Sweety, doing her thesis in history, said she came to the library looking for a particular book on Christian Missionaries in Madras from 1835 till the 1900s and she found it there. "I am only afraid I might damage the book by turning the pages. This section has so many rare books," she said.

Additional Chief Secretary, School Education Department, B. Chandra Mohan said that this iconic heritage library has been thoughtfully reimagined as a vibrant centre of learning and discovery for every kind of reader – from passionate book lovers and serious researchers to chil-

dren who come to learn, enjoy, and play while exploring knowledge.

"We are seeing a steady rise in footfall with school children visiting on field trips, students from different educational institutions coming to study, aspirants preparing for civil services and other competitive exams.

With the new STEM section fostering scientific temper and curiosity, and the serene campus with its large trees and granite benches encouraging reflection and intellectual discussions, the library today stands transformed into a true hub of learning, discovery, and intellectual growth," he said.



Minister for Handlooms and Textiles R. Gandhi inspecting the venue where Chief Minister M.K. Stalin would inaugurate the car manufacturing plant in Ranipet.

Stalin to inaugurate Ranipet's first car plant on February 9

The Hindu Bureau
RANIPET

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will inaugurate Ranipet's first car manufacturing plant at the SIPCOT complex in Panapakkam village on February 9.

Minister for Handlooms and Textiles and Ranipet MLA R. Gandhi, accompanied by Ranipet Collector J.U. Chandrakala and Superintendent of Police Ayman Jamal, inspected the preparatory work being undertaken by the district administration for the event. "Civic improvements such as relaying of the bitumen stretch to the SIPCOT complex, and removal of uneven speed-breakers are being done for the CM's visit," a State Highways official said. The project is estimated to cost ₹9,000 crore. The Minister also inspected work on the construction of the administrative office of SIPCOT at a cost of ₹18.67 crore.

Around 1,200 acres of land from Agavalam, Thuraiyur, Nedumpuli, and Peruvallayam that come under Nemili panchayat union was acquired for the project. Of this, the manufacturing plant covers around 470 acres. A ₹400-crore footwear manufacturing park is being built in the remaining space on the SIPCOT premises.

inside the SIPCOT complex, the car manufacturing plant of JLR and Tata Motors will be the first such facility in the country to manufacture the luxury models of JLR, a brand owned by Tata Motors that specialises in electric vehicles. Other models of Tata Motors would also be manufactured at the facility. All components for cars would be made at the unit, which would cater to domestic as well as international consumers. The facility would provide around 5,000 direct and indirect jobs in the coming years, revenue officials said.

"We are seeing a steady rise in footfall with school children visiting on field trips, students from different educational institutions coming to study, aspirants preparing for civil services and other competitive exams.

With the new STEM section fostering scientific temper and curiosity, and the serene campus with its large trees and granite benches encouraging reflection and intellectual discussions, the library today stands transformed into a true hub of learning, discovery, and intellectual growth," he said.

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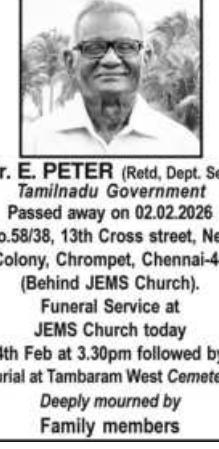
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Tamilnadu Government

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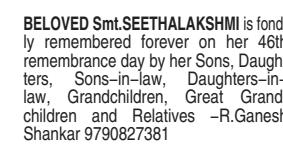
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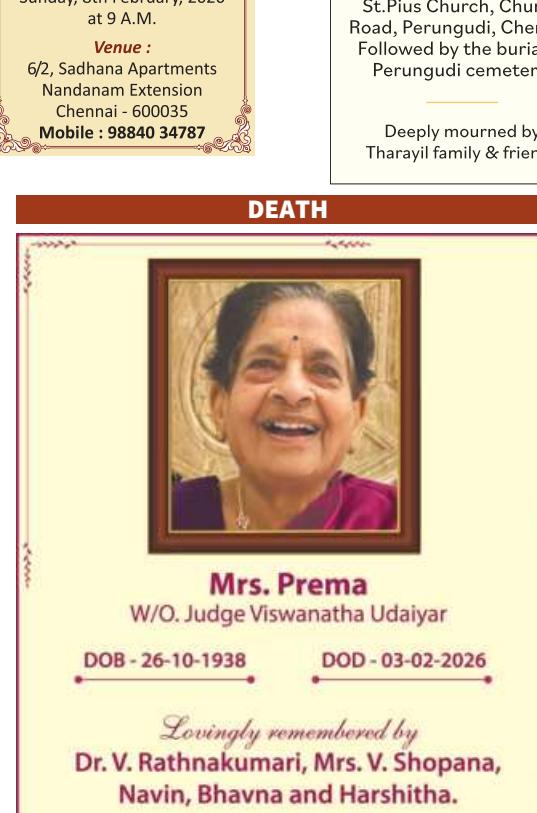
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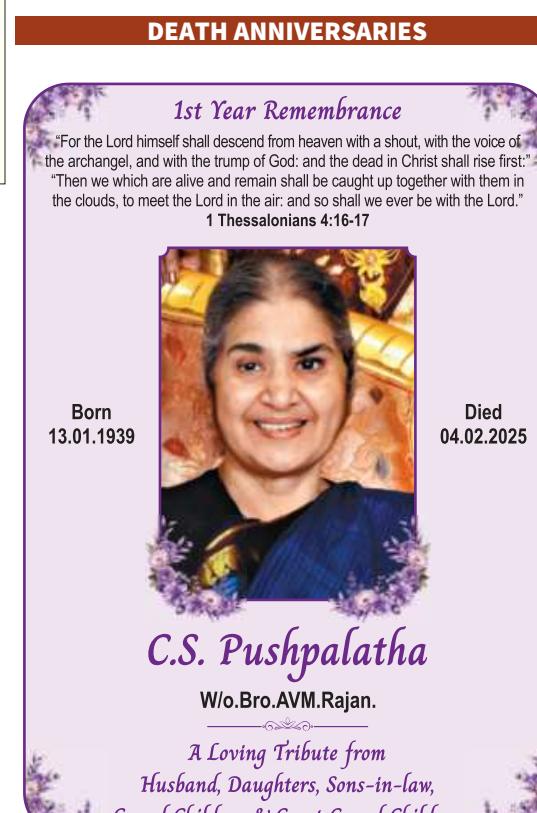
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Cancer is no longer spoken about only in clinical settings. It has become a shared conversation, shaped by science, awareness, and human resilience. Today, the focus has shifted from fear to informed action, from isolation to collective support.

One of the most visible changes is how early awareness has entered everyday life. Health check-ups, screenings, and open discussions are empowering people to take charge of their well-being. Knowledge is no longer intimidating; it is accessible, practical, and increasingly encouraged across age groups. This shift has helped many approach health with confidence rather than hesitation.

Medical progress continues to redefine what care looks like. Treatments are more targeted, recovery paths are more structured, and patient comfort is now central to decision-making. What once felt overwhelming is now navigated with clearer options and personalised approaches, allowing individuals to stay engaged with work, family, and passions.

Equally important is the broader understanding of healing. Cancer care today recognises the role of emotional well-being, nutrition, movement, and community. Support systems have grown stronger, with caregivers, families, and professionals working together as partners rather than observers. This shared effort has brought dignity and balance into the journey.

Survivors have become powerful voices in this evolving narrative. Their stories are not defined by illness but by perspective, strength, and renewed purpose. By speaking openly, they have helped normalise conversations around health and encouraged others to seek timely guidance and make informed choices.

World Cancer Day serves as a moment to acknowledge this progress and reinforce what truly matters: awareness, empathy, and consistency in care. It highlights a collective commitment to informed living and shared responsibility. As the conversation continues to evolve, it does so with optimism, clarity, and a renewed focus on people at its heart.

HA



UNITED BY UNIQUE CHALLENGES IN CANCER CARE

Haarshini Agarwal

World Cancer Day is an annual observance celebrated on February 4th, dedicated to raising awareness about cancer and promoting its prevention, detection, and treatment. In 2026, the global community will come together under the theme "United by Unique," which highlights the distinct challenges faced by individuals in the fight against cancer and emphasises the unifying power of shared experiences and support.

The significance of World Cancer Day cannot be overstated. This day serves as a reminder of the importance of awareness, education, and collaboration. It is an opportunity to celebrate the progress made in cancer research and treatment while reaffirming the commitment to continue working towards innovative solutions. Importantly, World Cancer Day encourages individuals across the globe to engage in discussions about cancer, breaking down barriers and misconceptions surrounding the disease, and fostering a supportive atmosphere that promotes understanding and compassion.

In 2026, the theme "United by Unique" speaks to the individualised experiences of patients, their families, and healthcare providers. It acknowledges that while cancer affects everyone, the journey of diagnosis and treatment can differ significantly from person to person. By recognising these unique challenges, we can better support one another in our respective battles.

IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING UNIQUE CHALLENGES

The theme "United by Unique" sheds light on the diverse experiences of those affected by cancer. Each individual's story is distinct, influenced by factors such as the type of cancer, stage at diagnosis, treatment options, and socio-economic background. By focusing on these unique experiences, World Cancer Day 2026 encourages us all to create an inclusive dialogue that respects and honours the varied journeys of cancer patients and survivors.

Access to cancer care and support services can significantly influence patient outcomes.



Understanding the unique challenges faced by different individuals can lead to more personalised care and improved chances of survival. By fostering awareness of these differences, the global community can work towards ensuring that everyone receives the care and attention they need.

THE PROGRESS AND INNOVATIONS

World Cancer Day is also a celebration of the remarkable advancements in cancer research and treatment. Over the years, advances in early detection methods, targeted therapies, and patient-centred care have contributed to improved outcomes for many. Recognising these achievements instils hope while encouraging further investment in innovation.

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Modern Proton Therapy: Advancing Precision, Improving Cancer Outcomes



Modern proton therapy today is no longer a one-size-fits-all approach. Advanced techniques such as Intensity-Modulated Proton Therapy (IMPT) allow radiation dose to be sculpted with remarkable precision, layer by layer, conforming tightly to the tumour's shape. IMPT enables clinicians to protect nearby organs even in highly complex cases, while maintaining optimal tumour coverage. This level of accuracy is particularly valuable in paediatric cancers, head and neck tumours, and cancers of the brain and spine.

At Apollo Proton Cancer Centre (APCC) in Chennai, India's first dedicated proton therapy centre, this promise has translated into real-world impact. To date, nearly 2,500 patients from over 38 countries have received proton therapy at APCC. Importantly, around 25% of these patients are children, teenagers, and young adults, a group for whom the long-term consequences of treatment matter deeply.

Equally transformative has been the advent of compact, single-room proton therapy solutions. These newer systems make proton therapy more efficient, reliable, and accessible, without compromising on precision. Single-room solutions reduce treatment time, improve patient comfort, and enhance operational efficiency, an important step toward expanding access to advanced radiation technologies within India and the region.

The impact of these advances is most evident in survivorship. In children, reduced radiation exposure translates into lower risks of learning difficulties, growth disturbances, hormonal problems, and secondary cancers later in life. For teenagers and young adults, often balancing education, careers, and family aspirations, proton therapy helps preserve organ function, fertility potential, and overall well-being, enabling many to return to normal routines sooner. Early Indian clinical experience has also reinforced the safety and feasibility of modern proton therapy for children and young adults. A peer-reviewed study from Apollo Proton Cancer Centre, published in JCO Global Oncology (<https://ascopubs.org/doi/pdf/10.1200/JGO.20.00319>), reported that image-guided, pencil beam scanning proton therapy could be delivered safely in carefully selected paediatric and young adult patients, even in complex brain and non-brain tumours. This early evidence from India has been an important step in building confidence around proton therapy in low- and middle-income settings, while laying the foundation for long-term survivorship-focused outcomes research.

Adult patients with complex cancers also benefit significantly. Tumours of the head and neck, liver, skull base, and spine, common in the Indian context, can now be treated more safely, with fewer long-term complications and better tolerance.

Beyond clinical care, Indian centres like APCC are actively contributing to global evidence through research, clinical trials, and long-term outcome tracking. This ensures that proton therapy in India is not just technologically advanced, but scientifically robust and locally relevant.

As cancer survival improves, the measure of success is evolving. It is no longer only about extending life, but about protecting it, physically, emotionally, and socially. With modern techniques such as IMPT and innovative delivery models, proton therapy is helping place survivorship at the centre of cancer care.

In doing so, India is not just adopting global innovation; it is shaping the future of precision oncology.

(Written by Dr. Rakesh Jalali, Medical Director and Dr. Pankaj Kumar Panda, Senior Research Officer, Apollo Proton Cancer Centre, Tharamani, Chennai)

For appointments call : 7338992222

vative cancer solutions.

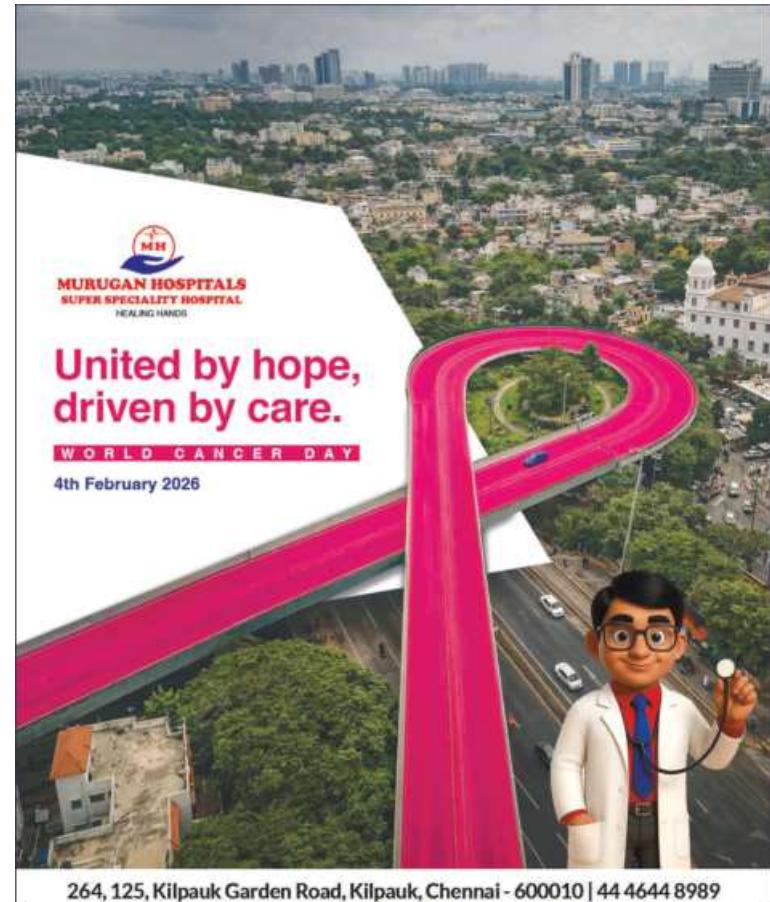
In 2026, communities are encouraged to observe World Cancer Day by organising events that promote awareness, education, and fundraising initiatives to support cancer research and patient care. Activities may include health fairs, educational workshops, and social media campaigns aimed at spreading the message of the day. Such initiatives empower individuals to take action, whether by adopting healthier lifestyles, participating in screening programs, or supporting cancer organisations dedicated to improving care.

World Cancer Day 2026 is a call to action for everyone. Individuals are encouraged to learn about cancer prevention, engage in conversations about the unique experiences of those affected by cancer, and support patients and survivors. By educating ourselves and those around us, we can contribute to a culture of awareness and compassion that fosters early detection, effective treatment, and support for all.

The collective efforts on World Cancer Day represent a powerful movement toward a cancer-free future. By coming together under the theme of "United by Unique," we not only acknowledge the challenges faced by many but also celebrate our ability to unite and create positive change.

As we look forward to February 4, 2026, let's stand together, raise our voices, and support the vision of a world where everyone's unique journey in the fight against cancer is recognised and valued. Together, we can inspire hope and make a lasting difference in the battle against cancer, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come.

WORLD CANCER DAY 2026 EMPHASISES
UNIQUE CHALLENGES IN CANCER CARE, FOSTERING
AWARENESS AND SUPPORT GLOBALLY.



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24/7 Emergency

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Don't issue work order for elevated corridor on ECR: HC to T.N. govt.

Court passes interim order on a writ appeal filed by a disqualified bidder. Appeal was preferred against dismissal of a petition filed by the bidder

Mohamed Imranullah S.

CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Tuesday restrained the Tamil Nadu government and the Tamil Nadu State Highways Authority (TANSHA) from issuing a work order to the successful tenderer for the construction of the 14.2-km-long elevated corridor from Thiruvanmiyur to Uthandi on the East Coast Road (ECR) in Chennai, besides widening of the road into six lanes, at an estimated cost of ₹2,100 crore.

First Division Bench of Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava and Justice G. Arul Murugan passed the interim order on a writ appeal filed by disqualified bidder Dilip Buildcon Limited, based out of Bhopal, which claimed it had quoted over ₹600 crore less than Hyderabad-based KNR Constructors Limited, whose technical and financial bids had been found to be in order by TANSHA.

The judges ordered that the work order should not be issued until the next date of hearing of the writ appeal, and directed the High Court Registry to list the appeal next on February 12.

They also made it clear that the interim order would not come in the way of TANSHA communicating to the appellant company the reasons for having rejected its technical bid on December 24, 2025.

The appeal had been preferred against the dismissal of a writ petition filed by Dilip Buildcon,



The judges ordered that the work order should not be issued until the next date of hearing of the writ appeal, and directed the High Court Registry to list the appeal next on February 12.

seeking a direction to TANSHA to reconsider its technical bid. Senior counsel C. Manishankar, assisted by advocate M. Ashwin Kumar, accused TANSHA of not having assigned a reason for rejecting the technical bid of their client, and also alleged preferential treatment to KNR Constructors.

On his part, Mr. Narayan had denied that preferential treatment had been given by TANSHA to KNR Constructors, and contended that the latter was fully eligible to participate in the tender process when the notification calling for bids was issued on August 25, 2025.

He said the last date for submission of tenders was extended only to clarify doubts raised by the bidders, and not to accommodate his client.

Assisted by advocate Vaibhav R. Venkatesh, the senior counsel had contended KNR Constructors was a reputed construction company that had successfully completed many projects, across the country, including the elevated highway project for a distance of 10.10 km along the Avinashi Road in Coimbatore city.

Kavin's murder: High Court directs CB-CID to peruse CCTV footage, file report

The Hindu Bureau
MADRASI

After the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) produced the CCTV footage recorded on the Tirunelveli-Seevaleppari stretch on July 27, 2025, the day Kavin Selvagnesh, who belonged to a Scheduled Caste community, was murdered allegedly by the brother of his caste Hindu girlfriend, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Tuesday directed the CB-CID to peruse the footage and file a report.

Justice L. Victoria Gowri issued the direction to the CB-CID while hearing the petitions filed by the accused, K. Saravanan, father of main accused Surjith, and K. Jayapal, Surjith's cousin.



Justice L. Victoria Gowri issued the direction to the CB-CID while hearing the petitions filed by the accused, K. Saravanan, father of main accused Surjith, and K. Jayapal, Surjith's cousin.

that Jayapal went there after Surjith's arrival, or the duration of their alleged stay.

The petitioner said if such footage had been produced, it would clearly establish he was not present at the hideout, and he was the one who handed over Surjith to the police on the highway. The deliberate non-collection and suppression of this vital evidence demonstrated that the prosecution avoided producing material which would have exonerated him, he added.

Kavin of Arumugamangalam near Eral in Thoothukudi district was in a relationship with Siddha doctor S. Subhashini of Palayamkottai.

Kavin was murdered on July 27, 2025, allegedly by Surjith, Subhashini's younger brother. The police arrested Surjith, his father Saravanan, a Sub-Inspector of Police, who has now been placed under suspension, and cousin Jayapal for assisting him. Surjith's mother Krishnakumari, also an SI, has also been placed under suspension.

No prior knowledge'

Jayapal said he had learnt about the incident only after Surjith reached the quarry. The prosecution's case, even as pleaded in the final report, did not disclose any material to show he had prior knowledge of the crime, or that he prearranged shelter for Surjith. The sequence of

Government of Karnataka
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URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER URBAN LAND TRANSPORT
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E-Mail : dulitbangalore@gmail.com, dulit@karnataka.gov.in W: https://dult.karnataka.gov.in
No:DULT-TECH/59/2025 Dated 03.02.2026

EXTENSION OF LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF BIDS

This is to bring to the notice of all concerned that the notification published in newspaper on 31.12.2025 with respect to the tender for reputed consultancy service providers for the service of Preparation of a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) for Seven (7) District Headquarters of Karnataka, last date for submitting bid has been extended to 27.02.2026 at 5:30pm. The bidders may download the tender documents from the Government of Karnataka website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.

Package No.	District Headquarter	Tender No.
1	Madikeri	DULT/2025-26/SE0032
	Chamarajanagar Chikkaballapur	DULT/2025-26/SE0033
2	Haveri	DULT/2025-26/SE0034
	Karwar	
3	Koppal	
	Yadgir	

Sd/- Joint Director (Admin)
Directorate of Urban Land Transport
Urban Development Department

DIPR/CP/5385/SHIRDI SAI/2025-26

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Shivajinagara Division
Thimmaiah Road, Queens Road, Bengaluru.

No:EE/SJN/E-Proc/18/2025-26 Date: 03-02-2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (Two Cover)

(Through GOK KPP Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> only)

The Executive Engineer, (Shivajinagara Division), BCCC, Bengaluru, invites tenders from eligible Contractors registered in CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES/National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the construction of works detailed in the table below.

SI No.	Name of the works
1.	Construction of Kalyani, Rock Fill Bund in Halasuru Lake, Bengaluru Urban District Amount Put to Tender (Without GST) : ₹728.75 Lakhs, EMD: ₹11,00,000.00

Calendar of Events: (1) Tenders must be submitted online through KPP portal on or before 16-02-2026 upto 4:00 pm. (2) Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on 13-02-2026 at 3:00 pm in the Office of the Chief Engineer-Zone-2, Bengaluru Central City Corporation, Annex-3, 4th Floor, GBA Office Compound, N R Square, Bengaluru. (3) Last Date for uploading the Filled Tender Document is 16-02-2026 upto 4:00 pm. (4) Date of Technical Bid opening of Tenders is on 17-02-2026 by 11:00 am. (5) Opening of Financial bid Opening of Tenders is on after Technical bid approved.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Shivajinagara Division

MODERN COACH FACTORY, RAEBARELI

Tender No.: 27/2025-26(Open) of DyCE/I/MCF/RBL

Deputy Chief Engineer-I, Modern Coach Factory, Raebareli for and on behalf of President of India, cancels "E-Tenders" for following works: S.N.1. Name of work: Repair of Leakage Roof Sheet in different shops (Furnishing, Finishing, Shell, Wheel, Bogie, Paint Shop & Depot etc. Shops) in Factory area & FWP on MCF/RBL for 02 years. Tender No.: 23-2025-26. Approx. Cost (In₹): ₹51,00,002.80. Date of Opening of Tender: 24.02.2026. Completion period: 24 Months. • Tenderer/s shall be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed for this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. • For detail, please log on Indian Railways IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in. Dy. Chief Engineer/I

Open tender based on two packet system i.e. Technical Bid & Financial Bid. Tender Notice No.: MCF/RBL/Housekeeping/Mech/2025-26 & 2026/27/C674 dated 28.01.2026 is invited by Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/SMS & HK, MCF/RBL through IREPS portal www.ireps.gov.in for and on behalf of president of India for the following work:- Description of work: Mechanized cleaning of Shell shop, SMS shop, New Shell shop, Bogie shop, New Bogie shop, Machine shop and Tool Room and Millwright, CMT and Welding Lab, Wheel shop, New wheel shop, Cleaning of WOC (Utility Buildings), Auxiliary Sub - Station Blocks (ASS), Fire Pump Station, PDC, Transport shop, Diesel Pump House, Gas ward and LPG Gas Ward, Toilet and urinal Blocks, Water Booth and Cycle/Vehicle stand, Engineer Blocks, Shell Store-II, Ward No.58 & 60, Scrap yard, Segregation & disposal of Low value/Wooden packing/Zero value waste from various shops of shell group to Dump yard/nominated place, Management of Wooden packing/Zero value scrap in Dump yard, Cleaning of Cobweb and Mechanized cleaning of side wall & pillars up to the height of 10 meters and Cleaning of Cobweb (Floor cleaning) as per scope of work for 600 working days. Approx. Value (Rs.): ₹ 13,23,79,104.08. Cost of Tender document(Rs.): 10,00,000. EMD (Rs.): ₹ 8,11,900.00. Quantity of work: 600 working days. Completion period of work: 24 Months. • Date & Time of closing of Tender: 27.02.2026 at 15:00 hrs. • Detailed Tender Notice, Eligibility criteria, Terms & conditions are available at IREPS website: www.ireps.gov.in, in tender document.

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/SMS&Housekeeping

Corrigendum No.-2, Date-29.01.2026

Corrigendum | Tender No. Calib-Jig-25-26-176 | Closing date of the tender may be read as 14/02/2026 instead of 03.02.2026

Website: www.ireps.gov.in Works Manager/M&P

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VARIOUS WORKS

W/623/NIT/1, Date : 29/01/2026. The Divisional Railway Manager (WA) Ratlam invites "Open Tender" through e-tender on website www.ireps.gov.in the details are as under-

E-Tender No. & Name of Work	Approx. Value ₹	EMD ₹
1. RTM-2025-26-139, Chanderia-Dhoswas section -	2,34,99,347.19	2,67,100
Improvement of water supply and drainage facility in staff quarters (COR, SMP, GRF & NHB Rly Colony).		
2. RTM-2025-26-140, Nimach - Mandor section -	1,30,49,858.15	2,15,300
Improvement to SSE/P/WAY/Nimach office, depot and store including electrical work.		
3. RTM-2025-26-172, Dr Ambedkar Nagar (DADN) -	4,47,69,420.29	3,73,900
Providing 20 units Type II quarters in lieu of dilapidated quarters (T1790 A to N, = 14/ N, T193 A to F - 06 No) including electrical work.		
4. RTM-2025-26-173, Ratlam Division - Providing	4,51,08,038.26	3,75,600
Type II quarter at Ajnod - 12 No. and Patla - 08 No (Total 20 Nos.) including electric work.		
5. RTM-2025-26-174, Nimbahera- Replacement of	2,28,76,170.64	2,64,400
type II staff Quarters (02 Nos) against dilapidated quarter no. G-33 A to H- 8 Nos. & T/16 A to B - 2 Nos. (Total 10 Nos.) including electrical work.		
6. RTM-2025-26-175, CNA-RTM Section - Supply of	54,55,440.64	1,09,100
potable drinking water through tanker at various stations, LC gates and gang chawls for 02 years.		
7. RTM-2025-26-176, Berach - Provision of full	1,26,11,336.07	2,13,100
length 2nd loop line with simultaneous reception facility at Berach cabin.		
8. RTM-2025-26-177, 1. Chittaurgarh - Provision of	13,37,98,534.58	18,19,000
Ballast less track at PF Line no. 2 (DN ML), PF line no. 4 (Common Loop line) and PF no. 5 (UP Loop line) and 2. Ujjain station - Provision of Ballastless track on PF No. 1 (DN main), PF no. 3/4 (Loop), PF no. 5 (Loop) & PF no. 6 (loop).		
9. RTM-2025-26-179, 1. Rajendra Nagar - Provision	17,46,63,526.01	10,23,300
of existing line at connection with SIMHASHTHA 2028 & 2. Lekoda Upgradation of "D" class to "B" class in connection with Simhashta 2028 including electrical work.		
10. RTM-2025-26-180, Providing and fixing Single	55,71,467.20	1,11,400
Piece Spring Inserted Reusable Size Nut for Size M-27 Lock Nut M 027 for hook bolt under DEN North RTM Jurisdiction.		
11. RTM-2025-26-181, Chanderia - Ratlam	62,07,081.57	1,24,200
Fatehabad section - Pre & post tamping track measurement survey using Timble Gedi Vorsys trolley System in the jurisdiction of Divisional Engineer (North) Ratlam.		
12. RTM-2025-26-182, Ratlam Division -	52,45,620.57	1,04,900
Improvement/ repair to GRP Thana / Barrack at (7 stations - DahodS, MGN, COR, UIN, SEH, IND, NID, DAD).		

Approx Quantity : For Sr. no. - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 - As per tender schedule. Cost of Tender Form ₹ : For Sr. no. - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 - Nil. Completion Period : For Sr. no. - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 12 - 12 Months. For Sr. no. - 9, 1 - 8 & 24 Months. Date of uploading on website : For Sr. no. - 1, 2 & 5 - 20.02.2026. For Sr. no. - 9 & 12 - 29.02.2026. For Sr. no. - 3, 4 & 5 - 02.03.2026. For Sr. no. - 7 - 06.03.2026. For Sr. no. - 8, 10 & 11 - 27.02.2026. Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria and terms and conditions are available at Website : www.ireps.gov.in

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OPPORTUNITIES

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Over 150 Jobs in today's issue

Tier 2, 3 cities power India's tech hiring'

Opportunities Desk

as AI hiring continues to rise.

Key findings

While overall hiring has moderated, companies are reshaping workforce strategies instead of relying solely on higher pay to retain talent.

1. 79% of HR leaders say retention in Tier 2/3 cities is equal to or better than Tier-1 metros.

2. Tech hiring in these cities is expected to rise from 12.3% to 19.7% by FY27, reflecting a shift from cost-led expansion to continuity-driven planning.

3. 65% of women professionals are open to Tier-2 or hybrid roles; yet women account for only 35% of India's tech workforce, signalling a missed stabilisation opportunity in an employer-led

market.

4. While AI roles continue to expand, only 15% of firms currently have formal AI governance frameworks in place, raising risks around employee confidence, trust, and retention.

5. The report cautions that without mature hybrid work models and AI governance frameworks, AI-led growth could intensify workforce churn rather than offset it.

In a press release, Husain Timwala, president, upGrad Rekrut, said, "The data points to a clear shift from compensation-led retention to architecture-led retention.

In an environment of flat pay cycles and higher compliance costs, companies are increasingly using location strategy, workflow redesign and learning ac-

cess as substitutes for wage escalation. Tier-2 cities are emerging as stability hubs not because they are cheaper, but because they offer lower attrition and longer workforce continuity. However, this model only holds if hybrid work and AI governance mature in parallel. Without those enablers, the same reset that improves retention for some segments could accelerate exits among women and mid-career professionals, turning AI-led growth into a churn risk rather than a capability advantage."

Emerging hubs such as Ahmedabad-GIFT City, Coimbatore, Kochi, Indore and Lucknow now account for close to one-fourth of all AI-linked hiring mandates handled by the company, says the report.

At a time when India's technology sector is witnessing a slowdown in hiring, Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities are emerging as stable hubs for employers, says a new report by upGrad Rekrut, the talent and staffing division of global skilling major upGrad.

The '2025-26 Talent Landscape and AI Integration Report', based on responses from more than 3200 HR leaders and tech professionals, finds that India's tech slowdown is not uniform.

While Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities are emerging as stability hubs for employers, the impact of this reset is uneven across demographics, even

GENERAL

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For application form, eligibility criteria, scale of pay, rule of reservation and other details, visit DSNU website: www.dsnu.ac.in. The filled-in application with Registration Fee of Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees One Thousand Only). (Rs. 500/- (Rupees Five Hundred Only) in case of SC/ST/BC/PH), by way of Demand Draft drawn in favour of "The Registrar, Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University" payable at Visakhapatnam or Online Payment should reach The Registrar, Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University, "NYAYAPRASTHA", Sabbavaram, Visakhapatnam – 531 035, Andhra Pradesh" on or before 26.02.2026 by 5.00 P.M.
Visakhapatnam
Date: 03.02.2026

Sd/-
REGISTRAR I/c

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SI. No	Name of Posts	No. of Posts
1	Assistant General Manager (Engineering)	2
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5	Manager (Materials)	1
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	GM (Elevated Construction) / (Under Ground Construction)			Rs.2,25,000/-	20	55
2	AGM (Elevated Construction) / (Under Ground Construction)	8	Deputation/ Contract	Rs.1,60,000/-	17	47
	JGM (Elevated Construction) / (Under Ground Construction)			Rs.1,45,000/-	15	43
3	DGM (Elevated Construction) / (Under Ground Construction)	7	Contract	Rs.1,25,000/-	13	40
	Manager (Elevated Construction) / (Under Ground Construction)			Rs.85,000/-	7	38
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	AM (Elevated Construction) / (Under Ground Construction)			Rs.62,000/-	2	30

Note:

 i. The detailed employment notification will be published in CMRL website under careers section vide URL: <https://chennaimetrorail.org>. on or before 06-02-2026.

ii. Age, qualification & experience stipulated for the above posts should be as on 04-02-2026. Age and post qualification experience will be relaxed for deserving candidates.

iii. Salary is negotiable for deserving candidates.

iv. Last date for receipt of online applications is 23-02-2026.


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IN BRIEF



Tributes paid to Annadurai on 57th death anniversary

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin, along with Ministers, paid floral tributes at the memorial of DMK founder and former Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai at Anna Square in Chennai on Tuesday on the occasion of his 57th death anniversary. They also paid floral tributes at the memorial of former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi at Anna Square. Earlier in the day, Mr. Stalin and the Ministers took part in a silent procession to the memorial through Wallajah Salai and Kamarajar Salai.

TVK invites applications from aspirants for Assembly poll

Actor-politician Vijay's Tamilaga Vettai Kazhagam has announced that those who are willing to contest on behalf of the party in the 2026 Assembly election can submit their application forms from February 6. In a statement issued on Tuesday, party general secretary N. Anand said aspirants for all the 234 constituencies can collect the forms, fill in the details, and submit them between February 6 and 14 at the party headquarters at Panaiyur near Chennai. However, the party has not made any announcement in respect of the poll-bound Union Territory of Puducherry. In recent months, Mr. Vijay has scaled up his criticism of the ruling DMK as well as the Opposition AIADMK through indirect references. He has said that neither the "evil force" nor the "corrupt force" should rule the State.

Union Budget a huge disappointment to people of T.N., says Chief Minister



New facility: Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurating a healthcare building in Kolathur in Chennai on Tuesday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Reiterating that the Union Budget for 2026-27 was a huge disappointment to Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said on Tuesday that the people of the State would teach a lesson (to the NDA) in the coming Assembly election.

He was asked about the Union Budget at an interaction with reporters in Chennai. He replied, "There is only disappointment. We expected some change, but there was no change." The Budget was a "huge disappointment" to the people, he said. "The people will teach a lesson," he added, when it was pointed out that it is an

election year in the State. At another interaction, asked for his message to his political opponents, Mr. Stalin said, "I don't consider anyone as enemy; I only see all as friends." The Chief Minister in-

augurated a multi-storey building with a blood purification unit in his Kolathur constituency. It has been constructed by the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority at a cost of ₹11.74 crore. The first floor

houses a physiotherapy centre, while the second floor houses an artificial limb centre. Dialysis procedures are to be offered on the third floor, and various facilities for patients will be available on the fourth floor.

Ration shops opened

The Chief Minister also inaugurated six ration shops on the same premises and a park near the Kolathur lake. He distributed books and laptops to students.

Ministers K.R. Periakaruppan, Ma. Subramanian, and P.K. Sekarababu; Chennai Mayor R. Priya; legislators Thayagam Kavi, A. Venkateshwaran, and Joseph Samuel; and senior officials took part at the event.

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

A former official of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has alleged that he was denied salary for 15 months after he underwent a kidney transplantation, almost putting him to starvation.

P. Jayaseela Rao, who worked as a Senior Observer in the Nellore Observatory in 1992-96, said he underwent dialysis and subsequently a kidney transplantation. Though he attended to his regular duties after getting a medical certificate, he was not paid a salary.

The non-payment of salaries put him to starvation, Mr. Rao said while request-

Four States restrict free power supply to specific groups or those with less than 30 units a month

consumption. In the current year (2025-26), the estimated subsidy bill is ₹7,752 crore. The concession has been on since May 2016.

At the same time, the Commission pointed out, "Kerala, Goa, Gujarat, and Odisha provide relatively targeted access to free power, restricting it to specific groups such as SC/ST [Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes] or to consumers with less than 30 units per month." In fact, Kerala and Goa have nil percentage of households in the highest quintile in receiving free electricity. The panel added that such an arrangement "allows them [the States concerned] to support an improved quality of life of vulnerable populations with relatively less fiscal impact."

About 1.5 lakh officials, including enumerators and supervisors, are expected to take part in the process

naires could be obtained after registering oneself on the portal (to be notified later).

"Once they fill up the details, an ID will be generated. When the area- or street-level enumerator visits, the ID should be given and he/she will use the app to check and validate," Mr. Babu said. After the self-enumeration process that will last 15 days, the houselisting and housing-census process will commence and go on for 30 days. Officials are finalising plans to train the enumerators, the supervisors, and other officials who will be involved in the process.

All the staff members at the Directorate of Census Operations in Chennai have been trained. Four staff members of the Chennai office underwent training as national trainers. Lead trainers, master trainers, field-level trainers, enumerators, supervisors, and others will be trained, Mr. Babu said.

State gears up for Census; houselisting process likely to start after Assembly poll

Dennis S. Jesudasan
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu is gearing up for Census 2027, as Chief Secretary N. Muruganandan chaired the first meeting of the State-level coordination committee at the Secretariat on Monday.

The self-enumeration process and the eventual houselisting and housing-census process are likely to start after the Assembly election.

At the first meeting, coordination among various stakeholders, including State government departments, and notification of census officers were discussed. Director of Census Operations (Tamil Nadu) M. Sundareswaran Babu said. About 1.5 lakh officials, including enumerators and supervisors, are expected to take part in the process. The houselisting and housing-census process is likely to commence in June or July.

First digital census
This will also be the first digital census. Each of the households would be asked 33 questions from the questionnaire by enumerators. There will also be an option for self-enumeration, and the question-

Denied salary for 15 months following kidney transplant: former IMD official

When the appellant requested documents relating to his claim, the Chief Public Information Officer of the Meteorological Department said they were not available

ing the documents relating to the denial of his remuneration, details of medical bills that were not reimbursed, a copy of the medical certificate issued by Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, and Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences, Tirupati. However, his medical bills were later reimbursed following an order of the Central Administrative Tribunal.

The Chief Public Information Officer (CPIO), Office of the Head, Climate Research and Services, India Meteorological Department, said the records/claims of Mr. Rao were not available.

Incomplete and false
Not satisfied with the response, Mr. Rao moved an appeal before the Central Information Commission saying the reply was incomplete, false, and misleading. When the matter came up for hearing, the CPIO maintained that the case was more than 28 years, and the records were not traceable.

After hearing both sides, the commission held that the respondent official

had failed to explain the data/record retention policy of the department. Information Commissioner Kushwant Singh Sethi directed the CPIO to cross-check the records with the Chennai Branch and give a revised reply to the appellant incorporating the information sought on all the points as per the Right to Information (RTI) Act, depending on its availability.

Told to file affidavit
If records were not available, the official was told to file an affidavit on oath to the commission with a categorical statement on non-availability of the sought information by reproducing the data/record retention policy.

Stepping down from election work in six constituencies due to personal reasons: Annamalai

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

Former State president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) K. Annamalai said he had conveyed to BJP State president Nainar Nagenthiran his inability to take up the responsibilities assigned to him in six constituencies for election-related work because of personal commitments.

Mr. Annamalai told the media in Coimbatore on Tuesday that he would take up whatever work the party gave him during the Assembly election.

He has also explained to Mr. Nagenthiran his inability to actively take part in field work now because of his father, who was undergoing treatment in Coimbatore, as he needed to stay with him, he said.

The focus for the BJP and its cadre is to ensure



The focus for the BJP and its cadre is to ensure that the National Democratic Alliance's victory in the State in the Assembly election

K. ANNAMALAI
BJP leader

that the National Democratic Alliance's victory in the State in the Assembly election.

Responding to Vijay

"TVK leader Vijay shouldn't call the BJP an empty engine, as the TVK does not have an engine at all," he said. If the TVK is able to field candidates in all the constituencies in the State for the Assembly election, it can be said that it has an engine, Mr. Annamalai remarked.

The focus for the BJP and its cadre is to ensure

provides subsidies for many schemes. Why is it not supporting the industries with a power cost subsidy. Many industries from Tamil Nadu are now investing in other States that offer such subsidies," he alleged.

Mr. Annamalai charged the DMK government with not allocating enough for capital expenditure in its Budget.

Tamil Nadu must make use of the schemes announced in the Union Budget to generate jobs for its youth, he added.

"The DMK government

'Attack' on schoolboy: associations demand FIR under SC/ST Act

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUPPUR

Representatives of Scheduled Caste (SC) welfare organisations have demanded the registration of a First Information Report (FIR) into what they allege to be a caste-based attack on a Class VIII boy by a few other students at a government high school at Kunnathur in Tiruppur district.

Producing a video clip showing the boy's mother alleging caste-based discrimination at the NRKN Government High School, the representatives insisted that the attackers of the 13-year-old must be booked under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The police had, in a press release on January 30, denied any caste-based motivations behind the incident in which the boy had suffered burns after

The police said the incident had occurred accidentally while the students were playing

the other students allegedly pushed him into a pit that was being used to burn garbage on the school premises. The police said the incident occurred accidentally while the students were playing. When the boy was pushed by his schoolmates, he lost his balance and fell into the pit.

In a petition submitted to the Superintendent of Police, Tiruppur Rural, representatives of the SC welfare organisations alleged that though the boy's parents had now been silenced by the police and school authorities, an FIR should be registered under the Act considering the gravity of the offence.

The court said the government had regulated

HC rejects plea for sanction to use fiberglass-reinforced boats for travel to Katchatheevu islet

The Hindu Bureau
MADURAI

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Tuesday dismissed the petition filed by a fisherman from Rameswaram who had sought a direction to the authorities concerned to permit fishermen to use fiberglass-reinforced plastic motorised boats to travel to Katchatheevu for St. Antony's Church festival, which is scheduled to be held on February 27 and 28.

A Division Bench of Justices G. Jayachandran and K. K. Ramakrishnan upheld the decision taken by the authorities to reject the request made to permit the use of fiberglass reinforced plastic motorised boats to travel to Katchatheevu.

The court said the government had regulated

travel to Katchatheevu by taking into consideration the security of individuals.

No exceptions
There cannot be any deviation or exception to the regulation, the court said

and dismissed the petition filed by J. Brinso Raymond of Rameswaram. The authorities concerned had refused to permit the use of fiberglass-reinforced plastic motorised boats citing risk factors.



Annual event: The petitioner, a fisherman from Rameswaram, had wanted to travel to Katchatheevu for St. Antony's Church festival, which is will be held on February 27 and 28. L. BALACHANDAR

Karnataka CM tables resolution against new rural jobs Act

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amid vociferous protests by the BJP and JD(S) members, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday tabled a resolution in the Assembly that expresses "serious opposition" of the House to the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeekika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, 2025, and urges the Centre to fully restore the earlier Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, by rolling back the new job scheme.

"In the interest of protecting the right to life of rural people of Karnataka, this House urges the Centre to immediately annul the VB-G RAM-G Act that is not only opposed to the federal structure and idea of decentralisation, but also snatches the power and rights of village panchayats besides causing serious burden on the State exchequer," the three-page resolution said.

Reiterating the Assembly's commitment to the principles of decentralisation and panchayat raj system which is the strong foundation for the country's democratic system, the resolution said the House viewed the annulling of the MGNREGA seriously as it was an elixir of life for rural poor besides being a part and parcel of their lives.

The resolution claimed that MGNREGA, intro-

Dharna seeking Excise Minister's resignation

BENGALURU

The BJP and the JD(S) MLAs began an overnight protest on Tuesday inside the Vidhana Soudha demanding the resignation of Excise Minister R.B. Thimmapur over an alleged corruption scandal in his department.

Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok alleged that there was corruption to the tune of ₹6,000 crore, referring to a letter by Guruswamy, president, Karnataka Wine Merchants' Association, an Excise official being trapped by the Lokayukta police recently, and a purported audio conversation between an Excise official and a lawyer.

duced in 2005 by the UPA government had brought about revolutionary changes through removal of unemployment, stopping of migration, payment of wages without gender discrimination, strengthening of panchayat decentralisation and creation of personal and community properties in rural areas.

The new Act violates the right to life and livelihood granted under Article 21 of the Constitution and also goes against the spirit of the 73rd amendment of the Constitution that grants autonomy to village panchayats, besides defeating the purpose of Mahatma Gandhi's gram swaraj, the resolution said.

The resolution claimed that MGNREGA, intro-

Kerala to move ahead with first phase of RRTS

State Transport Department to submit proposal to Centre and initiate consultations to obtain required clearances; the project is estimated to cost about ₹1,92,780 crore, according to an order

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Amid the alleged indifference of the Union government to the demands of Kerala for high-speed travel, and claims by technocrat E. Sreedharan that he has started working on a high-speed rail project as suggested by the Centre, the State government has accorded in-principle approval for the proposed 583-km Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) project, from Thiruvananthapuram to Kasaragod.

Kerala has also decided to take up the first phase (Travancore line) of the 284 km from Thiruvananthapuram to Thrissur. The Transport Department will submit the proposal to the Centre and initiate necessary consultations to obtain mandatory clearances.

The project is estimated to cost ₹1,92,780 crore, and the final cost can only be determined upon completion of the detailed project report (DPR), after finalising alignments, technical models, signalling systems, and transit-oriented development (TOD) models, according to an order.

Phase 1, which includes integration with the Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi Metros, is slated for execution from 2027 to 2033. This will be followed by Phase 2 (Malabar Line, Thrissur-Kozhikode), with integration of the Kozhi-



The Kerala government estimates that a complete Statewide RRTS network can be realised in 12 years. REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

'Sreedharan opened office to mislead public'

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR

remained silent on the issue.

No official assurance
Addressing the media at Pazhayangadi during the party's Vikasana Munnetra Jatha, Mr. Govindan said no one should expect Central government approval for Mr. Sreedharan's initiative in the absence of any official assurance from the Railway Ministry.

kode Metro, and Phase 3 (Kannur Line, Kozhikode-Kannur), and Phase 4 (Kasaragod Line, Kannur-Kasaragod). Further, the State has plans for the project's

future expansion to Coimbatore via Palakkad, to Kanniyakumari from Thiruvananthapuram, and to Mangaluru from Kasaragod.

Through this "parallel phased execution", a complete Statewide RRTS network can be realised in 12 years. Taking a cue from the Delhi RRTS, the project could be implemented with a funding pattern of 20% by the State, 20% by the Centre, and 60% via long-term loans borrowed from international financial institutions.

SilverLine project

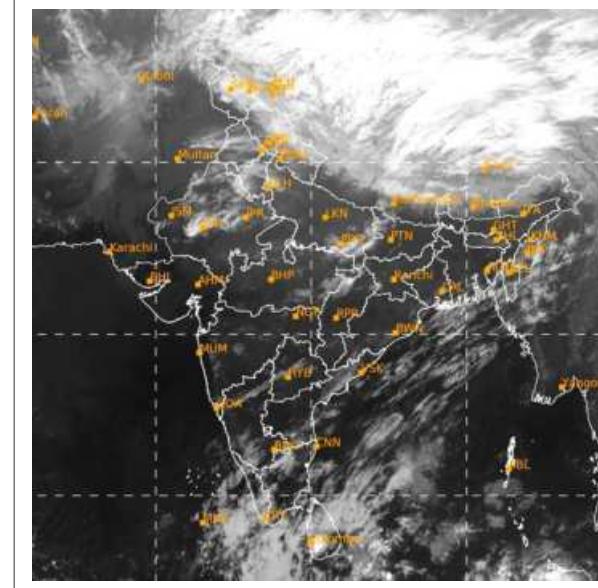
The new project has been proposed by the State against the backdrop of the technical objections flagged by the Centre to the SilverLine project and the public protests against the project in certain areas. As the system can be implemented largely as a grade-separated (elevated on pillars) structure, it can be integrated with the existing and proposed metro rail projects to create a unified multimodal transit system, the order said.

Adopting the elevated viaduct model (on pillars) will significantly reduce land acquisition, prevent the obstruction of natural water flow, and mitigate public opposition observed in certain areas, it added.

Meanwhile, Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Tuesday reiterated that a high-speed rail would eventually come to Kerala, although the Minister did not provide the details of the Central project.

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: Dense fog likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Sikkim, Sub Himalayan West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	30.4	13.1	Kozhikode	—	34.2	25.7
Ahmedabad	—	29.6	20.2	Kurnool	—	32.8	20.0
Aizawl	—	30.4	14.8	Lucknow	—	30.4	14.3
Allahabad	—	23.4	12.2	Madurai	—	33.3	23.1
Bengaluru	—	29.2	16.6	Mangaluru	—	33.4	20.0
Bhopal	—	24.2	13.4	Mumbai	—	32.7	20.0
Bhubaneswar	—	31.2	15.5	Mysuru	—	31.0	17.8
Chandigarh	—	20.2	9.8	New Delhi	—	22.5	9.4
Chennai	—	30.7	20.4	Patna	—	26.0	15.6
Coimbatore	—	31.6	20.2	Port Blair	—	0.3	25.4
Dehradun	—	23.6	11.2	Puducherry	—	28.2	20.6
Gangtok	—	18.0	11.8	Pune	—	32.2	18.0
Goa	—	34.5	21.8	Raipur	—	32.0	17.2
Guwahati	—	28.5	14.1	Ranchi	—	26.3	11.0
Hubballi	—	32.0	18.0	Shillong	—	20.2	7.0
Hyderabad	—	28.6	18.6	Shimla	—	15.2	6.4
Imphal	—	26.6	11.6	Srinagar	—	10.0	2.8
Jaipur	—	24.3	11.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.3	23.6
Kochi	—	30.0	18.0	Tiruchi	—	30.7	20.6
Kohima	—	18.8	8.0	Vijayawada	—	29.5	20.0
Kolkatta	—	27.4	14.1	Visakhapatnam	—	29.1	20.9

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you're breathing

In observation made at 4.00 pm, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 337 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 22.

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

S0: 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: 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

Centre rules out further APRA funds for Telangana

M. Rajeev

HYDERABAD

The Union government has ruled out further release of pending funds for development of backward regions in Telangana, claiming that the entire amount has been released.

Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary replied in the negative when Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy and Eatala Rajender, MPs, asked whether there was any outstanding issue in releasing grants due to Telangana. The members asked about the delays in the release of ₹1,800 crore due to Telangana for four years including 2019-20, 2021-22 and 2023-24.

The Union Minister said it was decided to release a total amount of ₹2,700 crore to Telangana in six instalments of ₹450 crore under Section 94(2) of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act (APRA), 2014 and the entire amount had been released.

Section 94 (2) of the Act, dealing with fiscal measures including tax incentives to two Telugu States, says that the Union government should support the programmes for the development of backward areas in the successor States, including expansion of physical and social infrastructure. The Centre had accordingly released ₹2,700 crore, ₹450 crore a year at ₹50 crore each for the nine erstwhile districts in Telangana, which were categorised as backward in terms of social and physical infrastructure.

Despite requests by successive governments, the Centre had ruled out further release of funds.

A.P. Cabinet hands over TTD ghee adulteration case to Commission of Enquiry

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

The commission will address the gaps in the SIT report and conduct a comprehensive probe

ly resolved that the Commission of Enquiry would address the gaps in the SIT report and conduct a comprehensive probe into the procurement process, tender conditions and administrative lapses linked to the alleged mixing of chemical substances in the ghee.

During the meeting, Ministers informed the Chief Minister that former TTD chairman Bhumana Karu-

nakar Reddy, who was not a member of the purchase committee at the time, was reportedly invited as a special invitee, while committee members including then Minister Kolu Parthasarathy and Vemireddy Prashanth Reddy were not invited. Officials also informed that laddus allegedly prepared using adulterated ghee were even sent to Ayodhya.

The Cabinet directed the commission to submit its report at the earliest. It also asked the panel to focus on flaws in the tender process and examine allegations that cooperative dairies were sidelined to allow bogus dairies.

"Every person who believes in democracy should witness this struggle and sacrifice. Those who falsely invoke freedom of speech and intolerance should also listen to Sadanandan Masterji's speech..." Mr. Shah said.

Telangana witnesses steady rise in cancer cases; doctors call for early detection

Siddharth Kumar Singh
HYDERABAD

Telangana has recorded a steady rise in cancer cases over the past decade, increasing from 40,177 in 2015 to 52,334 in 2024, signifying a growing public health burden in the State. The figures were shared in the Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament last December.

With World Cancer Day on Wednesday, oncologists say the upward trend highlights the urgent need to strengthen early detection, screening and awareness efforts across Telangana.

"For the first time, more early-stage cancer cases are being seen. That is a good sign," said Nori Datta-



Ahead of World Cancer Day on February 4, oncologists have called for need to strengthen awareness efforts. GETTY IMAGES

Stage 4.

At the MNJ Institute of Oncology and Regional Cancer Centre in Hyderabad, doctors say the increase is evident in the daily influx of patients. Sandhya Rani Nippani,

associate professor of Radiation Oncology at MNJ, said the hospital registers around 100 new cancer cases each day, amounting to nearly 13,000 new registrations annually. These include both paediatric and adult patients, as well as blood malignancies and solid tumours.

Among adults, head and neck cancers linked to tobacco chewing continue to be highly prevalent in the region. "We see very advanced head and neck cancer patients. Breast cancer cases are also common. Although cervical cancer is largely preventable and curable if detected early, many women are reaching the hospital in Stage 3 or Stage 4," she said.

TAMILNADU MINERALS LIMITED

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Online tenders are invited in two cover system for the following tenders:

1	Description of work	Elender with reverse bidding for Selection of EPC Contractor System Project inside the premises at TAMIN Graphite beneficiation plant, Eravankad.
2	Tender No. & Date	TM/2024/001, Dated:03.02.2026
3	Tender ID	0026_TMIN_656817_1
4	Bid submission start date	04/02/2026 from 10:00 hrs
5	Pre bid meeting	1



End in sight

The U.S. trade deal gives hope that the tariffs ordeal may be over soon

News of the India-United States trade deal has brought palpable relief to a lot of Indian industries, but it also comes with persistent and important questions that remain unanswered despite a press statement by India's Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal. The initial announcement, through social media, while true to U.S. President Donald Trump's form, also marks a departure for India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Past trade deal announcements have all been made through more formal channels. The announcement of U.S. tariffs on Indian imports being cut to 18% from the existing 50% is certainly welcome. However, as of now, there is no clarity on when this would be implemented. While Mr. Trump said they would be cut "immediately", Mr. Goyal said that the details will be shared "soon". There is also considerable ambiguity over whether this is the first tranche or 'mini-deal' of a larger Bilateral Trade Agreement, a limited deal affecting only tariffs, or something in between. Mr. Trump's assertion that Mr. Modi has "agreed to stop buying Russian oil" must also be addressed by the Indian government sooner rather than later. Mr. Goyal did not touch upon this in his statement. Stopping Russian oil entirely would not only force India to find alternatives for about a third of its oil imports but would also cast a shadow over its relations with Russia, which is a long-time friend and critical supplier of defence equipment. Such a move would announce a very definite realignment for India and, in that light, deserves to be discussed in Parliament first. Similarly, buying more Venezuelan crude comes with its own refining challenges.

There is also the question of what India has committed to the U.S. in terms of tariff concessions, investments and purchase orders. Apart from making the assurance that sensitive agricultural items and dairy would be excluded, the government has been silent despite several significant assertions being made by Mr. Trump and his team. While the "final stages of detailing" are still to be completed, as Mr. Goyal has said, the light at the end of the tunnel has already buoyed Indian stock markets, bolstered the rupee, and brought especial cheer to labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, apparel, footwear, leather and engineering goods that had been hurting from the 50% tariffs. These sectors already stand to gain from the India-European Union trade deal, which Mr. Goyal has assured will come into effect this year. The tariffs they will face in the U.S. will likely still be slightly higher than those enjoyed by competitors in the South-East Asian countries due to their Most-Favoured Nation status. Yet, the new deal stands to certainly enhance their competitiveness, and the targeted announcements in the Union Budget 2026 should also help bridge this narrower gap.

Unfriendly vibes

Politics is playing an oversized role in the ICC T20 World Cup

Much water has flowed down the Indus since 1947, and yet India and Pakistan are stuck in a time warp when it comes to border conflicts and cricketing ties. The latest salvo fired by Pakistan is centred around its refusal to play against India in the ICC Twenty20 World Cup fixture in Colombo on February 15. In a bizarre turn of events, India's western neighbour has taken offence to the fact that Bangladesh was denied a neutral venue and was also scratched out of the championship. The logic being if Pakistan can be given a neutral venue in Sri Lanka, the same concession could have been granted to Bangladesh. However, Pakistan's fixtures were fixed a long time ago, while Bangladesh's sudden insistence on shifting its preliminary games outside India came too late and proved to be a logistical nightmare. But it would be simplistic to only just blame India's neighbours on either side for political posturing; this current mess affecting a global cricketing tournament was triggered from Delhi. Kolkata Knight Riders were nudged to drop Bangladeshi pacer Mustafizur Rahman from its squad, and this move unleashed a catastrophic domino effect on the championship. The omission was seen as a reaction to the assault against Hindus in Bangladesh.

What India did not bargain for was the fiery reaction from Dhaka. The Bangladesh Cricket Board cited security concerns and requested the International Cricket Council (ICC) to shift its four early games away from India. The ICC refused to budge and inevitably Scotland replaced Bangladesh in Group C. Pakistan's reaction to this latest development has been theatrical. That Bangladesh, erstwhile East Pakistan, was carved out of Pakistan in 1971, remains a historical truth and it also strained ties between the two nations. However, with the latest conservative turn in Bangladeshi politics, with one former Prime Minister in asylum in India, Pakistan senses a pathway to forge an 'Islamist brotherhood' with Dhaka. This, despite the reality of Bangladesh being formed on the basis of linguistic nationalism thriving on Bengali pride. In all this political slugfest involving three neighbours, a championship is now caught in a needless crossfire. Perhaps, this is also a sobering lesson for the ICC and official broadcasters, who ensure that India and Pakistan are placed in the same group to guarantee games between the rivals so as to reap the resultant commercial windfall. Sport and politics do mix, especially in the subcontinent, and its pitfalls are starkly evident. The ICC T20 World Cup awaits its start on February 7 while Asian solidarity lies in tatters.

India's next industrial shift — electrons over molecules

For over a century, the world's factories, kilns and trucks have been powered by "molecules" — oil, coal and gas burnt for heat and motion. That age is now giving way to one where competitiveness is increasingly written in electrons: clean and reliable electricity. The nations that move the fastest from molecules to electrons will not only cut emissions but also win supply chains, capital and jobs.

On this score, China has opened a decisive lead. It is not merely adding renewables at record pace. It is redesigning industry itself to run on grid power. In 2024, close to half of China's industrial energy came as electricity. India is closer to one quarter. The gap directly affects export competitiveness and resilience to fuel price shocks.

Why 'electrons vs molecules' is the right lens
Molecules (oil, gas, LPG, coal, biofuels) are combusted directly in engines, boilers and furnaces. Electrons are delivered by the grid. Coal has already shifted role from on-site combustion to centralised power generation. More electrons mean higher automation, better process control and easier decarbonisation.

Electrification also brings a major efficiency dividend. Electric motors convert over 90% of input energy into useful work, while internal combustion engines typically convert less than 35%. This means each percentage point increase in electrons displaces more fuel molecules than raw energy numbers suggest.



Shrikant Madhav Vaidya

is an energy strategist and a former Chairman of IndianOil Corporation Ltd.

Electrons spell competitiveness, ensuring clean and reliable electricity, supply chains, capital and jobs, and a cut in emissions

This snapshot is revealing. China draws nearly half its industrial energy from electrons and also has the highest share of green electrons. The United States and world average are around 12% while India lags at just 7%. China leads both in the quantity and the quality of electrons even as India remains molecule-dominated.

At the economy level, China, the U.S. and the European Union (EU) all sit near one-third electrification. But China deliberately channels far more electrons into industry than its peers. This reflects strategic intent. As the world's manufacturing hub, China ensures that factories enjoy reliable power and a rising share of clean electricity. That positioning directly strengthens export competitiveness in markets where carbon intensity is increasingly scrutinised.

China's transformation; where India is
China's playbook has been to build the grid, then build electron-first industry. China's surge did not happen by accident. Since 2010, it has poured massive capital into generation, ultra-high-voltage transmission, flexible substations and grid-scale storage. The result is a structural tilt toward electrons across industry. In steel, electric-arc-furnace (EAF) steel rose from about 44 million tonnes in 2010 to 106 million tonnes in 2024. Though only approximately 15% of output, this shift has been policy driven through scrap recycling and preferential tariffs.

In cement, China has electrified grinding mills, materials handling and deployed digital controls. Waste-heat-recovery systems typically contribute 30-35 kWh per tonne of cement. Calcination emissions remain unavoidable, making CCUS pilots essential. India can follow a similar pathway.

China's lesson is simple — electrify what can be electrified today, and reserve molecules only for processes that have no immediate alternative.

What is India's starting line like? India has doubled grid capacity in a decade and is a global leader in annual solar additions. Yet, industrial electrons remain around one-quarter of energy use, and green electrons just 7%-8% of final energy. Three factors explain this gap. First, legacy reliance on on-site combustion locks in molecule use. Second, uneven power quality and reliability discourage firms from designing all-electric processes. Third, policy focuses more on generation than on electrifying industrial processes.

This is a road map to an electron-first industrial decade. In steel, India already produces approximately 30% of steel through EAFs, as compared to approximately 70% in the

U.S. Improving scrap collection, standardisation and trading platforms can lift this share rapidly. Renewable-linked EAF incentives are essential, especially with the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) targeting steel.

In cement, support pilots of electrified kilns, large-scale waste-heat recovery and carbon capture, utilisation, and storage (CCUS) hubs. Target a 20% reduction in molecule use per tonne this decade while preparing CCUS.

On micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), most MSMEs run on coal boilers and diesel gensets. Transition requires concessional finance for electric boilers and induction furnaces, pooled procurement of renewable power purchase agreements, and technical assistance.

When it comes to digitalisation, this must be embedded in new industrial clusters. Advanced controls reduce power waste, enable demand response, and generate auditable carbon data demanded by global buyers.

Why does this matter beyond climate?

First, competitiveness as global buyers increasingly demand low-carbon manufacturing. Green electrons embedded in supply chains decide contract outcomes.

Second, security. Shifting heat and motion to domestically produced electricity reduces exposure to imported oil and gas price shocks.

Third, sovereignty. Industry can locate based on skills and logistics, not fuel availability.

The new industrial race

The global race is not just electrons versus molecules, but also about green electrons versus grey electrons. China has acted strategically.

Although its economy-wide electrification (31%) is similar to the U.S. (32%) and the EU (34%), it prioritised industry — nearly half of industrial energy is electrified, with a higher green share than peers. This design gives China a durable manufacturing edge.

India must absorb this lesson. Without a rapid rise in green electrons, India risks CBAM penalties and lost export opportunities, but with bold action, it can seize the initiative.

Policy must aim not just for megawatts of renewables, but for megawatt-hours actually flowing into industry. India should launch a national mission on industrial electrification, significantly raise annual grid investment, mandate electrification in new industrial parks, and provide targeted MSME finance.

The next industrial revolution will be written in electrons, not molecules. India must ensure that it is not left behind.

Industrial electrification snapshot

Green and grey electrons versus molecules

Global picture: industrial electrons and their quality

Region	Green electrons (%)	Grey electrons (%)	Total electrons (%)	Molecules (%)
China	18	29	47	53
The EU	16	18	34	66
U.S.	12	20	32	68
India	7	20	27	73
The world	12	18	30	70

Whole-economy context

Region	Green electrons (%)	Grey electrons (%)	Total electrons (%)	Molecules (%)
China	12	19	31	69
U.S.	13	19	32	68
The EU	17	17	34	66
India	8	19	27	73
The world	12	18	30	70

AI's next investment cycle belongs to applications

The artificial intelligence (AI) industry has reached a crossroads. For years, companies poured money into infrastructure such as data centres, chips and underlying models. Now, the big question is not about AI working, but whether it can be profitable. The solution lies in concrete AI applications, and not just having more training or larger GPU clusters.

AI infrastructure versus AI applications
In 2025, companies spent around \$320 billion on AI infrastructure. Despite this huge investment, foundation model businesses have thin profit margins. High inference costs cut into revenue and competition keeps prices down. For instance, OpenAI reached \$13 billion in annualised revenue by August 2025 but still lost \$5 billion in 2024. This approach is not sustainable; it is a short-term fix supported by venture capital and corporate money hoping for better returns.

The story is different for AI applications. In 2025, businesses spent \$19 billion on AI applications, making up more than half of all generative AI spending. This is over 6% of the total software market, reached just three years after ChatGPT was launched. More importantly, this spending proves real market demand: companies are no longer only testing AI. They are using it widely. At least 10 AI products now bring in over \$1 billion in annual recurring revenue, and 50 products make more than \$100 million.

Meta's \$2 billion purchase of Manus in December 2025 shows this shift. Manus, a Singapore startup, launched its AI agent just nine months earlier and quickly reached \$125 million in annual revenue by supplying a simple but effective AI product that gets tasks done — not just talks about them — thus proving both technical ability and business success.

Investors want companies with real customers, not just technology. By the third quarter of 2025,



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AI profits will come from real applications

there were 265 private equity deals involving AI applications, a 65% increase from the previous year, and 78% were add-on acquisitions for existing portfolio companies. Strategic mergers and acquisitions in AI hit record highs by Q3, with deal values up 242% from the year before.

Where the real value is

Real value is emerging in the departmental AI segment. In 2025, coding tools made up \$4 billion of the \$7.3 billion departmental AI market, making them the largest segment. Half of all developers now use AI coding tools every day, a number which rises to 65% in top-performing companies. When ServiceNow bought Moveworks or Nvidia purchased several AI startups, these were not infrastructure deals. They were investments in companies that help customers achieve real business results with AI.

The foundation model landscape itself tells the application story. Anthropic now commands 40% of enterprise LLM spending, up from 24% last year and 12% in 2023, while OpenAI's enterprise share fell to 27% from 50% in 2023. Anthropic did this by dominating coding applications, where it holds a market share of 54% compared to OpenAI's 21%. Applications drive infrastructure adoption and foundation models, not the other way around. Morgan Stanley reports that generative AI reached a 34% contribution margin in 2025, its first profitable year, and this could rise to 67% by 2028 as infrastructure costs fall and efficiency improves. However, most of these profits go to companies selling complete solutions, not just raw computing power.

Private investors now have to decide which use cases will create the next wave of real value, not just add a simple interface to ChatGPT without real value. But solutions built for specific verticals such as health care, law, finance and manufacturing (those that are deeply integrated into workflows, use unique data, and become essential to operations) are the businesses that

are worth serious investment. The free market distributes resources well when investors focus on fundamentals, beyond mere stories. Revenue, customer retention, growth rates and paths to profitability matter again. Right now, circular financing obscures true demand. For instance, of Microsoft's reported Azure AI revenue, quite a lot comes from OpenAI's spending on compute at heavily discounted rates that essentially cover only Microsoft's costs. Applications break this pattern because they generate revenue from outside the circular financing loop.

Core issues

For governments, the next phase will raise tough questions about competition, especially as foundation model providers begin to build their own applications. When OpenAI launches coding tools or Anthropic develops enterprise solutions, it puts pressure on independent application builders who do not have the same infrastructure advantages. Copyright issues are also becoming more important as the source of training data becomes a key legal concern. Privacy rules will need to adapt to address AI agents that access large amounts of personal and business information.

Policymakers should not hurry into strict regulations. The application layer needs room to experiment, fail and improve until it finds product-market fit. But still, rules about competition, especially reviews of acquisitions that prevent big companies from buying and shutting down potential rivals, are important. The trend of acqui-hires (where startups are bought mainly for their staff and then closed) often leaves employees stranded and can hurt the energy and the innovation that the sector needs.

The Internet was not monetised by building bandwidth. It was monetised by building applications that made bandwidth valuable. AI will follow the same trajectory.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tariffs reduced

The decision by the U.S. President Donald Trump to reduce the U.S.'s tariff on India to 18% (Front page, February 3), all of a sudden, stems from New Delhi's decision to reduce oil imports from Russia, which it had already committed to the U.S. The perception is that it arises from the fact that New Delhi has entered into an extensive and exclusive trade agreement with the European Union. This agreement is a master stroke by New Delhi which

appears to have made the U.S. clear its hazy vision.

**A.V. Narayanan,
Chennai**

The development spells hope and augurs well for the bilateral relationship between the two countries. However, there is no clarity on whether the tariff imposed for Russian oil purchases has been removed or not. It is time that the America administration removes the tariff hurdles and lets relations between the two

great democracies get back to normal.

**Kosaraju Chandramouli,
Hyderabad**

Frankly speaking, this nonagenarian quill-driver is of the opinion that India has been weak in dealing with the U.S. The American President is on cloud nine proudly proclaiming that 'we agreed to a trade deal'. But what sort of an 'amazing relationship' is this? India can be a friend of America but not a factotum

to the U.S. at any cost whatsoever.

**Mani Natarajan,
Chennai**

The cryptic announcement by the U.S. comes as a matter of immense relief, but marks yet another twist in the 'blow hot, blow cold' relations between the two nations. However, the caveats appear to be a glaring instance of direct intervention in the internal affairs of our country. Given the high degree of unpredictability when it

There is no case for scrapping MPLADS funds

Recently, a controversy broke out over the use of MPLADS funds. Launched in December 1993, MPLADS, or Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme, is a Central Sector Scheme fully funded by the Government of India. It enables Members of Parliament to recommend developmental projects focusing on creating durable community assets (such as roads, school buildings, and water facilities) in their constituencies.

The case at hand

Last month, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) alleged that three Congress MPs from Rajasthan had misused the MPLADS funds. The party claimed that Brijendra Singh Ola of Jhunjhunu had allocated ₹25 lakh, Rahul Kaswan of Churu had allocated ₹50 lakh, and Sanjana Jatav of Bharatpur had allocated ₹45 lakh for developmental work in the Kaithal district of Haryana, instead of utilising the funds for developmental work within their constituencies in Rajasthan. This, the BJP argued, ran contrary to the core objective of MPLADS. It raised concerns about the appropriateness of allocating public funds across State boundaries. The party further alleged that the allocations were politically motivated, as Kaithal is the Assembly constituency of Aditya Surjewala, son of Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Randeep Singh Surjewala.

The Congress rejected this charge of impropriety. Mr. Ola said that the allocations were made within the framework of existing MPLADS guidelines (2023), which state that elected MPs can recommend eligible works up to a limit of ₹50 lakh in a financial year outside their constituency/State, except in cases of natural calamities. (In the event of a "calamity of severe nature" in any part of the country, an MP can recommend works up to a maximum of ₹1 crore.) He also accused BJP MPs of having previously used MPLAD funds for

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questionable purposes.

The debate over the rationale of this scheme is not new. While critics argue that MPLADS funds are poorly utilised and should be discontinued, supporters of the scheme argue that funds should continue to be given as MPs need them for carrying out developmental work.

Use of funds

The MPLAD Scheme enables each MP to recommend developmental projects worth ₹5 crore annually, usually within their own constituency. According to data from the live MPLADS dashboard (mplads.mospo.gov.in), which is updated as projects progress, during the ongoing 18th Lok Sabha, ₹5,486 crore has been allocated for MPLADS funds. Of this, ₹1,453.69 crore has been spent so far. Many developmental works are still under way.

During the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-2024), ₹4,837.87 crore was allocated for MPLADS funds, of which ₹3,639.53 crore was reported as spent. Of the total 96,211 works recommended to be carried out, 41,143 were completed. While nearly half the works were not completed, 75.23% of the allocated budget was spent. The share of the total allocated budget that remained unspent could be attributed to inactivity during at least two years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The data suggest that the MPLADS funds were used well in previous years as well. During the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-2019), only 8.7% funds remained unused. In the 15th Lok Sabha (2009-2014), this share was much lower (3.47%). And in the 14th Lok Sabha (2004-2009), only 0.99% remained unused.

While some MPs may not have been able to use their MPLADS funds to the fullest capacity, that cannot be treated as the dominant trend. In fact, there are notable examples of MPs who have fully utilised their MPLADS allocations and it is worth

highlighting them.

According to a report in October 2025, Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal (Rajya Sabha, Punjab) emerged as the top spender among Punjab's Rajya Sabha MPs, having utilised ₹9.34 crore of his allocation of ₹14.72 crore (over 63%). Mr. Seechewal had primarily utilised his funds to address water scarcity in villages.

Iqra Choudhary, the Samajwadi Party MP for Kairana, has been appreciated by many for maintaining a fully updated MPLADS profile with geotagged images. This exemplifies transparency and enables a citizen to easily verify what work was done and where.

In the 17th Lok Sabha, Tejasvi Surya (Lok Sabha MP from the BJP representing Bengaluru South) spent ₹19.36 crore, according to an analysis by Bangalore Political Action Committee. By also asking the highest number of questions in the Lok Sabha, he emerged as a top performer among Bengaluru city MPs.

Ahishhek Banerjee, the Trinamool Congress MP from Diamond Harbour, was cited in a report for having the highest number of project completions among West Bengal MPs. He completed 173 works and spent ₹6.13 crore.

No case for discontinuation

There is therefore no case for discontinuing the MPLADS Scheme or for rethinking or reducing the amounts. A better approach for improvement would be to organise short workshops with consultants, where MPs are guided on how to effectively utilise their MPLADS funds for development purposes.

After all, MPs know the importance of utilising MPLADS funds. Expenditure on developmental projects within their constituencies addresses local needs and gives them political benefits. And it is when people truly benefit that MPs have a greater chance of getting re-elected.

While some MPs may not have been able to use their MPLADS funds to the fullest capacity, that cannot be treated as the dominant trend.

While it is true that some MPs may not have been able to use their MPLADS funds to the fullest capacity for developmental work, that cannot be treated as the dominant trend. In fact, there are notable examples of MPs who have fully utilised their MPLADS allocations and it is worth

Why the BJP struggles in Tamil Nadu

Tamil religiosity functions outside the ideological framework of the Sangh Parivar

STATE OF PLAY

B. Kolappan
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In theory, Tamil Nadu should have been fertile ground for the BJP and the Sangh Parivar to take root. The State's cultural landscape includes the Bhakti movement, temples, a vast body of devotional literature, and Sangam poetry that praises several deities. Despite the rationalist movement, a majority of the people are believers. Even several politicians who benefited from 'Periyar' E.V. Ramasamy's Dravidian movement continue to practise faith in their personal lives. In fact, the few leaders who remain committed to Periyar's hardcore ideology have been unable to persuade their own families to follow it fully.

Yet, the BJP has failed to convert religious Hindus into political Hindus in Tamil Nadu. This is because the socio-religious tradition of the region – from the Bhakti movement to the Self-Respect Movement – has been deeply anti-Brahmin and hostile to Brahminical rituals and Sanskrit modes of worship.

There has also long been resistance among Tamils to viewing themselves primarily through the homogenising category of 'Hindu'. Internal sectarian identities have often been stronger than any pan-Hindu consciousness. The Supreme Court's decision to appoint a retired judge to mediate the Vadakalai-Tenkalai dispute among Vaishnavites at the Varadaraja Perumal Temple in Kanchipuram underlines this fragmentation. The antagonism between Shaivites and Vaishnavites has been no less intense.

The Dravidian movement



itself has its roots in the historical conflict between Brahmins and Vellalas. The Vellalas, a land-holding community with expertise in agriculture, were predominantly Shaivites. The intellectual foundation of the Dravidian movement was laid largely by educated Vellalas who were anti-Brahmin.

The historian, A. R. Venkatachalam, in Dravida Iyakkam Vellarular, notes that while several Vellala scholars supported the Self-Respect Movement, they were furious

when the magazine Kudi Arasu, run by Periyar, published a series of articles ridiculing the Congress to function as a viable opposition and even capture power. In such a scenario, the BJP could have more easily displaced the Congress and occupied that space. Instead, the AIADMK foreclosed this possibility, leaving the BJP without a clear ideological or electoral opening.

By preferring a status quo approach to the caste system, the BJP has failed to reflect the ethos of Tamil Nadu. When there were demands for performing pujas in Tamil and for the appointment of non-Brahmins as priests, BJP leaders opposed them.

The BJP-led Central government has also failed to proactively implement major development schemes in the State. It has been unable to turn the tables on the Dravidian parties, which have a strong organisational base and deep cultural legitimacy.

Has the 16th Finance Commission sidelined the States?

Despite a rare consensus among States, the Commission has aligned with the Centre's priorities

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan
Sambavi Parthasarathy

The 16th Finance Commission (FC)'s vertical devolution recommendations prioritise the needs of the Centre over the realities of States. By merely acknowledging, rather than heeding, States' fiscal pressures, the FC has taken a distinctly conservative stance.

To grasp the underlying tensions, we must first look deeper into the structural issues. The 16th FC has maintained the vertical devolution rate at 41%, representing the States' share of the divisible pool. Crucially, this divisible pool excludes cesses, surcharges, and collection costs, meaning its total volume is dictated by the Centre's tax strategy. By favouring cesses and surcharges over standard tax instruments, the Centre effectively shrinks the shareable revenue; conversely, a shift back to traditional taxation would expand it.

Data show the way the present regime has gone about it. **Chart 1** is a simplified representation of the divisible pool. Between 2013 and 2019, for every ₹100 collected by the Centre, about ₹93.95 was collected as taxes and duties, while the cesses and surcharges component increased to ₹13.5. For 2025-26, the Centre is expected to collect ₹89 as taxes and duties and ₹11 as cesses and surcharges. The GST compensation cess was not included in this analysis, as it was collected to compensate the States for revenue loss due to the implementation of GST.

Let us juxtapose the figures: post-2019, the cesses and surcharges component has nearly doubled from ₹5.7 to ₹13.5 for every ₹100

collected. Notably, the 16th FC has also come to the same conclusion: "In 2011-12, this non-shareable portion of revenues was 1.1% of GDP, and the divisible pool was 9.1%. By 2023-24, the non-shareable portion had expanded to 2.2% of GDP while the divisible pool stood at 9.4%."

Further evidence of this is also seen in **Charts 2A** and **2B** which are based on absolute collections data presented in Parliament on Tuesday. The money collected as cesses by the Centre – excluding GST compensation cess – increased from ₹44,688 crore in FY15 to ₹3,52,650 crore in FY22 and is expected to be around ₹2,51,206 crore in FY26. Similarly, surcharges collected have risen from ₹15,702 crore in FY15 to ₹40,758 crore in FY22 and is expected to be around ₹1,72,500 crore in FY26.

This unbridled rise in cesses and surcharges means that the share of the divisible pool in the Centre's Gross Tax Revenue (including the GST compensation cess) is expected to remain below 90% for the sixth consecutive year (**Chart 3**). In contrast, between FY13 and FY18, this share remained consistently above 93%. While the debate rages over whether to maintain, raise, or lower the vertical devolution rate of 41%, the underlying divisible pool is shrinking because the Centre is increasingly collecting revenue through cesses and surcharges.

As many as 18 States – including Odisha, Haryana, and Gujarat, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu – have demanded an increase in vertical devolution from 41% to 50%. Most other States have advocated for a more moderate increase to 45% or 48%. In stark contrast, the Centre called for a "moderation in tax devolution". While the 16th FC kept the rate unchanged in an apparent attempt to balance these competing demands, the reasoning provided suggests that maintaining the status quo primarily serves the Centre's interests.

First, the FC notes that the Constitution does not permit a cap on cesses and surcharges. It argues that the Centre requires these funds for emergencies such as war, famine, and pandemics, concluding that imposing a limit would be "imprudent". Interestingly, the FC simultaneously acknowledges that long-term reliance on these levies is "undesirable", warning that if the Centre continues to favour them, it may "lose interest in standard instruments of taxation", an outcome detrimental to States' interests. Furthermore, the FC points to "recent shifts in the external security and defence environment" as a justification for increased defence spending, while asserting that the Centre has demonstrated a "high degree of effectiveness" in infrastructure building, necessitating greater financial support. Also, it maintains that the current distribution of tax revenues "gives States sufficient resources to discharge their constitutional responsibilities". It concludes by suggesting that the resolution lies in a mutual agreement between the Centre and the States, whereby the Centre voluntarily transitions a large part of its revenue collection from cesses and surcharges back into the divisible pool of regular taxes.

The FC's interpretation of the fiscal landscape ultimately raises more questions than it answers. First, could the architects of the Constitution have ever envisioned such a disproportionate rise in cesses and surcharges? Second, by declaring a cap on cess as "imprudent," has the FC not effectively forced the Centre to draw its own boundary, by refusing to play mediator? Third, doesn't the claim that the Centre demonstrates efficiency in infrastructure ignore the fact that high-performing States are getting the raw end of the bargain? Finally, if the States truly possess "sufficient" resources, why have nearly all of them – regardless of political affiliation – unanimously demanded a larger share?

Status quo in States' share

The data for the charts were sourced from the Rajya Sabha Questions and Answers, 16th Finance Commission report and CAG reports



Chart 1: For every ₹100 collected by the Centre, how much ₹ is collected as taxes & duties and cesses & surcharges?

TAXES AND DUTIES CESSES, SURCHARGES (INCLUDES COST OF TAX COLLECTION)

2013-19

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 4, 1976

Wages by cheque will keep away lenders'

New Delhi, Feb 2: The Union Labour Minister, Mr. K.V. Raghunatha Reddy, told the Lok Sabha to-day that the Government would look into the question of opening branches of banks in colliery areas, tea gardens and other places to help workers encash their wage cheques.

Mr. Reddy, who was replying to the debate on the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, assured members that payment of wages by cheque as provided for in the Bill would be purely voluntary. No employer could make payment by cheque without the authorisation of the employee.

The Bill, which has already been passed by the Rajya Sabha, sought to replace an ordinance amending the Payment of Wages Act to enable employers to make payment of wages by cheque. The Lok Sabha approved the Bill after accepting an official amendment of a technical nature.

During the discussion, members from all sides of the House except the CPI-M, welcomed the measure. They expressed the hope that the Bill would liberate workers from the clutches of money-lenders. But Mr. Dinen Bhattacharya (CPI-M) contended that the employers would try to make payment by cheque compulsory. This would lead to great hardships to the workers, he said.

Moving the Bill, Mr. Raghunatha Reddy said the Bill was designed to protect workers from the stranglehold of moneylenders. He did not agree with Mr. Dinen Bhattacharya that payment by cheque would add to the difficulties of workers.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 4, 1926

Maintaining Britain's food supply

London, Feb. 3: It is learnt that Government's plans for maintaining essential food supplies in the case of national emergency have reached an advanced stage of preparation. It is now disclosed that the Board of Trade recently circularised the wholesale food merchants regarding available stocks and sources of supply and is at present tabulating their replies and perfecting a skeleton organisation for distribution all over the country directed by twelve district officers under the central command of Postmaster-General.

From Page One**U.S. deal will not include sensitive sectors: Goyal**

"Our marine exporters were facing difficulties. The textile sector had also been facing the need for reduced tariffs. This is a deal that will protect the interests of every Indian and provide huge opportunities for all the people of India, and will protect the sensitive sectors, including agriculture and dairy," the Union Minister said.

Mr. Goyal said, "It will open up huge opportunities for our labour-intensive export sectors such as textiles, apparel, plastics, home decor, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery, organic chemicals, rubber goods, machinery, and aircraft components."

Trump's assertions

Mr. Goyal also sought to address questions from the Opposition as to why the deal was first announced by Mr. Trump. "The reciprocal tariff was set by the U.S., and they were the ones who had to reduce tariffs, so when they did reduce it to 18%, that news would obviously come from the U.S.," he explained.

In his post on Truth Social, Mr. Trump also made several assertions about what Mr. Modi had allegedly agreed to on India's behalf. One of these was that India would buy "over \$500 billion dollars [sic] worth of U.S. energy, technology, agricultural, coal, and many other products".

Khemchand Singh set to be Manipur CM

There are 37 BJP MLAs, including seven Kuki-Zo legislators, in the 60-member Assembly. Five Kuki-Zo MLAs attended Tuesday's meeting. In all, there are 10 Kuki-Zo MLAs in the Assembly.

Six MLAs in the Assembly are from the National People's Party (NPP) and five from the Naga People's Front.

Not all are on board

Though the Tuesday's meeting was attended by five Kuki-Zo MLAs, not all of them were on board.

Paolielal Hakip, BJP MLA from Saikot who belongs to the Kuki-Zo community, told *The Hindu* that he met party leaders and told them that till there was an assurance on a political solution for the community, he would not join the government.

Over the past three days, the BJP central leadership asked all its Manipur legislators and alliance partners to be present in New Delhi for a crucial meeting. Wilubou Newmai, a BJP leader from Manipur, said, "A lot of back-channel efforts went in to bring all the communities together."

Face-off in LS over Rahul Gandhi's speech

Speaker Om Birla held meetings with both government and Opposition MPs to resolve the impasse and did not preside over the proceedings on Tuesday.

The House witnessed high drama over Mr. Gandhi's insistence on speaking about excerpts from General Naravane's unpublished book, cited in a report published by *The Caravan* magazine.

Objecting to Mr. Gandhi's move, Mr. Rijiju said the Speaker had already given a ruling on the matter on Monday, and the Opposition leader should not raise the issue repeatedly. Mr. Gandhi countered that as the Leader of the Opposition, he took objection to the term 'permission' when he had to speak. As the impasse continued, Krishna Prasad Tenneti of Telugu Desam Party (TDP), who was in the Chair, called other members to speak.

When other Opposition MPs did not speak, he called the name of TDP's Harish Balayogi. But as soon as the TDP MP started speaking, Opposition MPs rushed into the well of the House, tore papers and hurled them towards the Chair, prompting Mr. Tenneti to adjourn the House until 3 p.m.

PM is 'compromised', says Rahul amid ruckus

Speaking to presspersons in the Parliament House complex, the former Congress chief said this was the first time in history that the LoP had not been allowed to speak on the Presidential Address.

"The main thing is that our Prime Minister has been compromised," Mr. Gandhi said.

The unpublished memoir reportedly showed the Union government's indecisiveness in dealing with China during the face-off in eastern Ladakh in October 2020.

Criticising the India-U.S. deal, Mr. Gandhi said that the Centre "sold off" the blood and sweat of the farmers to U.S. interests. "The farmers of India must understand that in this trade deal, Narendra Modi ji has sold off your labour and blood and sweat. And that is because he is compromised now. Not just you [farmers], the entire country has been sold. That is why I am not being allowed to speak there [inside the House]," he said.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is rattled. And the trade deal that had been stuck for the last four months, for some reason which Prime Minister Modi and I know, was sealed last evening," he said, claiming that Mr. Modi is under pressure from the Epstein files and U.S. case against Gautam Adani.

Manipur House must be dissolved: Cong. leader

State Congress president moves HC against the 'unconstitutional acts' of Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla; says the February 9, 2025, order effectively 'circumvented the rigours of Article 174(1)'

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

Manipur Congress president Keisham Meghachandra Singh has petitioned the Manipur High Court, challenging the "unconstitutional exercise of powers" by Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla to pave the way for President's Rule in the State on February 13, 2025.

The last sitting of the House was held on August 12, 2024... next sitting ought to have been held on or before February 11. However, Biren Singh resigned as CM on February 9. On that day, the Governor declared his January 24 order summoning the Assembly for February 11 to be null and void

K. MEGHACHANDRA SINGH
Manipur Congress president

the Manipur government.

The court of Justice A. Guneshwar Sharma noted that the case involves the interpretation of Article 174 and referred it to the Chief Justice for placement before a Division Bench and listing of the case.

In July 2025, the State Congress chief sought a clarification from the government regarding the constitutional status of Manipur's 60-member Assembly, which had not been convened since August 2024.

President's Rule was imposed in the State four days after N. Biren Singh resigned as Chief Minister on February 9, 2025, amid the ongoing ethnic conflict.

The Congress president asked whether the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly is "still alive or already dead" or "constitutionally deemed to be dissolved from midnight" of February 11, two days before the imposition of President's Rule.

Floor test

"The last sitting of the 60-member House was held on August 12, 2024, and according to Article 174(1) of the Constitution of India, the next sitting ought to have been mandatorily held on or before February 11. However, Mr. Biren Singh resigned as the Chief Minister on February 9. On that day, the Governor declared his January 24 order

summoning the Assembly for February 11 to be null and void," he wrote in a memorandum.

He pointed out that the Assembly was not in suspension at the time of the Chief Minister's resignation, and Article 174(1), which mandates that no more than six months should elapse between two sittings of a Legislative Assembly, remained applicable.

He said the Governor's February 9, 2025, order effectively "circumvented the rigours of Article 174(1)" and further delayed the Assembly's sitting beyond the constitutionally permitted time frame. He added that any gubernatorial action or order requiring a new Chief Minister to undergo a floor test "would tantamount to the violation of Article 174(1)".

Meanwhile, the Kangkipi District Internally Displaced Welfare Committee rejected the March 31 deadline for the resettlement of the internally displaced persons, calling it unrealistic and unworkable in the absence of basic infrastructure.

Centre must act to protect Kashmiris, say J&K MLAs**Peerzada Ashiq**

SRINAGAR

Growing cases of harassment and violence against Kashmiris residing outside Jammu and Kashmir reverberated in the J&K Assembly on Tuesday, with both the ruling National Conference (NC) and the Opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) seeking the Centre's intervention into the matter.

PDP MLA Waheed Ur Rehman Parra said incidents of "hate crimes" against Kashmiri students and workers outside the Union Territory were on the rise. He moved an adjournment motion seeking an "urgent discussion on the safety of Kashmiris".

Disturbing trend
"Hate crimes, intimidation, and physical assaults faced by members of the Kashmiri community living outside the Union Territory are deeply disturbing. These incidents have created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among families," Mr. Parra said, urging Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and the Union Home Minister to take concrete steps.

NC MLAs also staged a sit-in outside the Assembly, demanding restoration of Statehood, constitutional guarantees, and an end to the harassment of Kashmiris outside J&K. "Time is appropriate to restore J&K's Statehood. We also seek the attention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mr. Shah to end the harassment of Kashmiris outside the Union Territory. It has now become fashionable to target Kashmiris in States like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand," NC MLA Tanvir Sadiq said.

Meanwhile, former J&K Chief Minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti accused the NC of failing to raise the issue effectively. "Where are the MPs of J&K who should be raising their voices as such attacks become routine?" she said.

SC questions WhatsApp, Meta on personal data**Krishnadas Rajagopal**

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would not permit instant messaging platform WhatsApp and its parent company, Meta, to breach the right to privacy of millions of their "silent consumers" in India through the sharing and commercial exploitation of personal data.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, addressing Meta and WhatsApp, compared the sharing of private data to a "decent way of committing theft", saying by now "you must have taken away millions of bytes of data". WhatsApp and Meta, led by senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Amit Sibal, objected to the court's observations, saying users



Justice Bagchi pointed out that the DPDP Act of 2023 covered only the factor of privacy.

could 'opt out' of data sharing and that prior consent was cardinal. WhatsApp stressed that messages on its platform were end-to-end encrypted.

Chief Justice Kant asked the online entities whether a poor street vendor or a person living in rural areas would be able to navigate the complicated and "cleverly-crafted" language of

consent and be able to take an informed decision.

Value of shared data

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, who, along with Justice Vibul M. Pancholi, formed part of the Bench, said every silo of data relating to an individual – whether private or not – had value.

He pointed out that the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act of 2023, India's first legal framework for digital personal data privacy, covered only the factor of privacy. There seemed to be nothing in the law on the sharing of the data value of a consumer.

"The DPDP Act only addresses privacy. We would like to examine the rental sharing of data. Behavioural trends and tendencies can be utilised and monetised. Your (WhatsApp's)

Trinamool, some poll officials behind voter harassment, says BJP**Shiv Sahay Singh**

KOLKATA



Bengal BJP MLAs submit a memorandum to Governor C.V. Ananda Bose on Monday. PTI

After weeks of insisting that the Trinamool Congress was exaggerating reports of harassment during the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal, the State unit of the BJP has changed its stance. It now admits that people in the State are facing harassment, but blames a section of poll officials, in collusion with the ruling Trinamool, for "deliberately" making mistakes and issuing notices to harass voters.

According to the BJP leaders, it has been observed in many cases that "EROS and AEROS across the State have appointed contractual employees for the scrutiny process of SIR or for issuing notices and conducting hearings, which is completely contrary to the EC guidelines".

The memorandum added that despite repeated requests from the EC to the West Bengal Chief Secretary and Finance Secretary, no data entry operators had been appointed for the SIR. During the SIR in Bihar, a sufficient number of data entry operators were appointed by the State government, it said.

The memorandum seeks to initiate disciplinary proceedings against erring poll officials.

The BJP MLAs claimed

that a section of electoral registration officers (EROS), additional electoral registration officers (AEROS), and booth-level officers (BLOs) of common people in collusion with Trinamool Congress and I-PAC

during SIR.

The memorandum gave an example of a person communicating online with his doctor about medicines, only to get advertisements or notifications about medical services minutes later.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta

present in the courtroom, said "our private data is not only sold, but it is commercially exploited. We are not only consumers, but also products".

The Bench impleaded

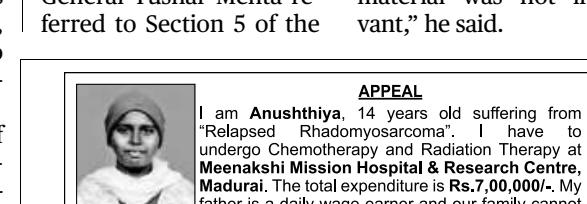
the Centre, through the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, as a party in the case. Justice Bagchi said the Centre has to compare the DPDP Act and the European Union's (EU) strict online go-

NSA provisions allow Wangchuk's transfer to Rajasthan: Centre**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

National Security Act, 1980 which armed the "appropriate government" with the power to "regulate place and conditions of detention". Mr. Mehta said a detained person "may, by general or special order, be removed from one place of detention to another place of detention, whether within the same State or in another State".

Mr. Mehta said there was material against Mr. Wangchuk, which justified the detention order. "The material was not irrelevant," he said.



I am Anushthiya, 14 years old suffering from 'Relapsed Hodgkin's lymphoma'. I have to undergo Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. The total expenditure is Rs.7,00,000/- My father is a daily wage earner and our family cannot afford this huge expenditure. Donations sent by Ch.D.M.O. NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c No. 60182010063310, IFSC: CNRB0016018) favouring 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, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401 / 31523781 / 7338978027. E-mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com. Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org.

Anushthiya

PM is 'compromised', says Rahul amid ruckus

Speaking to presspersons in the Parliament House complex, the former Congress chief said this was the first time in history that the LoP had not been allowed to speak on the Presidential Address.

"The main thing is that our Prime Minister has been compromised," Mr. Gandhi said.

The unpublished memoir reportedly showed the Union government's indecisiveness in dealing with China during the face-off in eastern Ladakh in October 2020.

Criticising the India-U.S. deal, Mr. Gandhi said that the Centre "sold off" the blood and sweat of the farmers to U.S. interests. "The farmers of India must understand that in this trade deal, Narendra Modi ji has sold off your labour and blood and sweat. And that is because he is compromised now. Not just you [farmers], the entire country has been sold. That is why I am not being allowed to speak there [inside the House]," he said.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is rattled. And the trade deal that had been stuck for the last four months, for some reason which Prime Minister Modi and I know, was sealed last evening," he said, claiming that Mr. Modi is under pressure from the Epstein files and U.S. case against Gautam Adani.

U.S. deal a 'big decision' that will benefit India, PM tells NDA MPs

In the first meeting of alliance MPs during Budget Session, Narendra Modi tells them that 'the world is increasingly looking at India amid uncertainties'; Rijiju says MPs are excited about conclusion of trade agreements with as many as 39 countries

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The National Democratic Alliance's parliamentary grouping on Tuesday felicitated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for signing trade deals with various countries recently. In reply, the Prime Minister said the world was increasingly looking at India amid uncertainties.

In the past one year, India has finalised trade agreements with the European Union, the United Kingdom, Oman, New Zealand, and the United States.

The meeting, the first of NDA MPs during the Budget Session, congratulated the newly elected BJP national president, Nitin Nohin, who was present.

According to an MP who attended the meeting, Mr. Modi said India's strength amid the uncertain global situation was being noticed. "The world is looking



On a high note: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president Nitin Nohin, and Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah at the NDA Parliamentary Party meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

at India," he is reported to have said. Another MP said the Prime Minister described the India-U.S. tariff agreement as a "big decision" that would benefit the country.

Mr. Modi commended Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for presenting her ninth consecutive Bud-

get, adding that it was a document that laid the road map for the country and its development to 2047, when India completes a century as a modern independent state.

Briefing presspersons after the meeting, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said that MPs

were excited about the conclusion of various trade agreements. "There is excitement among the MPs that these trade deals have been concluded under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. The trade deals have been signed with a total of 39 countries. This is historic. All these 39 coun-

tries are developed countries... This is historic. There has been a very good atmosphere in the country," he said.

Mr. Rijiju said the Prime Minister had given broad guidelines for Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members to carry forward their parliamentary and welfare work.

"The Prime Minister said the NDA is winning one election after another due to its good work. He said election can't be won without being on the ground. We have to be on the ground and do good work for the welfare of the people," Mr. Rijiju said.

Those who attended the meeting included Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Health Minister J.P. Nadda, Apna Dal leader and Union Minister Anupriya Patel, NCP leader Praful Patel, Shiv Sena leader Shrikant Shinde, Rashtriya Lok Morcha leader Upendra Kushwaha and MPs.

Exporters relieved, farmers upset over trade agreement

A. M. Jigesh

NEW DELHI

Exporters of agriculture products, fisheries, and seafood were relieved after the announcement of the trade deal between India and the United States, but farmers expressed concern about the possible import of crops such as soybean, cotton, maize, and wheat, and trade unions warned that the deal would hurt Indian industries and workers.

"We are back in the business now," Alex Ninan of the Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI) told *The Hindu*. "We are confident that with the conclusion of the trade deal and lowering of tariffs to 18%, quantum of export of seafood from India to U.S. will show an increase and soon reach back to the previous levels," said SEAI president G. Pawan Kumar.

The Samyukt Kisan Mor-

cha (SKM), an umbrella group of farm outfits, termed the deal as a "betrayal of the people".

Allowing zero per cent import tariff on U.S. goods is a surrender to the pressure of U.S. imperialism, the SKM said.

"This trade deal to allow Indian markets to be flooded by highly subsidised U.S. agricultural products will devastate the entire peasantry in India. The U.S. has only 18.8 lakh farmers as per the recent survey in 2024, compared to 14.65 crore operational holdings in India as per the agricultural census of 2015," the SKM said, urging farmers to join the general strike on February 12.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions said if the deal comes into effect, it will be the most deadly action against the interests of workers and peasants, and Indian economic sovereignty at large.

EXPLAINER

Suhasini Haider

NEW DELHI

The announcement that the U.S. will reduce "reciprocal" tariffs on India from 25% to 18% and drop the 25% punitive tariffs for Russian oil imports, is a major relief to Indian exporters, and indicates that relations between the two countries are on the mend after a year of severe tensions.

The move on slashing U.S. tariffs was made during External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Washington to attend a Critical Minerals Ministerial meeting, his seventh visit to the U.S. since Donald Trump's election as U.S. President. It also comes just weeks after the new U.S. Ambassador Sergio Gor took charge in Delhi, indicating a fresh attempt at resetting ties. However, differences remain between Prime Minister Narendra Modi's version of the agreement and Mr. Trump's version,

which will need to be reconciled.

Where is the negotiated text of the trade deal?

Mr. Trump's reference to a trade deal left it unclear whether he is referring to a deal over cutting reciprocal tariffs, or to the larger "first tranche" of the India-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that has been negotiated between trade teams after Mr. Modi's visit to Washington in February 2025. As a result of the FTA, both sides were expected to drop tariffs, but no details of the FTA, or a negotiated text, have thus far been released by either government.

Tariffs to zero?

Mr. Trump's claim that India would "reduce Tariffs and Non-Tariff Barriers against the United States, to ZERO", has not been confirmed by New Delhi, nor has there been any explanation about which lines would reduce to zero. In addition, questions about market access, especially in agricultural sectors like soyabean and dai-

comment on whether any such commitment has been given, but the size of the figure indicates this is meant to be done over several years, and with multiple sectors involved. It is important to remember that India-U.S. bilateral trade in goods stands at about \$13 billion at present, and India's current investment in the U.S. is just over \$40 billion.

Indian investment in the U.S.

In his post, Mr. Trump said that Mr. Modi also "committed to buy American" with over \$500 billion dollars for U.S. energy, technology, agriculture, coal, and other products. The government declined to

NDA ally TDP seeks clarity on India-U.S. trade deal; Opposition walks out of RS

Suhobna K. Nair
NEW DELHI

TDP member says that only public statements have been made by both sides so far with no formal documentation

two separate duty codes – one for the reciprocal tariff and another for the Russia-India punitive levy, each reviewed independently until further legal clarification is issued. "I therefore appeal to the government to continue an intense dialogue with the U.S. administration to secure the formal withdrawal of the punitive duty," he said.

After Zero Hour, the Congress chief whip in the Upper House, Jairam Ramesh, said Indians had heard about the deal from Mr. Trump rather than from their own government.

Opposition MPs raised slogans accusing the government of bartering India's interests. Leader of the House J.P. Nadda criticised the Opposition's protest, accusing them of "seeing bad even in good things". Opposition MPs, except those from the Trinamool Congress, walked out. Mr. Nadda further added, "Their interest is only in creating politics out of everything, and we saw an example of that just now."

Trade deal: unanswered questions remain



On the same page: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor in New Delhi. PTI

ed States and, potentially, Venezuela", adding that this would help end the war in Ukraine. The Ministry of External Affairs has not responded to requests for comment on this issue. While the government insists that it has no part to play in these commercial decisions, that is contradicted by Mr. Trump's statement that Mr. Modi had agreed to cutting Russian oil.

Will India have to give concessions on Iran?

Mr. Trump has indicated that the U.S. wants India to buy Venezuelan oil in lieu of Russian oil. This may be a relief for India, but raises questions over its autonomy on important strategic decisions. The U.S. has also threatened to impose 25% tariffs on countries "doing business" with Iran, which includes India, and Washington plans to end its sanctions waiver on Indian investment in Iran's Chabahar port.

He pointed out that Russia was only seeing public statements from the U.S. regarding the possibility of India refusing Russian oil.

No word on India stopping oil purchases, says Kremlin

Press Trust of India
MOSCOW

Russia has not heard any statements from India about stopping Russian oil purchases, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday.

His comments came a day after U.S. President Donald Trump said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "agreed to stop buying Russian Oil, and to buy much more from the United States and, potentially, Venezuela".

"We haven't heard any statements from New Delhi on this matter yet," Mr. Peskov said.

Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, who oversees the energy sector in the Cabinet, said the government was closely monitoring the situation.

He pointed out that Russia was only seeing public statements from the U.S. regarding the possibility of India refusing Russian oil.

SIR case: West Bengal CM likely to attend court

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is likely to appear in person on Wednesday before a Supreme Court Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant in a case challenging the legality of the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise conducted in the State.

A batch of pleas challenging the mass exclusion of electors from the voters' list of the State is listed for hearing on Wednesday. Ms. Banerjee has filed a petition in her own individual capacity against the exercise conducted by the Election Commission of India.

A gate pass for entry into the Supreme Court has been made for Wednesday, and she is expected to be present in the court room with her lawyers.



Mamata Banerjee addresses the media outside the EC office in New Delhi on Tuesday.

surrounded by many "SIR-affected" families from West Bengal. These families, who accompanied Ms. Banerjee to Delhi, include those who have either their names deleted from the electoral roll after being declared dead by the Election Commission and relatives of Booth Level Officers (BLOs) who died dur-

ing the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise. A Trinamool delegation led by Ms. Banerjee met the Election Commission on Monday.

The CEC can be removed from office through the process of impeachment, requiring a two-thirds majority of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha present and voting for the same.

Ms. Banerjee said that the BJP defended SIR claiming that it would remove "ghospetiya" or infiltrators from the electoral rolls, but so far, it had not been able to produce any evidence to back the claim. She further said that the exercise seemed to have targeted minorities. In West Bengal, 33% of the population are minorities. She asked, "Will you delete all of them?"

Opposition MPs question Centre on India-U.S. trade deal in Rajya Sabha

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Opposition MPs in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday asked the Union government to ensure that the India-U.S. trade deal does not impact the lives of Indian farmers.

Speaking on the second day of the discussion in the Upper House on the Motion to Thanks to President Droupadi Murmu for her address to Parliament, Opposition members questioned the government over the announcement of the deal by U.S. President Donald Trump and alleged that the Narendra Modi government succumbed to U.S. pressure.

Congress leader Rajani Ashokrao Patil said it was being pointed out that India would open its agriculture sector to the U.S. "If the government does not protect farmers, if you



Seeking clarity: Congress member Rajani Ashokrao Patil speaks in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. ANI

open their agricultural market... Mr. Trump has said that \$500 billion worth of purchases are going to take place... It is essential for Parliament and the nation to know on which aspects the Prime Minister held discussions with Mr. Trump," she said. The Congress MP sought a clarification on Mr. Trump's claim that India would buy oil from the U.S. and Venezuela from now instead of Russia. She asked if the Centre had decided to desert the country's long-term ally. Trinamool Congress MP Ritabratra Banerjee said the Union government had succumbed to economic expansionism of the U.S., accepting all terms dictated by Mr. Trump on purchases of oil.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader John Brittas said the government considered the Upper House "inferior to Elon Musk's X platform" as the deal was announced in social media when Parliament was in session.

Abdul Wahab of the Indian Union Muslim League said U.S. President announced the deal first and the country's government responded much later. "I congratulate Mr. Trump for giving us the subsidy, making it 18%. Again like Operation Sindoora he has given a timely address to our government," he said.

Countering the Opposition questions, Shiv Sena leader Milind Deora said India had secured lower tariffs than its major competitors. "The tariff imposed on China is 34%, on Bangladesh 20%, on Vietnam 20%, and on Indonesia 19%. Today, India's tariff is only 18%," he said.

Will support any motion by Opposition to impeach CEC Gyanesh Kumar: Mamata

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday indicated that her party will be amenable to an impeachment motion against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar if a united Opposition moves such a motion.

The Chief Minister, however, noted that the Opposition does not have the numbers necessary to force the motion through in Parliament. "But it will be good to have it on record," she said. Ms. Banerjee, along with party national general secretary and Lok Sabha party leader Abhishek Banerjee, addressed a press conference in Delhi.

The two leaders were

IN BRIEF



India enters elite group with successful missile tech test

The Defence Research and Development Organisation successfully carried out the flight demonstration of Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet technology from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha, on Tuesday. The test was conducted at around 10.45 a.m. According to the Ministry of Defence, with this achievement, India has entered an elite group of nations possessing SFRD technology, a critical capability for the development of long-range air-to-air missiles that significantly enhance combat effectiveness and provide a decisive tactical edge against adversaries. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO and the Indian industry partners on the successful demonstration, describing it as a major milestone in the country's missile development programme.

Security forces engage group of terrorists in Udhampur

The Army said on Tuesday that security forces were engaged in a firefight with a group of terrorists in the Basantgarh area of Udhampur. An Army spokesman said contact was established with the terrorists during an ongoing operation named 'Operation Kiya' around 4 p.m. The operation is being jointly carried out by personnel of the Army, the J&K Police, and the CRPF. The Army said the operation was launched following an intelligence input. "A cordon has been established. A firefight is on. The operation is in progress," the Army said.

Air India plane flown after physical checks, no abnormal parameters noticed: DGCA

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Air India's Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner flight from London to Bengaluru which reported a fuel control switch glitch, took off on Sunday after the crew carried out a physical check of the switch and found no abnormal parameters during start of the engine or thereafter, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said on Tuesday.

The fuel control switch of the left engine of the Dreamliner aircraft VT-ANX, which operated the flight AI132 that had more than 200 people aboard, did not latch on the 'RUN' position twice during the engine start at London Heathrow airport, but was properly locked in the



Air India officials say it has begun fleet-wide checks of fuel control switches.

'RUN' position on the third attempt.

The detailed statement from the aviation regulator explaining the sequences related to the Dreamliner came against the backdrop of concerns in certain quarters over the aircraft operating the flight despite the fuel control switch issue.

Air India has started inspection of the fuel control switches of its Boeing 787 fleet following the incident, sources have said.

Air India's senior vice-president for flight operations, Manish Uppal, has told Boeing 787 pilots that the airline has initiated a fleet-wide re-inspection of the aircraft's fuel control switches and the airline's engineering team has escalated the matter to Boeing for priority evaluation, according to sources.

"In the interim, while we await Boeing's response, our engineers - out of an abundance of caution - have initiated precautionary fleet-wide re-inspection of the Fuel Control Switch (FCS) latch to verify normal operations," he said in an email on Tuesday.

At the State and Union Territory level, there were some outliers, where waste-pickers from the General category constituted a significant majority. For instance, in Delhi and Goa, those from General category communities outnumbered those from the SC, ST, and OBC communities put together. In West Bengal, General category

SC has not upheld death penalty in 3 years: report

The top court acquitted 10 death row prisoners in 2025; lower courts handed down 1,310 death sentences over the past decade; high rate of acquittals raises concerns about wrongful convictions

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has not confirmed a single death penalty in the past three years, according to an annual statistics report on death penalties in India, published by the Square Circle Clinic, a criminal justice initiative at the NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad.

In fact, in 2025, the top court acquitted 10 prisoners who had been on death row, the highest number of such acquittals in the past decade.

The report, which examined death penalty trends across India over the past 10 years, found that the sessions courts handed down 1,310 death sentences nationwide between 2016 and 2025.

"Despite growing judicial scepticism at higher levels," the lower courts sentenced 128 individuals to death in 2025 alone, the report said.

High rate of acquittals
Of the 1,310 death sentences, 842 verdicts were handed down by the High Courts, of which 70 – that

Capital punishment

Examining death penalty trends in India (2016-2025)

1,310
death sentences by Sessions Courts

128
sentenced in 2025

842
death sentences were heard by the High Courts

70 confirmed
(8.31%),
285 acquitted,
411 commuted

0 death sentences confirmed by the Supreme Court in the past 3 years

Of 37 HC-confirmed cases decided by SC:

15 | 14
acquitted | commuted

574
prisoners on death row (Dec. 31, 2025)
— highest since 2016

row before acquittal was over five years, with some prisoners languishing for nearly a decade before being exonerated.

However, 138 individuals were also removed from death row during the year through acquittals, commutations, or remand orders.

One of the report's most alarming findings concerns procedural violations at the sentencing stage.

Despite clear guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in *Manoj vs State of Madhya Pradesh*, which mandate psychological evaluations, prison conduct reports, and mitigation hearings – which were elevated to a fair trial right requirement in *Vasanta Sampat Dupare vs Union of India* – in 2025, nearly 95% of death sentences in 2025 were imposed without compliance.

Sentencing hearings were frequently conducted within days of conviction, leaving little scope for meaningful defence representation, the report said.

The report also showed that India had 574 prisoners – 550 men and 24 women – on death row as of December 31, 2025. The average time spent on death

tal and 14 were commuted.

"What is starkly clear from these figures is that errors at Sessions Courts are not only leading to wrongful imposition of death sentence but are also resulting in wrongful convictions. The high rate of acquittals by the appellate judiciary requires a serious examination of how Sessions Courts deem a case worthy of even a conviction," the report said.

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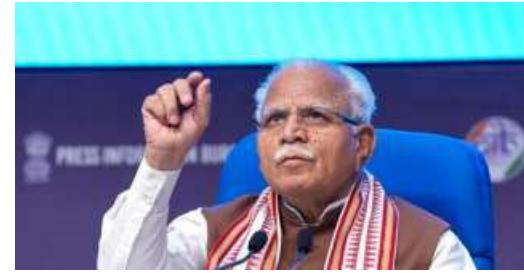
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IN BRIEF



India, Bhutan to strengthen cooperation in power sector

India and Bhutan will strengthen cooperation in the power sector, an official statement said on Tuesday. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of Bhutan Lyonpo Gem Tshering met Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar to strengthen cooperation in the power sector, the power ministry said. "During discussions, both sides deliberated on the commercial optimisation of power output from the Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project (1020 MW)," it said. PTI

Aditya Birla Capital profit jumps 33% to ₹945 cr. in Q3

Aditya Birla Capital on Tuesday reported a 33% jump in consolidated profit to ₹945 crore for the December quarter. The financial services arm of the diversified Aditya Birla Group, had reported a net profit of ₹708 crore in the year-ago period. On a standalone basis, the non-bank lender reported a 29% increase in profit after tax for the reporting quarter at ₹772 crore. The company said it took an impact of ₹38 crore because of the implementation of the new labour codes. PTI

Dhoot Transmission aims to raise \$250 mn via IPO

Auto component maker Dhoot Transmission has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator SEBI through the confidential pre-filing route to raise \$250 million (about ₹2,258 crore) through an initial public offering. Backed by private equity major Bain Capital, the proposed IPO will comprise a fresh issue of equity shares along with an offer for sale (OFS) by existing investors, while the promoters will not sell any stake through the OFS, sources said. PTI

Apparel industry hopes for revival in orders post tariff cut

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

The labour-intensive textile and apparel industry, whose exports to the U.S. constitute 28% of its international shipments, hopes for revival of orders and investments following the reduction of tariffs to 18%.

Textile and garment exports dropped 30% and 31.4% in October and November 2025 respectively compared with the corresponding period in 2024 due to the tariff.

According to K.M. Subramanian, president of Tirupur Exporters Association, almost 34% of knitted garment exports from Tirupur is to the U.S. The exporters expect orders to pick up now and will start investing to build capacities. Chairman of the Appa-



rel Export Promotion Council, A. Sakthivel, said the 18% tariff is expected to give a strong boost to apparel exports and attract fresh investments across the value chain.

Vijay Agarwal, chairman of the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council, said the high volume home textiles/furnishings sector was one of the worst hit. The tariff cut will benefit the home textiles and apparel sector and orders will start picking up for the U.S. now, he added.

Venezuelan oil will be difficult to process, say Indian refiners

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Even as U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Monday night that India had agreed to buy more oil from Venezuela, Indian refiners, in the recent past, cited difficulties in refining the oil from the South American nation.

This is primarily due to the fact that Venezuelan crude is comparatively difficult to process, and its properties are not very similar to those of other crude, they said.

Notably, Indian autho-

ties have not yet confirmed or denied Mr. Trump's assertions regarding India's oil purchases.

"Venezuelan crude apart from being bottom-heavy, also has high viscosity and high acid number," State-owned refiner Hindustan Petroleum's Director for Refineries S. Bharathan said in an analyst call earlier this month.

In other words, the heavy crude oil is thicker, thus, the higher viscosity is indicative of its resistance to flow while the higher acid number indicates the chemical mix existing nat-

urally in the oil.

Speaking to *The Hindu* last week, Sanjay Khanna, CMD of Bharat Petroleum as well as its Director for Refineries explained that the bottom-heavy crude had high metal and nitrogen content.

"It [Venezuelan crude] would have to be co-blended with other lighter crude, up to a 10-15% range and then processed," he explained.

Mr. Khanna further emphasised that procurement from any geography hinges on "techno-commercial" viability and availability.

Rupee jumps 1.2% to 90.32 on U.S. tariff cut; markets cheer deal

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Clarity has emerged in India's equity, currency and precious metal indices after U.S. President Donald Trump announced in a social media post late on Monday that the reciprocal tariff on Indian imports would be reduced to 18%.

The Indian rupee emerged as the best-performing Asian currency on Tuesday, registering a record gain of 117 paise or 1.28% in a single trading session to settle at 90.32 against the U.S. dollar, after India and the U.S. agreed to a trade deal.

In response to the announcement, India's benchmark Nifty50 index increased 2.5%, the most in nine months, to 25,727.55 points on Tuesday.

Ever since the U.S. announced the reciprocal tariffs, Indian markets have been awaiting clarity on the trade deal.

While equity markets swayed, currency traders were losing confidence and the safe haven demand for gold exacerbated over and above the existing global central bank purchases.

The safe haven demand for gold has now subsided as the increase was exacerbated by the uncertainty that came from the tariffs. Though the yellow metal crashed 4.55% to \$4,777 an ounce, it rebounded sharply by 5% to close at about ₹4,950 an ounce.

(With PTI inputs)

Indian, U.S. industry bodies and leaders laud tariff deal

Some, however, cautioned against taking the news of the India-U.S. deal for granted, although the U.S. President's tariff cut announcement was largely welcomed as a positive development

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Industry bodies and leaders in both India and the U.S., and across sectors, have welcomed the announcement of a deal between the two countries under which tariffs on India are set to be slashed from the current 50% to 18%.

U.S. President Donald Trump took to social media network 'Truth Social' late on Monday night to announce that he had spoken on the phone to his "greatest friend" Prime Minister Narendra Modi and that they had agreed to a deal to reduce India's tariffs.

While Mr. Trump's post also specified various other commitments made by India, Mr. Modi's post on X regarding the call only confirmed the duty reduction, without either confirming or denying the other aspects.

"The reduction in reciprocal tariffs – from earlier levels of around 50% to 18%, as indicated – would be a major game-changer for the competitiveness of Indian exports vis-à-vis other Asian suppliers," S.C. Ralhan, President of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), said.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) President Ravi Memani, too, said that the deal would "enhance the global competitiveness of Indian products while



Deal done: The cut in reciprocal tariffs is expected to be a major game-changer for the competitiveness of Indian exports. REUTERS

catalysing manufacturing growth, employment creation, and the development of resilient supply chains".

The deal was also welcomed by industry bodies in the U.S.

"We are optimistic that this is the first step toward a comprehensive trade agreement that will unlock even more private sector collaboration, and we look forward to reviewing the details of the deal," U.S. Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Suzanne P. Clark said.

The electronics sector, which accounts for a large part of India-U.S. trade, is also expected to experience a "major catalyst" from the deal, according to Ashok Chandak, President of SEMI India and the India Energy Storage Alliance.

Namit Joshi, Chairman of Pharmexcil, said that the U.S. currently accounts for 30-40% of the pharmaceutical industry's total revenue.

"This deal fosters greater market access for Indian generics and biosimilars, strengthening India's position as the global leader in affordable medicines," Mr. Joshi said.

The Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said that the U.S. tariffs of 50% had "sharply" disrupted trade flows to U.S., which accounted for 31% of the sector's exports in 2024-25.

"This [the tariff cut] is poised to revive demand and stabilise operations," the body added.

Apart from industry bodies, the heads of several Indian companies reacted positively to the deal, saying it would positively impact them.

"The Aditya Birla Group is the largest Indian investor in the U.S., and we see this agreement help shape more resilient supply chains, unlock manufacturing opportunities and drive long-term economic

competitiveness in both the U.S. and India," Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group said. He added that the Group was committed to expanding its presence and investments in the U.S.

Sudarshan Venu, Chairman of the TVS Motor Company highlighted the fact that now India has trade deals with key economic partners around the world.

"In a challenging global environment, predictability and openness in trade help Indian industry scale, innovate and create jobs," Mr. Venu said.

Anish Shah, Group CEO & Managing Director of the Mahindra Group said that the reduction in tariffs on Indian exports, along with the commitment to progressively lower tariff and non-tariff barriers, "will boost growth momentum and improve the predictability businesses need to invest with confidence".

Cautionary note

Rahul Ahluwalia, Founder-Director of the Foundation for Economic Development, however, cautions that the deal should not be taken for granted.

"Trump has shown a great deal of unpredictability in following through. Our most urgent task should remain internal reforms that help our regulations and institutions become globally competitive."

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	83,739	2.54
US Dollar	90.32	1.27
Gold	1,57,700	3.27
Brent oil	66.70	1.07

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2202.60	20.72
Adani Ports	1530.80	127.70
Apollo Hosp.	7088.50	155.00
Asian Paints	2426.00	24.40
Axis Bank	1356.20	44.70
Bajaj Auto	9595.50	99.00
Bajaj Finance	964.40	60.70
Bharat Elec.	438.95	-0.15
Bharti Airtel	1997.30	31.90
Cipla	1322.80	11.20
Coal India	429.40	5.90
Dr Reddy's Lab.	1235.40	52.90
Hindustan Unilever	40.20	DE*
Eicher Motors	7215.00	229.50
Etihad Corp.	279.80	7.15
Grasim Ind.	2808.90	34.30
HCL Tech	1695.30	18.50
HFDC Bank	948.70	20.60
HFDC Life	720.15	2.65
Hindalco	955.30	24.80
Hind Unilever	2368.60	11.30
ICICI Bank	1389.70	36.90
IntGlobeAvi.	4946.20	259.20
Infosys	1656.00	26.60
ITC	316.65	1.95
Jio Financial Services Ltd.	263.90	19.80
ITC Steel	1229.40	30.20
Kotak Bank	415.80	7.60
L&T	4038.80	117.50
M&M	3527.90	64.70
Maruti Suzuki	14782.00	398.00
Max Healthcare	1003.50	45.40
NestleIndia	1308.00	-0.30
NTPC	358.55	8.20
ONGC	257.00	3.05
PowerGrid Corp	283.20	12.80
Reliance Ind.	1437.10	46.70
SBI Life	2002.10	1.10
State Bank	1064.20	35.50
Shriram Finance Ltd.	1000.40	38.30
Sun Pharma	1702.10	74.20
Tata Consumer Products	1155.40	30.00
Tata Steel	192.93	4.42
TCS	3235.20	55.70
Tech Mahindra	1716.50	7.50
Titan	4068.60	115.40
Tata Motors PV	372.05	9.15
Trent Ltd.	3822.80	101.90
UltraTech Cement	12590.00	55.00
Wipro	242.69	0.39

DE: Demerged Entity

Oppo plans 110 centres this year

Oppo India said on Tuesday it plans to open 110 new premium service centres this year, equipped with product and gaming experience zones. PTI

NMDC Q3 net dips 8% to ₹1,747 crore; revenue rises 16%

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

State-owned NMDC reported consolidated net profit for the December quarter declined almost 8% to ₹1,747.01 crore compared with ₹1,896.66 crore a year earlier.

The lower net profit came on a nearly 16% rise in revenue from operations to ₹7,610.79 crore (₹6,567.83 crore). Total expenditure was higher at ₹5,608.54 crore (₹4,359.07 crore).

₹2.50 interim dividend
The company has declared a first interim dividend of ₹2.50 per equity share (face value of ₹1 each) for 2025-26.

Besides approving the dividend, the Board meeting on Tuesday also gave

'Govt. trying to minimise imports with Make in India'

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The government is committed to minimising im-

port dependence through 'Make in India' initiatives, although it can never be entirely eliminated, Defence Secretary Rajesh Ku-

mar Singh said on Tuesday. Mr. Singh was speaking at an event to mark the signing of an MoU between Adani Defence & Aerosp-

ace and Italian aerospace giant Leonardo in New Delhi to establish an integrated helicopter manufacturing ecosystem in India.

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS - TIRUPATI S.V. GOSAMRAKSHANA SHALA, TIRUPATI, e-TENDER NOTICE

WASHINGTON

'U.S. shoots down Iranian drone that approached aircraft carrier'



U.S. Central Command said on Tuesday that a U.S. Navy fighter jet shot down an Iranian drone that was "aggressively approaching" the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln with "unclear intent" in the Arabian Sea. The Shahed-139 drone was shot down by an F-35C fighter jet from the Lincoln. AP

YANGON

Myanmar, Russia sign new military cooperation pact, lasting till 2030



Myanmar and Russia have signed a five-year military cooperation pact, Moscow said on Tuesday, sealing an alliance analysts say has been crucial to the junta's grip on power. Russia's Defence Ministry announced the new pact lasting until 2030 after a Monday visit to Myanmar by Sergei Shoigu. AFP

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan adopts resolution urging 'aggressive' response to terrorism



Pakistan's National Assembly on Tuesday adopted a resolution urging the government to adopt an "aggressive" national response to tackle the threat of external sponsors of militancy and their internal facilitators. The resolution said that "in several cases, evidence available points to external sponsorship". PTI

KHARTOUM

Sudan military broke siege on key southern city Kadugli: Army chief



The Sudanese Army broke a paramilitary siege on the key southern city of Kadugli on Tuesday, Army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan said, in the latest reversal of a paramilitary offensive through the Kordofan region. Kadugli has been besieged for much of Sudan's nearly three-year war between the army and RSF. AFP

Palestinians line up to cross Rafah as it reopens

Associated Press
KHAN YOUNIS

Palestinians lined up on Tuesday on both sides of Gaza's border with Egypt, hoping to pass through the Rafah crossing after its long-awaited reopening the previous day.

On the Egyptian side were Palestinians who had undergone medical treatment in Egypt and had left Gaza earlier in the Israel-Hamas war.

On the Gaza side, Palestinians in need of treatment unavailable in Gaza were brought in busses.

Palestinian Red Crescent spokesperson said that only 16 patients, accompanied by 40 relatives, were brought from Khan Younis to the Gaza side of Rafah.

Russia sounds alarm as New START treaty is set to expire

The last nuclear treaty between Washington and Moscow is set to expire tomorrow; Moscow awaiting U.S. response to one-year extension offer; Russian drones strike Ukraine ahead of talks

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

The Kremlin warned on Tuesday that the world was heading into a "dangerous" moment as the last U.S.-Russia nuclear treaty is set to expire this week.

New START, the last nuclear treaty between Washington and Moscow after decades of agreements dating to the Cold War, is set to expire on Thursday, and with it restrictions on the two top nuclear powers.

"In just a few days, the world will be in a more dangerous position than it has ever been before," spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said.



Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump during a press meet at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, in Alaska, in August 2025. REUTERS

said. The Kremlin, which has offered a one-year extension of the treaty, said "we still haven't received a response from the Americans to this initiative".

If the treaty is not extended, the world's top two nuclear powers would "be left without a fundamental document that would limit and control

these arsenals," for the first time.

U.S. President Donald Trump, who cut many international agreements limiting the United States, said in September that an extension of the New START "sounds like a good idea," but little has changed since then.

Meanwhile, Russia fired around 450 long-range drones and 70 missiles of various types at Ukraine in a major attack overnight, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

The barrage came a day before the two countries were due to attend U.S.-brokered talks in Abu Dhabi.

Iran's Pezeshkian backs 'fair and equitable' talks

Stanly Johny

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday he has instructed Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to pursue "fair and equitable" negotiations with the U.S., amid large-scale U.S. troop mobilisation in waters close to Iran and regional efforts to jump-start diplomacy.



Masoud Pezeshkian
pediency," Mr. Pezeshkian wrote in a social media post.

On Monday, the State Department said the President was open for a deal. "Ultimately, the President is focused on our national interest. He has outlined a very clear message for the [Iranian] regime – no nuclear weapons, stop killing protesters," State Department spokesperson Tom Pigott told Fox News in an interview.

heading towards Iran. Amid regional tensions, Turkey, Qatar, Egypt, and Oman have been pushing for direct talks between the U.S. and Iran. Most of America's allies in West Asia have opposed strikes on Iran.

"These negotiations shall be conducted within the framework of our national interests," Mr. Pezeshkian said on Tuesday, without elaborating.

Earlier, American media reported that Mr. Araghchi would meet White House Special envoy Steve Witkoff on Friday in Istanbul. U.S. President Donald Trump had warned last week that "time is running out" for Tehran to make a deal over its nuclear programme and warned that "a massive armada" was

What is happening in Balochistan?

NEWS ANALYSIS

Stanly Johny

On January 30-31, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) carried out coordinated attacks across at least nine districts of Balochistan, targeting police stations, military outposts and a high-security prison in Quetta, the provincial capital. In a video released online, BLA leader Bashir Zeb Baloch claimed responsibility for the attacks, describing them as the second phase of the 'Hero' (Black Storm) operation. He called on Baloch men and women to leave their homes and join the "national liberation war" against the Pakistani military. The BLA claimed it killed 84 security personnel and kidnapped 18 others.

According to Pakistani authorities, the military launched operations against the militants across the province, killing at least 145 fighters. Soon after the attacks, Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi accused India of supporting "terrorists". "India is behind these attacks. I can tell you for sure that India planned these attacks along with these terrorists," Mr. Naqvi said, without offering any evidence. On February 1, India "categorically rejected" Pakistan's "baseless allegations", calling them "usual tactics to deflect attention from its own internal failings," according to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs.

Rich in minerals

Balochistan, a long-standing flashpoint Pakistan, has witnessed a surge in violence in recent years, particularly after the Taliban, which was backed by the Pakistani military estab-



Burnt vehicles inside a torched police station on the outskirts of Quetta on Sunday, after an attack by Baloch separatists. AFP

blishment, captured power in Kabul in August 2021. According to the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, Balochistan recorded at least 254 attacks in 2025, resulting in more than 400 deaths, a 26% rise from the previous year.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province, covers nearly 40% of the country's land area. Rich in mineral resources, it shares borders with Iran and Afghanistan, has an Arabian Sea coastline, and is home to nearly 15 million of Pakistan's 240 million people. Most of the country's mineral wealth – copper, scandium, lead, zinc, chromite, marble, granite and molybdenum – is concentrated in Balochistan, which also holds significant reserves of oil, gas, coal and gold.

The \$60-billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, linking China's Xinjiang region to Pakistan's Gwadar port through roads, railways and pipelines, passes through Balochistan. In September 2025, US Strategic Metals, a Missouri-based mining firm, signed a \$500m memorandum of understanding with Pakistan's Frontier Works Organisation, a military-aligned company, to extract minerals in Pakistan. But recurring violence in Balochistan continues to threaten

carried out one of their most daunting attacks when they hijacked the Jaffar Khan Express with more than 400 passengers onboard. Pakistani security forces launched Operation Green Bolan, rescuing more than 300 passengers and killing at least 33 fighters, according to an official account. March also witnessed large-scale protests, called by the Baloch Yaqethi Committee, a Baloch rights movement, which was violently put down by state forces.

Cycle of violence

But despite Pakistan's resort to heavy force, Baloch militants have expanded their attacks in recent years. Since 2018, major factions, including the BLA and the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), have coordinated under the banner of the Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar, a united front that calls for a sovereign Balochistan. Militants have increasingly deployed suicide bombers (including women), carried out coordinated attacks and temporarily seized territory and key highways, directly challenging state authority.

The Pakistani state often responds with retaliatory force, but without breaking the cycle of violence. Islamabad has frequently blamed India for the Baloch insurgency. Following the Jaffar Khan express attack, Pakistan formally designated Baloch militant groups as 'Fitna al-Hindustan'. India has consistently rejected any involvement. "Instead of parroting frivolous claims each time there is a violent incident, [Pakistan] would do better to focus on addressing long-standing demands of its people in the region," India said on February 1. "Its record of suppression, brutality and violation of human rights is well known."

Waves of rebellion

Balochistan has witnessed several waves of rebellion since its annexation by the Pakistani state in 1948. The latest phase began in the early 2000s after the emergence of the BLA. Human rights organisations have accused Pakistan of using excessive force against Baloch nationalists and militants. Amnesty International reports that over 10,000 Balochis have disappeared in Pakistan since 2011.

Enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and military operations have deepened resentment among the Baloch population. Local leaders argue that the Pakistani government is exploiting the province's resources without addressing the development needs of the local population. Long-standing historical, political and economic grievances have fuelled the separatist movement. Following the Taliban takeover of Kabul, as security conditions deteriorated in Pakistan's border regions with the Pakistani Taliban stepping up attacks in the tribal areas, Baloch separatist groups also intensified their operations.

In March 2025, the BLA



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WEIGHING IN OPTIONS

Desire to play Test season a reason behind skipping T20 WC: Cummins



Australia's Pat Cummins said his injury-forced withdrawal from the T20 WC was also driven by a desire to be completely fit for the Test season. "We thought the first half of the year was a pretty good time to be conservative with the amount of cricket that is coming up. Hopefully that will mean I can just go out and play all those Tests."

SHOULDERING ARMS

No comments on Pakistan's stance, our focus is on winning WC: Marsh



I don't have any comment on that [Pakistan's boycott of its T20 World Cup match against India] at this point. We are going to the World Cup to just focus on what we are doing, we will let that stuff take care of itself — Australia skipper Mitchell Marsh on the team's priorities ahead of the T20 showpiece.

FASTEAST FINGERS FIRST

Third stage of the T20 World Cup ticket sales commences



The third stage of ticket sales for the T20 World Cup commenced on Tuesday. "As the third phase of ticket sales opens, we look forward to welcoming fans to our stadiums for matches that reflect the depth and competitiveness of international cricket across all participating teams," said BCCI president Mithun Manhas.

PERFECT PREP

England beats Lanka by 12 runs in a low-scoring game, sweeps series



England achieved a 3-0 series sweep after defeating Sri Lanka by 12 runs in a low-scoring third T20I in Pallekele on Tuesday. It was England's 11th successive T20I victory over Sri Lanka. **The scores:** England 128/9 in 20 overs (Curran 58, Chameera 5/24) bt Sri Lanka 116 in 19.3 overs (Bethell 4/11, Jacks 3/14).



Vital strikes: Henry's three-wicket haul put the brakes on the Giants' innings. VIJAY SONEJI

Capitals storm into a fourth straight final

Openers Lee and Shafali get the Delhi team off to a blazing start in its chase of 169; Jemimah and Wolvaardt chip in; Mooney's effort in vain

WPL-4**Vivek Krishnan**

VADODARA

Delhi Capitals had faltered in the final over of the chase in its two defeats to Gujarat Giants in the league phase of the 2026 Women's Premier League. In the Eliminator on Tuesday, Capitals didn't allow the game to get that close.

In pursuit of 169 on a track offering low bounce at the Kotambi Stadium, Jemimah Rodrigues and Co. strolled to a seven-wicket win with 26 balls to spare, and sealed their spot in Thursday's final against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. This will be Capitals' fourth straight appearance in the summit clash.

In marked contrast to Giants' batters, who found the going tough early on, Capitals blazed away to 75 for no loss in the first six overs of the pursuit as Lizzelle Lee and Shafali Verma displayed ferocious ball-striking. In the fifth over, the pair tore into Renuka Singh, hitting five fours.

It was Georgia Wareham's introduction in the eighth over that gave the hosts some relief. The leggie snared Lee and Shafali in the space of five deliveries. But by then, DC was 92 for two, and just needed another 77 runs off 72 balls. Thereafter, Jemimah (41, 23b, 4x4, 1x6) and Laura Wolvaardt (32 n.o., 24b, 2x4, 1x6) took firm control with crisp shots in a 68-run stand.

Earlier, Beth Mooney (62 n.o., 51b, 6x4) did well to help Giants recover from 59 for four and post 168 for seven. She received considerable support from Wareham, who hit a quick-fire 35 in a partnership of 61. For DC, Chinelle Henry took three wickets.

A shaky start meant Ashleigh Gardner's side was always up against it. Sophie Devine slashed hard to get off the mark with a boundary off Mar-



Rising to the occasion: Jemimah's breezy knock ensured Capitals were home and dry with plenty to spare. VIJAY SONEJI

SCOREBOARD**GUJARAT GIANTS**

Beth Mooney (not out) 62 (51b, 6x4), Sophie Devine c Lee b Henry 6 (9b, 1x4), Anushka Sharma c Henry b Nandani 16 (13b, 2x4), Ashleigh Gardner c Sneh b Nandani 0 (1b), Kanika Ahuja st. Lee b Minnu 6 (9b), Georgia Wareham c Wolvaardt b Henry 35 (25b, 3x4, 1x6), Bharti Fulmal c & b Henry 0 (2b), Kashvee Gautam run out 18 (10b, 3x4), Tanuja Kanwar (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (lb-6, w-19): 25; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 168.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-9 (Devine, 1.6 overs), 2-38 (Anushka, 5.1), 3-38 (Gardner, 5.2), 4-59 (Kanika, 8.4), 5-120 (Wareham, 16.2), 6-125 (Bharti, 16.4), 7-164 (Kashvee, 19.5).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Kapp 4-0-32-0, Henry 4-0-35-3, Nandani 4-0-44-2, Minnu 4-0-23-1, Sneh 1-0-3-0, Shree

Zanne Kapp. But when she tried a similar shot against Henry in the next over, the ball took her outside edge. Lee stuck her right glove out for a nonchalant grab.

Giants' run rate received a slight boost when Kapp leaked 17 in the fifth over, but it was promptly offset

DELI CAPITALS

Lizelle Lee lbw b Wareham 43 (24b, 8x4, 1x6), Shafali Verma b Wareham 31 (21b, 7x4), Laura Wolvaardt (not out) 32 (24b, 2x4, 1x6), Jemimah Rodrigues c Devina b Rajeshwari 41 (23b, 4x4, 1x6), Marizanne Kapp (not out) 4 (3b, 1x4); Extras (b-8, lb-1, nb-1, w-8): 18; Total (for three wkts. in 15.4 overs): 169.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-89 (Lee, 7.1), 2-92 (Shafali, 7.6), 3-160 (Jemimah, 14.5).

GIANTS BOWLING

Renuka 2-0-27-0, Kashvee 2-0-17-0, Rajeshwari 3-0-33-1, Devina 3-0-35-0, Wareham 3-0-28-2, Tanuja 1-0-5-0, Gardner 1-0-15-0.

Toss:

Capitals; PoM: Jemimah. Capitals won by seven wickets with 26 deliveries to spare.

by Nandani Sharma removing Anushka Sharma and Gardner off consecutive balls.

In the circumstances, Mooney and Wareham applied themselves sensibly to ensure a competitive total. But it was no more than that.

West Indies, England start favourites in Group C

T20 WC COUNTDOWN**Abhishek Saini**

Bangladesh's unceremonious, late withdrawal from the T20 World Cup not only paved a way for Scotland's entry into Group C but has also eased the West Indies and England's paths to the Super Eights.

As the only two Full Member nations in the reckoning, West Indies and England are the overwhelming favourites. The other teams in the group are Nepal and debutant Italy.

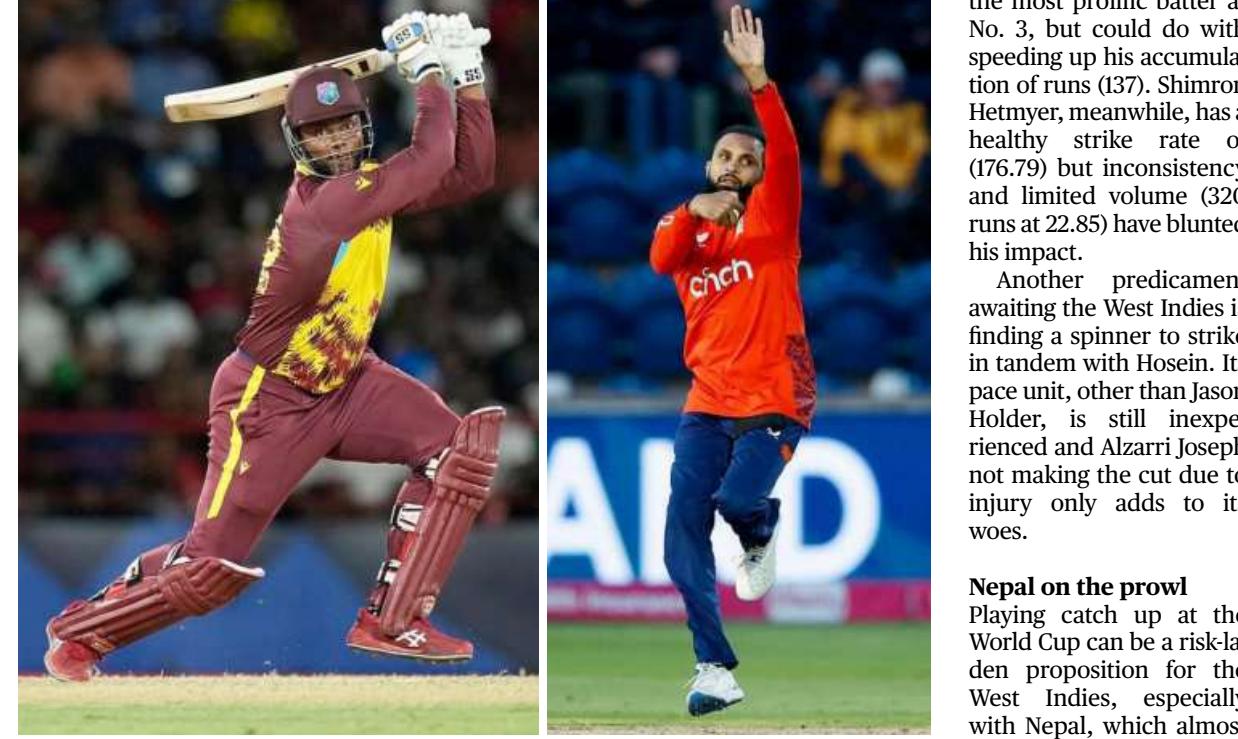
England's 4-1 drubbing at the hands of India last January forced the 2022 champion to embrace the high-octane template of the format.

Under Harry Brook's charge, England has scored at 11.39 runs per over in the PowerPlay since April 2025, outdoing even India and Australia, who started this trend of throwing caution to the wind.

Key man
Phil Salt has been a lynchpin in this approach with a strike rate in excess of 172, and an average of 43.

Veteran leg-spinner Adil Rashid, who will most probably take his final bow at this World Cup, is still England's most prolific bowler. He's nabbed 23 wickets since the last World Cup at an economy of just 8.47.

The outlook is not as



Genuine match-winners: Shepherd remains central to West Indies' fortunes while veteran England leggie Rashid continues to bamboozle the best in the business. FILE PHOTOS

promising for the Caribbean outfit. Only one Full Member team – Ireland – has fared worse than West Indies in this World Cup cycle. The Caribbean side has won just 13 of its 40 games since July 2024.

Romario Shepherd is the undisputed match-winner for the two-time former champion, and has chipped in with both the bat and ball – 35 wickets and 442 runs – since July 2024. West Indies can also rely on Akeal Hosein, whose inventive change-ups have been a revelation for the art of slow left-arm orthodox bowling. Mixing up his deliveries, Hosein

The Group C schedule

DATE	TEAMS	VENUE	TIME
Feb. 7	West Indies vs. Scotland	Kolkata	3 p.m.
Feb. 8	England vs. Nepal	Mumbai	3 p.m.
Feb. 9	Scotland vs. Italy	Kolkata	11 a.m.
Feb. 11	England vs. West Indies	Mumbai	7 p.m.
Feb. 12	Nepal vs. Italy	Mumbai	3 p.m.
Feb. 14	England vs. Scotland	Kolkata	3 p.m.
Feb. 15	West Indies vs. Nepal	Mumbai	11 a.m.
Feb. 16	England vs. Italy	Kolkata	3 p.m.
Feb. 17	Scotland vs. Nepal	Mumbai	7 p.m.
Feb. 19	West Indies vs. Italy	Kolkata	11 a.m.

has 35 wickets since July 2024 at an economy of under seven. However, the problems outweigh the silver linings.

A run rate of less than eight-an over in the PowerPlay since July 2024 does not paint a promising picture. Shai Hope has been

the most prolific batter at No. 3, but could do with speeding up his accumulation of runs (137). Shimron Hetmyer, meanwhile, has a healthy strike rate of (176.79) but inconsistency and limited volume (320 runs at 22.85) have blunted his impact.

Another predicament awaiting the West Indies is finding a spinner to strike in tandem with Hosein. Its pace unit, other than Jason Holder, is still inexperienced and Alzarri Joseph not making the cut due to injury only adds to its woes.

Nepal on the prowl

Playing catch up at the World Cup can be a risk-laden proposition for the West Indies, especially with Nepal, which almost defeated South Africa last time, in the fray. It will be on the prowl again, hoping that a giant-killing would finally convince world cricket of how close it is to the upper echelon.

Italy, meanwhile, will also fancy its chances of going back with a win. It had defeated Scotland by 12 runs in the European qualifiers, and the two have been pitted together again.

It prepared for the World Cup with a three-match series against Ireland, and got a taste of how life without Joe Burns would look like. The former Australia batter had been central through the qualifiers, but will not feature at the World Cup due to a contractual dispute.

Cricket slowly finding a place in football-crazy Italy

S. Shrivathsan

CHENNAI

None would have pictured this in their wildest dreams, not even those who believe in the stuff of fantasy.

Italy, a football-crazy nation with a rich history, could end up missing the bus to the FIFA World Cup – the side still has to clear the European playoffs – in a year in which its lesser-known cricket team makes its debut on the biggest stage in the T20 blue-riband event.

The Italy cricket team's assistant coach Kevin O'Brien and player Ben Manenti came up with witty responses when asked about the unthinkable unfolding before our eyes. "Hopefully, they (football players) might look at the success we have had in the last couple of months and take inspiration," said O'Brien, tongue in cheek, during a chat here on Monday.

Ben sounded a friendly warning. "The football team might not be in the World Cup, so the fans might have only one World Cup (to follow) this year.



Getting ready: Wayne Madsen of Italy in action during a warm-up match against Canada in Chennai on Monday. R. RAGU

So, they better get behind us."

History suggests that cricket had made its way into Italy centuries ago before disappearing from the scene. As strange as it may sound, football giant AC Milan was a wing of the 'Milan Football and Cricket Club' when it was founded in 1899.

Now, the influx of foreign-born players has helped put cricket back on Italy's sports map. But O'Brien stressed that the 'local' lads too have been shaping Italian cricket.

"We have five home-



The star: Rew set up England's win against Australia. GETTY IMAGES

England enters final; India vs. Afghanistan

UNDER-19 WC**Press Trust of India**

HARARE

A confident India, unbeaten so far, will be the overwhelming favourite against Afghanistan in the semi-final of the ICC under-19 World Cup here on Wednesday.

The victor will face England – which beat Australia by 27 runs in the other last-four stage match – in Friday's summit clash.

It was a tale of contrasting fortunes for England skipper Thomas Rew and Australia captain Oliver Peake in Tuesday's semi-final. While Rew's 107-ball 110 (14x4, 1x6) took England to 277 for seven in 50 overs, Peake's 88-ball 100

(10x4, 1x6) went in vain as his side fell short.

India, the most successful team in the tournament, having clinched the title five times (2000, 2008, 2012, 2018, 2022), should fancy its chances of going all the way.

Ayush Mhatre & Co. have had a great run in this edition, winning all their matches quite comfortably, including a 58-run win over Pakistan in the Super Six stage.

Afghanistan, too, has had a fairly good tournament, winning four of its five games, its only loss coming against Sri Lanka.

The scores: **Semifinal:** England 277/7 in 50 overs (Rew 110, Falconer 40) bt Australia 250 in 47.3 overs (Samuel 47, Peake 100).

Toss: England; **PoM:** Rew.

IN BRIEF



Sunderland routs Burnley; Mallorca mauls Sevilla

Sunderland cruised to a 3-0 win against Burnley on Monday to boost its hopes of qualifying for Europe and push the Premier League strugglers closer to relegation. Sunderland climbed to eighth place to maintain its impressive return to the top-flight. Vedat Muriqi scored his ninth goal in nine LaLiga games as Mallorca beat Sevilla 4-1 to leapfrog its rival and escape the relegation zone.

The results: Premier League: Sunderland 3 (Tuanzebe 9-og, Diarra 32, Talbi 72) bt Burnley 0. LaLiga: Mallorca 4 (Muriqi 26-pen, Costa 53, Darder 74, Torre 90+6) bt Sevilla 1 (Maupay 45+1). Serie A: Udinese 1 (Ekkelenkamp 49) bt Roma 0.



Grace Dangmei seals India's win over Hertha BSC Frauen

The Indian senior women's national team registered a 1-0 victory over German side Hertha BSC Frauen in a friendly match at the S&B Sport Football Complex, Antalya, Turkey, on Monday. Grace Dangmei scored the decisive goal in the 37th minute to secure the win for the Blue Tigresses, as they continued their preparatory campaign ahead of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026.

India u-17 women's football team loses to Bangladesh

The India under-17 women's team suffered a 0-2 defeat against Bangladesh in the SAFF U-19 women's championship 2026 in Pokhara, Nepal, on Monday. Arpita Biswas (29) and Alpi Akter (40) scored for Bangladesh, which leads the table with six points from two matches. India is second with three. India will take on Bhutan on February 4. The top two teams in the round-robin stage will qualify for the final. Although it is an U-19 tournament, India has sent an U-17 squad that is preparing for the AFC U-17 Asian Cup, set to be held later this year.

LIVE TELECAST

Men's U-19 WC: Afghanistan vs India, SS Select 2 & JioHotstar, 1 p.m.

PCB may face legal action from broadcaster

Press Trust of India
KARACHI/NEW DELHI

The ICC has warned the Pakistan Cricket Board that it faces the prospect of legal action from T20 World Cup's official broadcaster JioStar for deciding to boycott its February 15 game against India, a PCB source said on Tuesday.

There is a possibility that the ICC will withhold the entire annual revenue share of Pakistan, which is around \$35 million and pay the broadcasters from that purse.

A PCB source informed that although chairman Mohsin Naqvi had taken advice from the board's legal experts before briefing PM Shehbaz Sharif on the issue last week, the board is bracing for some serious consequences. "If Pakistan doesn't relent, not only will they face financial penalties, perhaps a lawsuit from broadcasters but also any efforts to go to the ICC Dispute Resolution Committee are likely to fail," the source said.

'Incredible moment' as two mothers in WTA top-10 at the same time



Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

Belinda Bencic and Elina Svitolina made history as the first mothers in the WTA's top-10 at the same time.

Switzerland's Bencic returned to the top-10 in January for the first time since stepping away from the court in September 2023 to give birth to daughter Bella.

In the latest rankings released on Monday, the Swiss was joined by Svitolina, mother of Skai, after the Ukrainian's run to the semifinals of the Australian Open last week.

The WTA has made efforts in recent years to help players maintain their professional careers and become parents through its Family Focus Programme. It includes ranking protection during pregnancy, postpartum support with a return to play and paid maternity leave.

"Two mothers ranked

inside the top-10 one year after returning to competition from maternity leave is something I am incredibly proud of," said Bencic, ranked nine. "Very few people know or have experienced how difficult that journey is, but my family, my team and I have put all

our energy, work and dedication into it to accomplish this goal."

Bencic and Svitolina both took advantage of the Special Ranking Rule for returning mothers.

"Coming back to the

AROUND THE CITY



Girel and Harsh split the point
Girel Joseph of France drew with Harsh Suresh of India in the first round of the first Chola Chess GM closed circuit chess here on Tuesday.

Important results (first round):

Girel Joseph (Fra) 0.5 drew with

Harsh Suresh (Ind) 0.5; Delgado

Ramirez (Par) 0.5 drew with

Mayank Chakraborty (Ind) 0.5;

Alisher Suleymanov (Kaz) 0.5

drew with Aronyak Ghosh (Ind)

0.5; Boyer Mahel (Fra) 0 lost to

Audi Ameya (Ind) 1.

The scores (second round):

SRIHER 196/8 in 20 overs (S.

Sriccharan 31, B. Pranav 76,

Sankal Kumar 29, L. Dhinesh

Kumar 3/31) bt Nazareth 43 in

10.3 overs (A. Srikanth 3/10, R.K.

Pranav Sabapathy 3/13).

Jaya Arts 150/4 in 20 overs (A.C.

Kasi Vignesh 39, M. Mohit Singh

55 n.o., S. Mohan Raj 26 n.o.) bt

Veltech RS Arts 40 in 17.1 overs

(S. Nagaraj 3/1).

Mar Gregorios 181/3 in 20 overs

(Mohammad Zabibullah Faisel

59).

PSBB Millennium 81/9 in 20 overs

(Krutesh Kannan 3/12) lost to

Chettinad 82/4 in 17.3 overs.

Under-14 cricket from Feb. 11

G.R. CA will conduct an u-14 inter-school/academy cricket tournament from February 11 at Tellus cricket arena & Kabilan Nest.

Entries close on February 8. Details, contact V.P. Giri Narain at 90940 66288.

Titles for D.G. Vaishnav and M.O.P. Vaishnav

D.G. Vaishnav (six points) and M.O.P. Vaishnav (six) bagged the men's and women's titles in the University of Madras inter-zone chess tournament held here.

Among men, Loyola came second (four) while B-zone Combined Team (two) emerged third. B-zone Combined Team finished runner-up among women with four points while WCC was third with two.

Leela and Sandhya finish on top

The duo of Leela Iyengar & Sandhya finished first with 61.46% in the Madras Gymkhana Club open bridge tournament held here recently.

Other placings: 2. Sreekrishnan & Kumar Venkatraman 60.83; 3. Narayan Iyer & Aparajitha 60.73.

Kerala too good for Assam; Punjab edges Tamil Nadu in a shootout

Services knocks out defending champion Bengal on penalties, meets Railways in last-four stage; all semifinalists are from Group B in the final round



Marching on: Kerala had it easy against the home side Assam, while the Services players are over the moon after stunning Bengal in the shootout. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Services in the last four. After a goalless first half, Sau-
rabh Banwala (74) and Johnson Joseph (83) struck late.

The results (quarterfinals):
Assam 0 lost to Kerala 3 (Manoj 17, Mohammed Ajmal 45, Abubacker Dilshad 90+2); Bengal 0 drew with Services 0. Services won 3-2 on penalties; Railways 2 (Saurabh Banwala 74, Johnson Joseph 83) bt Rajasthan 0; Tamil Nadu 1 (M. Ushankar 84) drew with Punjab 1 (Jatinder Singh Rana 37). Punjab won 4-1 on penalties.

championship at the Rajiv Gandhi stadium here on Tuesday.

Kerala went ahead in the 17th minute when captain Manoj headed in a corner-kick, while Mohammed Ajmal doubled the lead in the 45th. Abubacker Dilshad completed the rout in the second minute

of stoppage time, scoring off a pass from Sajeesh.

In the semifinals, Kerala will face Punjab, which defeated Tamil Nadu 4-1 on penalties.

Jatinder Singh Rana handed Punjab the lead in the 37th minute before M. Umasankar equalised in the 84th minute to push

the match into extra time. Spot-kicks were needed after the game ended in a stalemate.

Services knocked out defending champion Bengal 3-2 on penalties after the match finished goalless.

Railways defeated Rajas-
than 2-0 and will meet Ser-

Liverpool seals Jacquet deal, Palace signs Strand Larsen

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Liverpool won the race to sign Rennes defender Jeremy Jacquet on a quiet final day of the Premier League transfer window, while Crystal Palace swooped for Wolves striker Jorgen Strand Larsen despite the collapse of Jean-Philippe Mateta's move to AC Milan.

The Reds agreed a reported fee of up to £60 million for the highly rated Jacquet before the window closed at 19.00 GMT.

But the 20-year-old will not join the Premier League champion until the summer despite Liverpool's need for defensive reinforcements.

Jacquet had been linked with a transfer to Chelsea earlier this month but was reportedly put off the move by the competition for places at centre-back in



Have to wait: Jacquet will not join the Premier League champion until the summer. GETTY IMAGES

the Blues' bloated squad. Palace completed the club-record £48 million signing of Norway forward Strand Larsen on a four-and-a-half-year contract.

Palace moved for Strand Larsen after believing Mateta was about to leave the club for AC Milan. Mateta's proposed switch to Serie A fell through on Monday after medical concerns over a knee injury, but Palace

still brought in Strand Larsen.

Bottom of the table Wolves signed Southampton striker Adam Armstrong for £7 million to replace Strand Larsen.

Everton signed Chelsea's 19-year-old winger Tyrique George on loan for the rest of the season.

Chelsea recalled Mamadou Sarr from his loan spell at Strasbourg.

MCC brings in 73 changes to the laws of cricket

Press Trust of India
LONDON

As many as 73 changes to the laws of cricket, including mandatory completion of the final over in the day in case of fall of a wicket in multi-day matches, have been announced by the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), the custodian of the Laws, with the amendments set to come into effect from October this year.

Announcing the changes on its website, the MCC said the final over in a multi-day match will have to be completed if a wicket has fallen, as not doing so takes "the drama out of the game".

The MCC has legalised use of laminated bats for "open age" cricket rather than just junior cricket" in an attempt to slow the rising costs of bats around the world.

The ball will be considered "finally settled" when it is in the hands of a fielder or stationary on the ground, said MCC.

"The ball no longer has to be in the bowler's or the wicketkeeper's hands to be finally settled," it said.

The wicket-keepers will no longer be penalised for having their gloves in front of the stumps when the bowler runs up.

The Law has now changed so that it is only after the ball is released that the wicket-keeper must be wholly behind the stumps.

This brings the wording in line with a fielder's position," it added.

Bunny hop catch

Removing the 'bunny hop catch', the MCC said fielders going outside boundary can only touch the ball once while airborne, "and then, having done so, to be wholly grounded within the boundary for the rest of the duration of that delivery."

The ball will be considered "finally settled" when it is in the hands of a fielder or stationary on the ground, said MCC.

"The ball no longer has to be in the bowler's or the wicketkeeper's hands to be finally settled," it said.

End of the road for the Indians in singles

Sahaja, Shrivalli, Vaishnavi and Maaya fall woefully short, losing in straight sets in the round-of-32, to leave the faithful ruing the day

MUMBAI OPEN

Tarun Shastry
MUMBAI

It was a sombre day for the Indian contingent at the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA) courts on Tuesday, as all four home players bowed out in the round-of-32 in the L&T Mumbai Open 125K series.

Sahaja Yamalapalli, Shrivalli Bhamidipaty, Vaishnavi Adkar and Maaya Rajeshwaran fell woefully short, leaving the handful of faithful to rue the day's play.

Vaishnavi emerged as the most competitive of the quartet, engaging Austria's Lilli Tagger in prolonged baseline rallies and threading precise ground-



Easily done: Semenistaja took out Cherubini for the loss of only four games. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

strokes off both wings. The 21-year-old Indian showcased depth and consisten-

cy, redirecting pace and attempting to dictate rallies from the back of the court.

Yet, Tagger seized control at pivotal moments, combining superior court

coverage with well-timed net-rushing to finish points and pressuring Vaishnavi into errors.

Close affair

The opening set remained tight until the closing stages, when Tagger opened up the court with acute cross-court angles, drawing errors from Vaishnavi and securing a decisive late break to take it 7-5.

In the second, she amplified her aggression, firing punishing aces down the T, mixing crisp forehand volleys with skidding backhand slices, and dictating the rallies from start to finish, before closing out the match with a 6-4 set win.

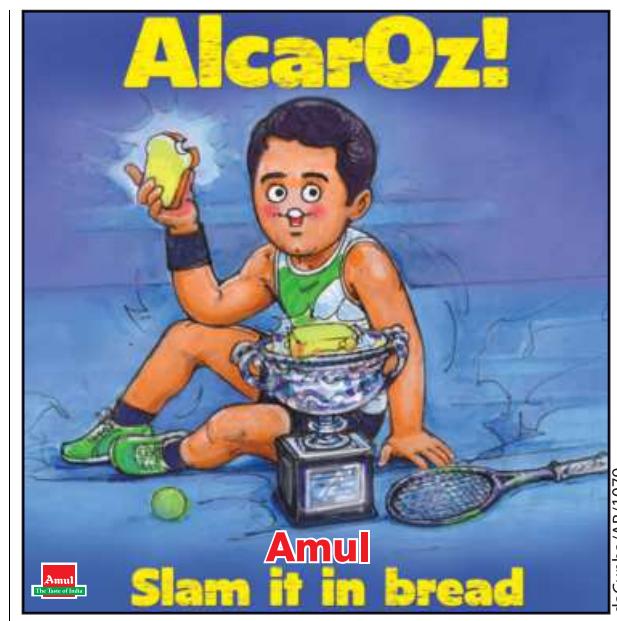
Later in the day, last year's semifinalist Maaya Rajeshwaran went down 3-6, 2-6 to last season's

quarterfinalist, Lanlana Tararudee.

The Thai imposed herself early with depth from the baseline, using heavy top-spin forehands, sharp returns and precise shot placement to repeatedly break Maaya's serve, leaving the Indian with little opportunity to mount a comeback.

Other results:

Darja Semenistaja (Lat) bt Diletta Cherubini (Ita) 6-3, 6-1; Yasmine Kabbaj (Mar) bt Peangtarn Pipuech (Tha) 6-3, 6-3. Eri Shimizu (Jpn) bt Sahaja Yamalapalli (Ind) 7-5, 6-2; Sohyun Park (Kor) bt Mingge Xu (GBr) 6-1, retd.; Fangran Tian (Chn) bt Rina Saigo (Jpn) 6-0, 6-3. Kristiana Sidorova bt Shrivalli Bhamidipaty (Ind) 6-1, 6-3; Tatiana Prozorova bt Priska Nugroho (Ind) 6-2, 6-1; Hanne Vandewinkel (Bel) bt Zuzanna Pawlikowska (Pol) 6-3, 6-3.



Tirkey discusses HI's state of affairs with Sports Minister

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI



The ongoing troubles in Hockey India reached up to the sports ministry with HI president Dilip Tirkey and other office-bearers meeting Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday.

Sources close to the development confirmed that Mandaviya sought all details of the happenings in the sport over the last few months, both on and off the field, indicating his concerns.

The meeting, lasting close to half hour, also covered the future course of action for hockey in general, with special emphasis on the upcoming Asian Games.

While nothing was officially learnt that the role of coach Craig Fulton, in the entire episode was also discussed.

Nepal coach Law doesn't want to settle for mediocrity

T20 WORLD CUP

S. Shrivathsan
CHENNAI

Australia's challenge at the T20 World Cup has just got tougher. The 2021 champion has been handicapped by the late withdrawal of Pat Cummins, a key component of its pace battery. Adding to its woes is the news that Josh Hazlewood, a razor-sharp operator across phases, is unlikely to be available for the early stages of the global tournament.

Stuart Law, former Australia batter and current

Nepal head coach, opined that those replacing Cummins and Hazlewood will have big shoes to fill. He, however, backed the Mitchell Marsh-led side to find a quick solution.

"All good things come to an end. There are some players who are reaching the end of their careers and then there are young players who are starting their journeys," Law said after Nepal registered a comfortable win over the UAE in the warm-up contest here on Tuesday.

After being in a race against time to be fit for the T20 World Cup, the 32-year-old Cummins was re-

cently ruled out due to a nagging back issue. His pace partner Hazlewood, 35, has been away from international action since October owing to injury setbacks.

"Cummins is a rare commodity. He is one of the best bowlers the world has seen, particularly in modern-day cricket. Hazlewood is one of the better T20 bowlers going around... the guys in Chennai know it well (he had turned out for Chennai Super Kings in the IPL). But, the Australian team has been very strong for a long time and there is a lot of quality in this team.

Cooper Connolly is one young player who has stood out; he has done well in the Big Bash League. Overall, there is a good blend of youth and experience in the squad," added Law, who took over the reins of Nepal in March.

The Australian acknowledged the hardships that the ICC associate members like Nepal endure, but does not want to settle for mediocrity when a big opportunity arises. "We are very aggressive with the way we think. We do not want to be one of the teams that just turn up and play." To Stuart, all are equal before the 'Law'!



Laying down the Law: The former Australian batter wants Nepal to play an aggressive brand of cricket. CRICKET ASSOCIATION OF NEPAL

CENTRAL RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM No.1

Corrigendum No. 1 is being issued for tender no. CR-BB-Sht-NORTH-2026-06, and details can be viewed on website at www.ireps.gov.in. This tender complies with Public Procurement Policy (Make in India) order 2017, dated 15.06.2017. Rest all other terms and conditions remain the same. All other details can be viewed on Website at www.ireps.gov.in.

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NOTICE Regarding Response to Prebid queries and Corrigendum for the tender titled "Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Agency for Operation and Maintenance of Jigysa Helpline (Call Centre) for Bihar Prashasnik Sudhar Mission Society (BPSMS)"

BIHAR PRASHASNIK SUDHAR MISSION SOCIETY
(General Administration Department)
Govt. of Bihar
Sinchai Barrack - 1, Harding Road, Patna-800001
(Tel: 0612-2215908, Email: bpsms1@gmail.com)

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE

Response to Pre-bid queries and subsequent corrigendum for the tender titled "Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Agency for Operation and Maintenance of Jigysa Helpline (Call Centre) for Bihar Prashasnik Sudhar Mission Society (BPSMS)" (RFP Reference No. : BPSMS/ Procurement/ 01/2025 Date : 14/01/2026) (PR No-022602 (B&C) 2025-26) have been uploaded on BPSMS website i.e. <https://bpsm.bihar.gov.in> and on e-procurement website <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>.

The last date for receipt of proposal online through eproc2.bihar.gov.in is 13.02.2026 up to 03:00 PM.

Sd/-
Procurement officer
Bihar Prashasnik Sudhar Mission Society

PR- 023311 (B & C) 2025-26
For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

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No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-26/1621/2025-26 Date: 03.02.2026

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Item rate Tenders are invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors registered in KPWD who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following works as per the schedule given below:

Name of the work: Providing Over Head Height Barrier at Various Locations at Kadechur Badiyal Industrial Area, Yadgiri District. (2nd Call).

• Last Date for submission of Bids: 17.02.2026 upto 4:00 pm.

Applicants May download bidding documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-DPR-04/1622/2025-26 Date: 03.02.2026

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB invites tender from reputed consultants/firms under two cover bid system having an office at Bengaluru with vast experience and proven record of similar nature of work for project mentioned below:-

Name of the works: 1) Providing Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Scientific Disposal of Industrial Solid Waste by Integrated Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and Alternate Fuel Raw Material Facility (AFR) including survey analysis, qualitative & quantitative study, design of MRF & AFR facility etc., at plot no.311 to 314, Belur Industrial Area, Dharwad Taluk & District. (2nd Call). 2) Providing Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for proposed external water supply scheme to Ittangihal, Arekere, Tidagundi Industrial Areas and surveying, Demarcation of boundary for the work of formation of Industrial layout for the proposed Tidagundi Village, Vijayapur Taluk & District. (Extent 1203A.06G)

• Last Date for submission of Bids: 18.02.2026 upto 4:00 pm.

Applicants May download bidding documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

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Chief Engineer-2, KIADB, Bengaluru

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CENTRAL RAILWAY

SIGNALING WORKS

Divisional Railway Manager (S&T), 1st Floor, Parcel Office Building, above P.F.No. 14 & 15, Central Railway, Mumbai CST-400 001, for and on behalf of the President of India Invites Open tenders from the reputed contractors. The time, date and submission of tender up to 15.00 Hrs. on 23/02/2026 and will be opened at 15.15 Hrs. on the same day. **Name of work :** Provision of balance Indoor & outdoor signalling works in connection with Electronic Interlocking station at Kalyan junction station on HDN route of Mumbai division, where Kawach is sanctioned. **Tender Notice No. CR-BB-SNT-PJT-2026-11. Approximate Cost : 7.02 Crores. EMD : ₹ 501400/- Date of Opening : 23.01.2026. Validity : 60 Days. Completion period : 03 Months. This tender complies with Public Procurement Policy (Make in India) Order 2017, dated 15.06.2017. Complete details of tenders are available at Central Railway. Official website www.ireps.gov.in the complete tender documents can be downloaded from the website. The complete details of tenders are also available in the "Notice Board" of the Divisional Railway Manager (S&T)'s Office, Mumbai CST.**

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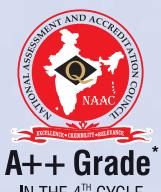
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Vivek Krishnan
VADODARA

O, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0. That was how Lauren Bell's sojourn with Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the fourth season of the Women's Premier League began. Entrusted with bowling the opening over of the opening game against Mumbai Indians on January 9, the 25-year-old English pacer appeared to have the brand new ball on a string.

On strike was ace all-rounder Amelia Kerr. The New Zealander is usually quick to impose herself with her attacking strokeplay, but on this occasion, she was made to poke and prod for a whole over, uncertain of where a run was going to come from.

Bell went on to work Kerr over meticulously, and had her reward in the third over of her tone-setting first spell when the batter sliced a desperate hoick to Arundhati Reddy at cover. Kerr's torment was encapsulated by a return of four off 15 deliveries.

Ever since, Bell has rarely deviated from her high standards. Over eight matches in the red-and-black jersey, the six-feet-tall bowler has inexorably homed in on a probing length, forcing top-order batters to feel almost as helpless as Kerr did on that nippy evening.

Bell's exploits – 12 wickets at a parsimonious economy rate of 5.62 – have gone a long way towards ensuring a second final in four years for RCB. In a format where dot balls are worth their weight in gold, she has delivered as many as 116 out of 192 deliveries. That is equivalent to 19.2 overs of dots, the most by anybody in this tournament.

The stranglehold she has had on opponents stems from her ability to examine techniques by pitching the ball up and extracting swing. Bell's outswinger to right-handers is particularly deadly. Interestingly, as RCB's bowling coach Anya Shrubsole observed in a media interaction after the team's last game, the delivery is a fairly recent addition to Bell's artillery. When she made her debut for England across all formats in 2022, the booming inswinger was her stock ball.

Tweak in action

The change came about as a result of Bell remodelling her bowling action at the end of her maiden Ashes series in 2023.

"I sat down with my coach and my bowling coach at the time. And we just chatted about how I could progress as a bowler. Obviously, one of my goals is to be one of the best seamers in the world. Basically, there are three parts of fast-bowling: pace, bounce, and movement. My action then didn't provide the most pace and the most bounce that I could get out of my physicality. So yeah, I just tinkered with my action a bit and tried to get a bit more upright. And in doing so, it led to changing the way I swung the ball," she said during a virtual media interaction on Monday.

Tinkering with the fundamentals of her action as an international cricketer in the public glare couldn't have been easy. It is a testimony to her drive to push on and become a better bowler that she took on the challenge.

"It was definitely tricky. It was a tricky maybe six to nine months of my career, but I had the best support I could have asked for at the time," Bell reflected. "I guess as a young player, I knew that it was for the right reasons and I wanted to push my cricket on. You don't want to stand still in professional sport because people will take over you. At that point, it was a bit challenging. I was doing it on the international stage as well. I was playing for England at a point where I wasn't 100%. I've come out the other side now, and it was all worth it in the end."

Favourite dismissal

Besides conventional swing, Bell can also derive movement off the surface. Cast your mind back to the game against Delhi Capitals at the D.Y. Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on January 17, when she castled Laura Wolvaardt with a peach. The South African batter was shaping up to drive in anticipation of the ball swinging away, but once the white Kookaburra landed on the deck, it seemed in just a fraction and breached the wide gap between bat and pad to clatter the stumps.

Of the 12 wickets in Bell's locker in this campaign, she savours this more than any other. It merits a place in the highlights reels of the competition.

"The ball that got Wolvaardt," Bell beamed when asked about her favourite dismissal of the season. "I guess we chatted about the fact that the ball coming back into her is probably her only area of weakness. I got a bit of assistance off the pitch and got it to go back in. So that was a plan that we chatted about pre-game and we managed to execute it out there."

With Bell proving to be such a force with the new ball, RCB has invariably used up three of her overs in the PowerPlay. When it comes to bringing her back for her fourth and final over, the scenario of the game has tended to dictate skipper Smriti Mandhana's decision.

"When I came out here, I don't think we planned that I was always going to



In the swing of things: Bell spearheads RCB's march to WPL final

The 25-year-old pacer from England has been on target from the very start of the fourth season of the Women's Premier League. Having picked up 12 wickets and bowled 116 dot balls in eight matches, the leader of the Bengaluru outfit's bowling attack reflects on a fabulous campaign ahead of the final on Thursday

EMMANUEL YOGINI

THE GIST

When the opportunity to pick Bell in the auction ahead of the 2026 edition sprung up, RCB seized it without a moment's hesitation. The coaching staff of the Bengaluru side was thoroughly convinced about the pacer's credentials

While the England speedster's stint with RCB has indeed been seamless, it does beg the question of why she was not utilised at all by UP Warriorz. She was part of the northern franchise in 2023, but didn't play a single game

With Bell proving to be such a force with the new ball, RCB has invariably used up three of her overs in the PowerPlay. When it comes to bringing her back for her fourth and final over, the scenario of the game has tended to dictate skipper Smriti's decision

bowl three in the PowerPlay. But it's been going really well. If you can get on top of teams earlier, it sets you up for the innings really well. So, yeah, we've been trying to take wickets in the PowerPlay and really get on top of teams." Bell elaborated. "And then, I've always got one left. It's normally when we need to break a partnership. Smriti will turn to me and I know my role is to come on and try and take a wicket."

Synergy with Smriti

In any well-functioning outfit, certainly, the symbiosis between the captain and the spearhead of the bowling unit is absolutely essential. In this case, Bell's familiarity with Smriti much before their association in the WPL has helped. They were teammates for Southern Brave in The Hundred.

"We knew each other really well before I came here because I've obviously played with her. That was more on a personal level and as a friend," said the youngster from Swindon in southwest England. "And then out here, I've obviously got to know her as a captain. She's been so clear and really backed me, giving me lots of confidence. So yes, we work really well together. Coming here, knowing that I knew my captain obviously settled a few nerves. We've got on and we tend to agree on all plans and everything she wants from me. It's been pretty seamless."

While Bell's stint with RCB has indeed been seamless, it does beg the question of why she was not utilised at all by UP Warriorz. She was part of the northern franchise in 2023, but didn't play a single game.

Puzzling as that seems with the benefit

of hindsight, Bell ensured she absorbed valuable lessons from the experience.

"Coming here to India and bowling on these pitches, I trained out here whilst I was with Warriorz. And just experiencing the WPL puts you in a good position," Bell stated. "Coming back, you kind of know what to expect and what it might be like. I was buzzing to just be there and be part of the squad and experience it all. And I knew that I was going to, once I got home, keep training and

into this competition that we really wanted an opening bowler who is strong in the PowerPlay," Shrubsole informed.

"She was the one we ideally wanted. It was always going to go down to auction order and things like that. So luckily, her name came up first and we were able to get her. She's kind of shown why we were so keen to have her here."

Yes, of course, she has.

+

hopefully get to a place where I can get picked and have an impact for a team."

When the opportunity to pick Bell in the auction ahead of the 2026 edition sprung up, RCB seized it without a moment's hesitation. The coaching staff of the Bengaluru side, of which Shrubsole is now an integral member, was thoroughly convinced about the England pacer's credentials.

"Looking at the make-up of the Warriorz side, they obviously decided not to go for her. But we were clear coming



SCIENCE

Indian scientists make affordable dipstick test to track AMR in sewage

Sewage sampling is an ethically acceptable and economically feasible approach to check for AMR in a population; likewise, for a nation as populous and vast as India, affordable testing technology is critical to curb the spread of AMR; a key feature of the new assay is its affordability, with a unit cost of ₹400-550

Edries Yousaf Hajam

Scientists from the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad, have developed an affordable way to check for antimicrobial resistance in sewage.

In their study, detailed in a paper published in *Nature Communications* on December 29, the scientists analysed sewage samples from 381 sites in Assam, Haryana, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal, looking for antibiotic residues, microbial diversity, and resistance genes.

Urban sewage in India is known to be a hotspot and reservoir for antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which the team was able to confirm. But equally importantly, the findings validated the scientific test, or assay, the team developed for the purpose, which the team said was affordable without sacrificing efficiency, and thus a solution suitable for use in low- and middle-income countries.

'See with your naked eye'

"The workflow to perform the dipstick assay is straightforward," Deepjyoti Paul, a research scientist at THSTI and the study's first author, said.

The approach is similar to a rapid diagnostic test, in this case to detect the resistance genes, i.e. those that confer microbes with the ability to resist certain drugs, in environmental sources. Scientists first collect sewage samples and process them to isolate the genetic material, then they amplify the quantities of those genes, for example using the PCR method, so that they are easier to detect.

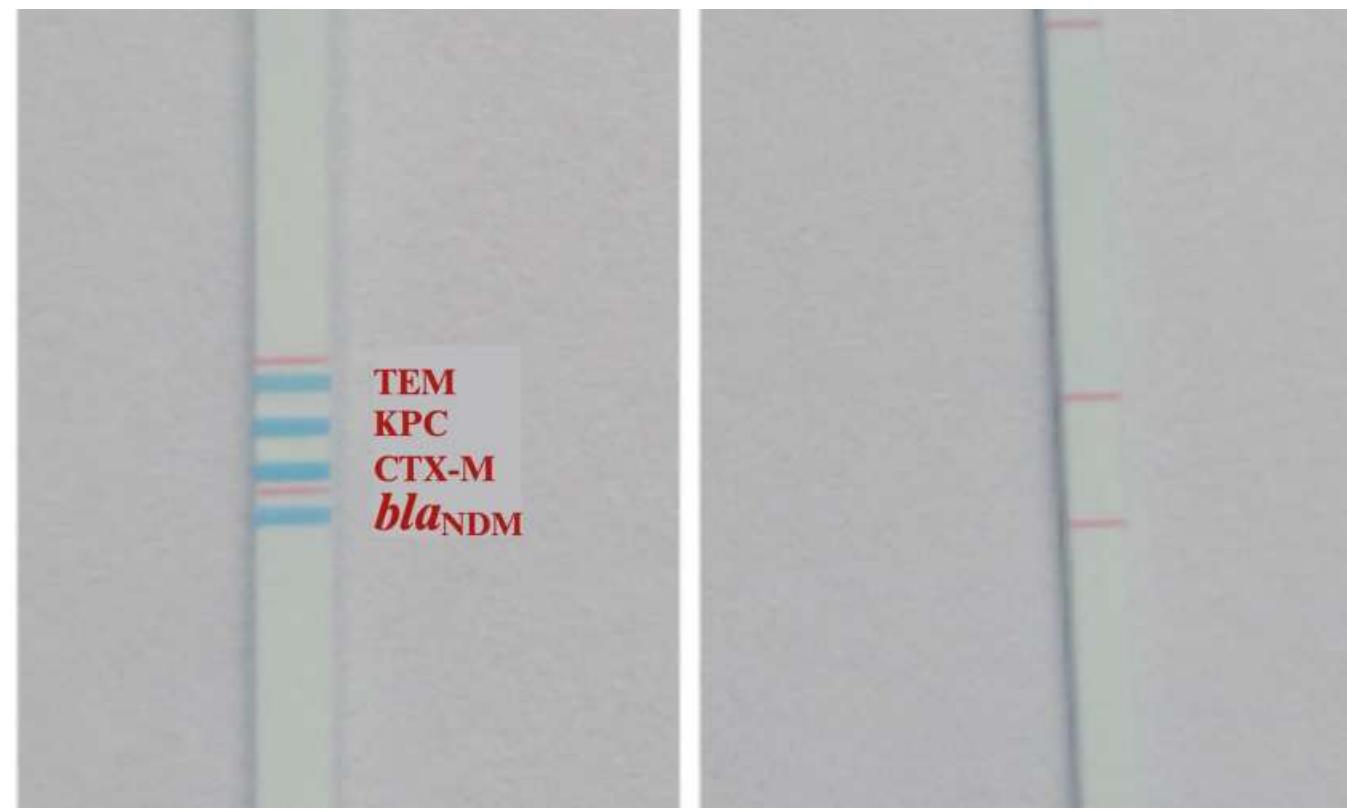
Then, the amplified genetic material and a detection reagent are added to a dipstick. If the AMR genes are present in the sample, they will bind to the dipstick and produce a band of a visible colour, and thus a clear visual readout.

"The beauty of the dipstick assay is that you can see bands with your naked eye and understand if the sample has a resistance gene or not," Dr. Paul said.

Snapshot of antibiotic use

Antibiotics that once worked may become ineffective in treating infections as bacteria develop defenses against one or multiple types of the drugs. As a result, treating resistant pathogens becomes more difficult, reducing the number of treatment options available. AMR pathogens can cause life-threatening infections and create complications following surgery and organ transplantation.

Sewage is a complex environment that offers a snapshot of antibiotic usage and provides an early warning system for resistance development. Samples from sewage can capture upstream signals from communities, hospitals, animal farms, and industries. If certain



An image of the dipstick assay in action. The stick on the right is the negative control, for comparison. PAUL ET AL., 2025 (NATURE COMMUNICATIONS)

antibiotics or resistance genes are prevalent at a particular location, it can be a sign that medical intervention may be required at the sources upstream. In fact, sewage sampling is considered an ethically acceptable and economically feasible approach to check for AMR in a population.

Likewise, for a nation as populous and geographically vast as India, affordable, time-efficient, and scalable testing technology is critical to curb the spread of AMR. A key feature of the dipstick assay is its affordability, with a unit cost of just around ₹400-550 – far lower than alternatives like shotgun sequencing, whose cost can exceed ₹9,000.

Each dipstick can also recognise 16 different resistance genes from a given sample and deliver results within two hours. In case new resistance genes are discovered anywhere in the world, researchers can also upgrade the dipstick in just three days.

"The dipstick based assay that we developed can easily be adopted in very minimal-resource settings," THSTI professor and the study's corresponding author Bhabatosh Das said.

Where there is smoke

While techniques like shotgun sequencing can provide a comprehensive picture of resistance genes, they are not feasible to use for routine testing and surveillance.

According to the authors, the dipstick assay can fill this gap by performing rapid large-scale surveillance to potentially flag a location in the sewage system for deeper investigation and intervention, by researchers, healthcare workers, and the



The beauty of the dipstick assay is that you can see bands with your naked eye and understand if the sample has a resistance gene or not.

DEEJPYOTI PAUL
Research scientist at THSTI

government.

The approach also builds on an earlier proof of concept developed in 2017 by researchers in Japan, to detect carbapenemase genes in stool specimens. Dr. Das's lab adapted the dipstick assay approach for other applications, including to detect microbiota associated with preterm births and to identify and differentiate SARS-CoV-2 variants.

But while the dipstick assay offers rapid insights, experts urged careful interpretation of its results at this stage.

"A gene doesn't make you unwell," David Graham, an antimicrobial resistance expert and retired professor at Durham University who now advises the United Nations, said. "A gene just tells you the possibility of an organism being there that might make you unwell." As he put it: "Genes are like smoke: where there is smoke, there is often fire."

Because resistance to antibiotics can be a result of different genes or even sets of genes in different countries, he emphasised the need for a deeper understanding of the context.

Cheaper, faster, scalable
Culturing resistant pathogens and

studying them at genomic, transcriptomic, and metagenomic levels could eventually develop a comprehensive understanding of the genetics of resistance. That information would provide crucial context to help researchers select genetic signatures that reliably indicate resistant pathogens.

"Our goal is to ultimately be able to track pathogens using genetics," Dr. Graham said, "because it is cheaper, faster and can be done at mass scales".

Thus, the dipstick assay can be useful in local settings where the context and circumstances of resistance are exceptionally well understood.

"Finding a gene is probably two or three biological steps away from finding something that is resistant, [such as] a viable organism or in worst case a viable pathogen," he added.

For now, the dipstick assay is best positioned as an early warning tool for AMR risk in and around Indian cities. Sewage-based surveillance using dipsticks could help identify localities in which wastewater treatment is inadequate or where antibiotic use might be high, allowing public health authorities to intervene upstream.

The approach could also help assess whether pharmaceutical effluent treatment plants actually reduce the spread of resistance.

Such utilities offer a crucial advantage in monitoring public health threats in a country which has become a global hotspot for AMR.

(*Edries Yousaf Hajam is a freelance science journalist.
edriss.yousaf@gmail.com*)

THE GIST

In India, which has become a global hotspot for AMR, the dipstick assay can help perform rapid large-scale surveillance to identify localities in which wastewater treatment is inadequate or where antibiotic use might be high

A key feature of the dipstick assay is its affordability, with a unit cost of just around ₹400-550 — far lower than alternatives like shotgun sequencing, whose cost can exceed ₹9,000

Each dipstick can also recognise 16 different resistance genes from a given sample and deliver results within two hours

BIG SHOT



A drone view shows trees burnt by wildfires in Chubut, Argentina on January 29. The fires have destroyed an area more than twice the size of Buenos Aires and stirred criticism over austerity measures under President Javier Milei that have significantly cut aid resources. REUTERS

QUESTION CORNER

Bending the arc



Q: What is suborbital tourism?

A: On January 31, Blue Origin, the private space company owned by Jeff Bezos, announced that it was suspending its New Shepard suborbital space tourism programme for at least two years to focus on its "lunar capabilities" instead.

Suborbital tourism is a form of space travel where paying passengers fly to the edge of space but do not complete a full orbit around the earth. These flights typically reach an altitude of around 100km — a boundary known as the Kármán line and the region beyond which is considered to be space.

Unlike orbital missions, such as those going to the International Space Station, suborbital vehicles don't achieve the immense speed necessary to stay in orbit. Instead they follow a parabolic flight path, similar to the trajectory of a ball thrown forward.

The experience usually lasts between 10 and 15 minutes. Around the peak of the flight arc, the vehicle's engines shut down and passengers experience several minutes of weightlessness, allowing them to float within the cabin and view the earth's curvature against the darkness of space through large windows. Because the craft is not travelling fast enough to



The world's first unpiloted suborbital flight being launched from Blue Origin's Launch Site 1 in Texas, U.S. on July 20, 2021. REUTERS

remain in orbit, gravity eventually pulls it back down through the atmosphere.

Companies like Blue Origin and Virgin Galactic have been the primary providers of these experiences. These flights require significantly less energy and less complex heat shielding, making them a more accessible entry point for private individuals who want to experience spaceflight.

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Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of Moroccans evacuated due to severe weather

50 In thousand. More than 50,000 people have been evacuated from their homes in northern Morocco due to severe weather and heavy rainfall affecting several provinces, the interior ministry said. The evacuations began on Friday, mostly in the Larache province. AFP

Number of Indian visitors hosted by Singapore in 2025

1.2 In million. Singapore hosted more than 1.2 million visitors from India in 2025, a 1% increase from the previous year, according to Singapore Tourism Board (STB) data. Overall International Visitor Arrivals (IVA) reached 16.9 million in 2025, representing 2.3% growth compared to 2024. PTI

Number of foreign visitors hosted by Spain last year

96.8 In million. Spain has set a new tourism record, welcoming nearly 96.8 million foreign visitors in 2025, according to figures released by the National Statistics Institute. The number of visitors saw an increase of 3.2%, compared to 2024, which saw 94 million tourists. AP

Amount Rajasthan collected as fines in 3 years for polluting

16.56 In ₹ crore. The Rajasthan government informed the Assembly that over 5.99 lakh challans were issued, and more than ₹16.56 crore was collected as fines against polluting activities in the State over three years. This was given in a written reply. PTI

The size of Bihar government's Budget for 2026-27

3.47 lakh crore. The Nitish Kumar government presented a ₹3.47 lakh crore Budget, asserting that the State was making progress at a rapid pace and that the estimated growth rate for the current fiscal was an impressive 14.9%. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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How did the space sector fare in the Budget?

While budget numbers for the space sector suggest that the state-led programme is stabilising, the Finance Ministry has overlooked the structural reforms that industry bodies like the SatCom Industry Association-India and the Indian Space Association have demanded

ECONOMIC NOTES

Vasudevan Mukunth

The Indian space program has moved out of its post-pandemic slump and is entering a phase of sustained, if also cautious, consolidation. Since 2012-2013, the national space budget has grown by 182%. While this sounds massive, most of the growth actually happened in the last decade, especially between 2014 and 2019. Allocations have increased more slowly in the last five years. In fact, for a while, the 2019-2020 expenditure of ₹13,017 crore was like a high ceiling that the Department of Space struggled to exceed in actual spending terms, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic and delays due to missions being rescheduled.

The 2026-2027 budget estimate is now 5.3% higher than the pre-pandemic peak, indicating that the 'lost years' of the pandemic are officially over, with the Department finally planning for a scale of operations that actually exceeds its previous historical maximum. In fact, if the expectation for NewSpace India, Ltd. (NSIL) to generate ₹1,403 crore from its own internal resources is included, the expenditure on the total space ecosystem is currently around ₹15,000 crore.

Structural reforms

The fiscal roadmap, however, also reveals a disconnect between the government's rhetoric on privatisation and financial reality. The budget numbers suggest that the state-led programme is stabilising, but by focusing almost exclusively on direct budgetary support to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and administrative costs for IN-SPACE, the Finance Ministry has overlooked the structural reforms that industry bodies like the SatCom Industry Association-India (SIA-India) and the Indian Space Association (ISPA) have demanded.

Leading up to the Budget, these industry associations had coalesced around a specific set of demands designed to make Indian space manufacturing globally competitive. As articulated in pre-budget memoranda submitted by SIA-India and ISPA to the Ministry, the sector desperately needs a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for space-grade components, echoing the success seen in the mobile manufacturing sector. They further recommended rationalising GST rates for satellite launches to lower entry barriers.

However, the 2026-2027 Union Budget is silent on these fronts. There is no PLI scheme to subsidise the high cost of domestic manufacturing nor a dedicated 'space fund' beyond the administrative allocation to IN-SPACE, the nodal supervisor and promoter of non-governmental entities in the space programme. Instead the government has effectively continued its role as a provider of funds to its own agency, ISRO, rather than evolving into the sort of facilitator industry representatives have been asking for. "Given that ISRO is taking a stand that IN-SPACE is the promoting agency, [the latter] should have been allocated at least ₹1,000 crore or so to run its own schemes to support the industry," Narayan Prasad, co-founder of satsearch, the largest supply chain discovery platform in the space industry, told *The Hindu*. "The funding for IN-SPACE [would mostly have been] to create demand for high tech platforms like new generation microsatellite bus, and novel payloads and subsystems that can have significant



Private constraints: The PSLV-C62 rocket, carrying an earth observation satellite along with 14 other co-passenger satellites to orbit, is seen at the launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh on January 11. PTI

service implications."

'Death valley'

Both ISPA and SIA-India have argued that the current GST regime creates a cash-flow problem: space companies pay significant taxes on high-tech imports and raw materials but because their final product is often exempt, they can't claim refunds on these inputs. The result is a hidden 18% tax on manufacturing, which makes 'Made in India' space hardware more expensive than components from jurisdictions with integrated VAT/GST refunds. Both associations have instead demanded a "zero-rated" GST regime, similar to exports, to allow companies to claim full refunds on input taxes and thus free up liquidity.

Perhaps the most significant missed opportunity was the refusal to classify the space sector as 'critical infrastructure'. In its pre-budget submission, ISPA had argued that this classification is essential to access long-term low-cost lending from institutional banks. They estimated that such a status, which would cover ground stations, launch pads, and telemetry networks, would reduce the cost of capital by 2-3% – a difference that could decide if a project is viable in a capital-intensive industry with gestation periods of half a decade or more.

The global space economy is currently transitioning to a high-volume commercial model with smaller margins. India currently holds around 3% of the global space market and the government has resolved to reach 10% by 2030. Without 'critical infrastructure' status, however, Indian start-ups will have to continue to borrow at commercial rates

(often 10-12%) while international competitors in the U.S. (SpaceX, Blue Origin) or Europe (Arianespace) are able to access venture debt or state-backed financing at lower interest rates.

Industry members have also highlighted a lack of relief to plug the gap between initial investments in research and development (R&D) and first revenue, colloquially called the "death valley". SIA-India and ISPA have both asked for a five-year tax holiday and tax credits for R&D, to incentivise heavy research spending. Otherwise, the financial risk remains entirely on the private entity and discourages the deep-tech innovation the government claims to want. "It seems like the government is interested in industry but ISRO is not," Mr. Prasad said. "ISRO has neither created significant pathways nor subsidised efforts that allow engagement of startups."

Therefore, industry members state that private firms will likely remain "second-grade" suppliers for ISRO's designs rather than endeavour to develop their own intellectual property. This in turn could prevent disruptive innovation, like reusable rockets or satellite-based IoT, which usually flourishes when private firms have the liquidity to take risks. It could also lead to brain drain.

'Inertia model will continue'

"India's private space ecosystem is entering a critical growth phase where early-stage capital must bridge the gap between prototype development and commercial scale-up," Deloitte India had written in a budget expectations report. "Despite rising investor interest since liberalisation in 2020, deep-tech ventures

remain constrained by high hardware burn rates, long gestation timelines and limited private risk appetite."

In the 2024-2025 Budget, the Finance Ministry announced a dedicated Venture Capital (VC) fund of ₹1,000 crore for the space sector to boost the space economy five times over the subsequent decade and to close the "death valley". The Cabinet cleared the setting up of this fund in October 2024 and placed it under the aegis of IN-SPACE. After SEBI approved the fund, the Ministry earmarked ₹150 crore for 2025-2026. However, ISPA and SIA-India have differentiated between equity investment (which the VC fund provides) and fiscal or structural support, such as direct funding for high-risk R&D and for building private launch pads. That is, while the VC fund was a significant move for innovation, even if it was quite small, relative to the industry's needs, as experts noted last year, it doesn't get rid of the capital traps created by the GST regime and the high cost of debt for infrastructure projects.

In effect, the government has opened the door to the private sector legally, but financially it has yet to clear the path. The budget stabilises the public space programme, ensuring ISRO has the funds for Gaganyaan and future planetary missions, but has ignored the fiscal levers of GST rationalisation, infrastructure status, and tax holidays, which the industry's own representative bodies have championed. Thus it stops short of creating a viable private space market.

"Basically this indicates that, this year again, the inertia model will continue, with ISRO focusing on activities within itself," Mr. Prasad added.

THE GIST

▼ The fiscal roadmap reveals a disconnect between the government's rhetoric on privatisation and financial reality.

Both ISPA and SIA-India have argued that the current GST regime creates a cash-flow problem: space companies pay significant taxes on high-tech imports and raw materials but because their final product is often exempt, they can't claim refunds on these inputs. The result is a hidden 18% tax on manufacturing, which makes 'Made in India' space hardware more expensive.

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ECONOMIC NOTES



At crossroads: Prime Minister Narendra Modi salutes marching NCC cadets during the NCC Rally at Cariappa Ground, in New Delhi on January 28. PTI

Why the government has increased capital spending for the defence sector

The government has announced a record ₹7,84,678 crore for defence in the FY2026-27 Union Budget, addressing urgent military needs amid geopolitical tensions. The increased funding aims to enhance domestic capabilities and support the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative

Anushka Saxena

For years, the Indian defence budget has been caught in a classic "guns versus butter" dilemma, attempting to balance the costs of human-power with the need for technological modernisation. If the figures released in the FY2026-27 Union Budget are any indication, the government seems to be turning the tanker. The FY2027 defence budget, hovering near the substantial ₹8 lakh crore mark, has the potential to meet the demands of a rapidly modernising military force and an expanding domestic defence industry.

The capital outlay

The absolute figures are robust. The total Ministry of Defence (MoD) expenditure has touched a historic high, nearing ₹7,84,678 crore for FY27 (Budget Estimate). This allocation accounts for 14.7% of the Government's total expenditure at the BE stage for FY27. While this percentage is a slight dip from the Revised Estimates (RE) of 14.8% in FY26, it marks a significant stabilisation compared to the lean years of FY21 and FY22, when the defence share had shrunk to nearly 13.2%. If New Delhi can continue to floor defence spending at 14-15% of the central spending pie, it would gradually insulate national security imperatives from the vagaries of fiscal consolidation.

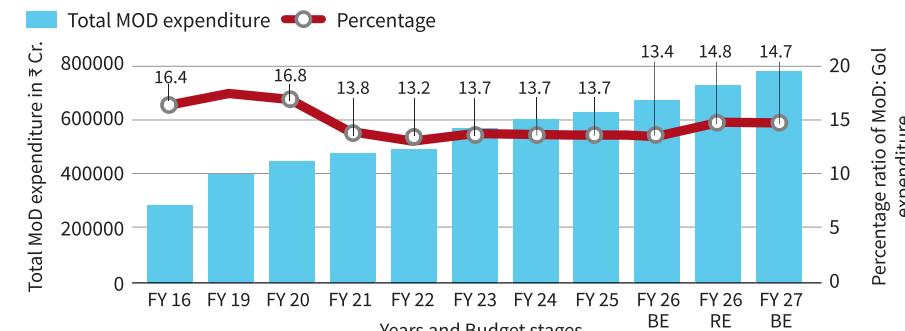
The spectre of ballooning revenue expenditure, specifically salaries and pensions, has haunted defence planners for decades. Because capital outlay is the fund that goes into modernisation and the purchases of big-ticket items such as armour, ships or aircraft, it is expected that revenue and capex components of a defence budget are at parity.

Utilising and diversifying

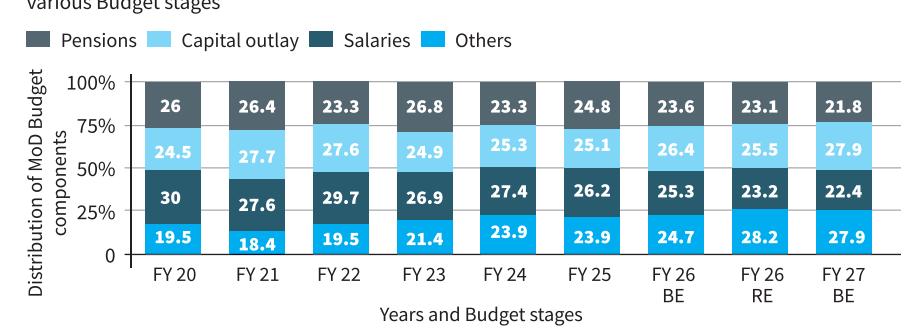
In the FY27 BE, the share of capital outlay has risen to 27.9% of the total defence budget. This is a remarkable jump from the 24.9% figure for FY23 (Actuals) and the 24.5% figure for FY20 (Actuals). In absolute terms, the capital outlay for FY27 BE stands at a staggering ₹2,19,306 crore. To put this in perspective, just a year prior, the BE for FY26 had allocated ₹1,80,000 crore for capital expenses. A year-on-year leap of nearly ₹40,000 crore in the capital head is hence significant. Not to mention, at the RE stage in FY26, more capex has been demanded, which is

A significant increase

This is the first full Union Budget presented after Operation Sindoora, and the financial footprint of the conflict is likely reflected in the budget for defence. The four-day intense aerial engagement following the Pahalgam terror attack exposed the need for a stockpile of armament

CHART 1: Defence expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure (in ₹ crore) across select years, and at various Budget stages**CHART 2:** Comparative figures of capital outlay (in ₹ crore) across the past four years, and at various Budget stages

Years/ Stages	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27
BE (₹ crore)	1,52,369	1,62,600	1,72,000	1,80,000	2,19,306.47
RE (₹ crore)	1,50,000	1,57,228.2	1,59,500	1,86,454.2	-
Actuals (₹ crore)	1,42,940.01	1,54,256.28	1,59,768.4	-	-

CHART 3: Composition of MoD budget/ expenditures in percentage across select years, and at various Budget stages

a departure from previously observed trends wherein the BE is always higher than the RE, and the RE is nearly always higher than the Actuals (see Chart 2).

However, to understand fully the urgency in these figures, one must acknowledge three main aspects of capex utilisation and the geopolitical realities of the past few years.

Firstly, this is the first full Union Budget presented after Operation Sindoora, and the financial footprint of that conflict is likely reflected in the demands for grants. The four-day intense aerial engagement following the Pahalgam terror attack exposed the need for a stockpile of armament

such as precision-guided munitions (PGMs) and loitering munitions, especially if the Indian armed forces are to prepare for a two-front challenge involving both China and Pakistan. In that regard, it is possible that the 21.8% jump in capital outlay is not just for future-proofing, but also for the replenishment of the war wastage reserves depleted in May 2025.

Secondly, the expenditure trends may also signal that Emergency Procurement (EP) – once an adhoc measure after the Galwan incident – has now been effectively institutionalised. The rapid spike in capital spending suggests that the

fast-track mechanism used to induct anti-drone systems and long-range vectors during Operation Sindoora could now be the standard operating procedure for critical technologies.

Thirdly, a critical nuance often missed in headline numbers is the concept of committed liabilities. These are payments due in the upcoming FY for contracts signed in previous years. Historically, a major chunk of capex has been absorbed by past obligations, which could include, say, installments for S-400s, Rafales, or Akash missiles signed years ago, leaving less untied cash for new signings. The hope is that the capex hike breaks this cycle, given that for the Government to be able to sign contracts for the procurement of say, Advanced Medium Light Aircraft, or Project 75I diesel-electric submarines, funds worth at least 10-15% of the total contract amount must be free for the agreement to go through in FY27.

Composition statistics

Finally, an assessment of the composition of the total MoD expenditure shows that the share of pensions in the total defence budget has contracted to 21.8% in FY27, down from 26% in FY20. Similarly, the salary component has moderated to 22.4%, a sharp decline from the 30% high seen in FY20.

While the absolute pension bill remains high, its share of the pie is shrinking, likely a preliminary result of the Agnipath scheme and a deliberate policy to cap revenue expenditure. With ₹2.19 lakh crore in the kitty for capital expenditure, the pressure now shifts to the domestic industry. The government has reserved nearly 75% of the capital acquisition budget for the domestic industry under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

The challenge, however, remains absorption capacity. Can defence public sector undertakings and private sector players deliver on time? The "Buy Indian-IDDM" (Indigenously Designed, Developed, and Manufactured) route of the Defence Acquisition Procedure is valuable, but recent operational urgencies dictate that delivery timelines cannot be flexible.

The heavy allocation suggests that the government is confident in the maturity of the Indian defence industrial base, and so, business performance, too, should reflect commitment to the act.

Anushka Saxena is a Staff Research Analyst at the Takshashila Institution.

THE DAILY QUIZ

On Sunday, Carlos Alcaraz became the youngest male tennis player to complete a career grand slam in the open era. Here is a quiz on the grand slams

Vighnesh P. Venkitesh

QUESTION 1

Starting off with an easy one, name the four grand slam tournaments.

QUESTION 2

What is a golden slam?

QUESTION 3

Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, and Novak Djokovic are considered the 'big three' of tennis. Who among them has not completed the golden slam?

QUESTION 4

Name the first male and female players to complete calendar grand slams in the open era.

QUESTION 5

Who was the first male player to complete a golden slam?

**Visual question:**

Name this player who was the first ever to win a golden slam, and the only one to achieve it in a calendar year. FILE PHOTO

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

1. This game led to mass public gatherings in 2016. Ans: Pokemon Go

2. This photo filter became the defining trend of 2016. Ans: Dog filter

3. This actor received his first Oscar in 2016. Ans: Leonardo DiCaprio

4. 2016 marked 10 years since the launch of this microblogging service and Google acquiring this platform. Ans: Twitter; YouTube

5. Groups froze in stylised poses in this trend. Ans: Mannequin challenge

6. This person was elected President of the U.S. in 2016. The U.K. voted to leave the EU in this referendum. Ans: Donald Trump; Brexit

7. This telecom launch in 2016 changed market dynamics.

This economic move faced backlash. This sitting woman Chief Minister died after prolonged hospitalisation. Ans:

Reliance Jio; Banknote demonetisation; Jayalalithaa

Visual: Name this social media platform. Ans: TikTok

Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan| Anisa Haque| Sukdev Shet| Piyali Tuli| Dodo Jayaditya

**FROM THE ARCHIVES**

Know your English

S. Upendran**What is the meaning of "humdinger"?** (Usha, Andhra Pradesh)

This is a word that was used quite frequently by the experts during the World Cup matches. The first syllable "hum" rhymes with "sum", "rum", and "come". The second syllable "dinger" sounds like "singer", "ringer", and "bringer". The stress is on the first syllable "hum". "Humdinger" is an informal word which means "excellent", "marvelous". It can be used to refer to a person or a thing. Here are a few examples. The two matches between South Africa and Australia were humdingers. Everyone expected the final to be a humdinger. It turned out to be a damp squib.

What is the meaning and origin of "on cloud nine"? (Surabhi Nagappa)

When someone says that he/she is on cloud nine, it means he/she is extremely happy; he/she is on top of the world. Kasi was on cloud nine when he found out he was going to become a father. When the well known director asked Sumathi to be the heroine in his next movie, she was on cloud nine for days. This expression is frequently used by the Weather Bureau in the United States. Cloud nine is used to refer to the "cumulonimbus" clouds – the storm clouds that you see before it starts pouring. I understand that sometimes these clouds reach a height of 30,000 or 40,000 feet. So when you are on one of these clouds, you are pretty high indeed. You might feel, literally, on top of the world. Hence the meaning, to be very happy. The expression was made popular in the 1950s by a radio series titled, "Johnny Dollar". In this series, the hero was often knocked down unconscious. When he was in this state, he was transported to cloud nine from where he would continue to talk to the listeners.

What is the difference between "till" and "until"? (Somasundaram, Kodambakkam, Chennai)

"Until" is considered to be more formal than "till"; otherwise there is no difference between the two. They are often used interchangeably. Here are a few examples. I waited until/till the Chairman arrived. Her parents refused to buy her a bicycle until/till she learnt to become a little more responsible. I want to stay in Singapore till/until the end of the month. We often hear people say "We walked until the gate and came back". This is wrong. "Until" and "till" both have to do with time, not distance. We should say, "We walked to the gate and came back".

What do you call the lines that are by the side of someone's eyes?

(Jailakshmi, Chetput, Chennai)

Such lines are called "crow's-foot". The singular is "crow's-foot". Why are they called "crow's-foot"? Because the lines look like the feet of crows! Not a very favourable comparison, is it?

Published in The Hindu on June 29, 1999.

Word of the day**Flagellation:**

beating as a source of erotic or religious stimulation; beating with a whip or strap or rope as a form of punishment

Synonyms:

flogging, lashing, tanning, whipping

Usage: After failing to deliver the parcel, he engaged in a mental session of self-flagellation.

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/flagellationpro

International Phonetic Alphabet:

/flædʒə'lɪfən/

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