



Hindustan Times

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					DOSA TAVA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.88 mm extra-thick base Patented nonstick on hard anodised – lasts longer Rivets fixed on flange – cooking area maximised
TRI-PLY PRO KADHAI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra-thick 3 mm Tri-Ply Stainless Steel – food will not burn Stay-cool, sturdy Stainless Steel handles Works on Gas + Induction 					TRI-PLY PRO HANDI See full range & prices

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- Deep-Fry before pressure cooking
- 3 mm extra-thick Tri-Ply – spreads heat quickly
- Works on gas & induction



- 6.6 mm extra-thick sandwich bottom heats evenly
- Base stays flat, will not bulge
- Works on Gas + Induction



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- 4.88 mm extra-thick metal – heats evenly, stays flat
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- Works on Gas and Induction



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- Extra-thick 3 mm Tri-Ply Stainless Steel
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Cooking at Home – Healthier, Cheaper, Smarter

PAGE ONE PLUS

NUMBER THEORY

Evolution of India's tax burden: Progressive in nature but with a caveat

By Roshan Kishore

India will become the world's third largest economy in a couple of years. It will still lag by a distance when it comes to average incomes. India's per capita GDP in current dollar terms – the same yardstick which will make it third largest by size of GDP – is ranked 144 in 2025. To be sure, even China, which is already the world's second largest in terms of GDP ranks 78 on per capita GDP. The mismatch between size of the economy and per capita incomes makes the question of tax burden an extremely important one in India. More so because it is also a democracy. The evolution of India's tax burden – as seen in central taxes – makes for an extremely interesting study. Here are three charts that summarise this.



1 Direct taxes have seen a large increase in total tax revenue in the post-pandemic period

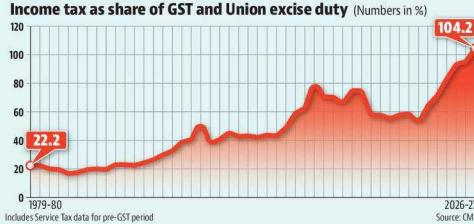
In 1980-81, direct taxes were less than 30% of the Centre's direct tax revenues. This number fell to less than 25% by 1990-91, the year India's embraced large-scale policy reforms. The story changed radically after reforms and direct taxes reached 18% of indirect taxes by 2008-09, the year of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). Reforms, simply speaking, made India's tax burden drastically progressive compared to the pre-reform era. Direct taxes are progressive in nature because the rich pay higher taxes and most of the poor do not pay any of them at all. Indirect taxes, in contrast, do not differentiate between rich and poor. The decade between the GFC and the pandemic saw a stall, in fact, marginal worsening in the share of direct taxes in the Centre's tax revenues. Things changed once again in the post-pandemic period and the share of direct taxes started rising. Direct taxes are now 160% of indirect taxes in the Centre's gross tax revenue.

Centre's Gross Tax Revenue as share of GDP (Numbers in %)	
Direct tax	Indirect tax
1980-81	1.92
1990-91	1.88
2008-09	5.79
2019-20	5.22
2026-27	6.86
	4.27

Source: CMI, Budget Documents

2 Income tax collections are now more than domestic indirect taxes put together

There are two major direct tax heads in India: income tax and corporate taxes. The former is a tax on individuals and the latter on company profits. Income taxes surpassed corporate taxes a few years ago in India. One of the immediate reasons was a reduction in corporate tax rates in 2019. A more structural reason was the rising fortunes of salaried income elite which was flagged in the newspaper earlier. 2026-27 will see a new milestone on the growing importance of income tax collections in the Indian economy despite a large reduction in tax slabs last year. Income tax collections are now higher than combined collections from union excise duty and Goods and Service Tax (GST). This means that individuals pay more in direct taxes than all indirect taxes levied within the country (customs is an indirect tax on imports). Simply speaking, it suggests a huge growth in individual incomes in the country overtime. Why, one may ask then, are people complaining about lack of employment opportunities in India?



3 Rising income tax collections are based on a very skewed base of individual incomes

9.8 million income tax returns (ITRs) were filed in India in fiscal year 2024-25. This number could well have crossed or will cross 100 million soon. Not all income tax returns have respectable incomes though. A comparison of share in number of ITRs filed and total income reported shows a huge inequality. ITRs with reported income of more than ₹1 crore had a share of less than 0.5% in number of ITRs in 2023-24 but accounted for 44% of total reported income. Almost 50% of the ITRs under the less than ₹5 lakh category had 13% of total reported income. How has this changed overtime? The earliest data we have is from 2012-13 and it seems that the most, although not all, of the change could be on account of inflation moving people in higher income brackets.

Inequality in India's income tax returns Chart shows annual income wise share (in %) for earliest and latest period for which we have data

	2012-13 number of returns	2023-24 number of returns	2012-13 Gross total income	2023-24 gross total income
Upto ₹5 lakh	81.05	48.63	26.94	12.88
₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh	13.26	35.05	13.14	18.27
₹10 lakh to ₹25 lakh	4.39	12.7	9.44	14.38
₹25 lakh to ₹50 lakh	0.79	2.45	3.92	6.47
₹50 lakh to ₹1 crore	0.3	0.74	3.04	3.91
More than ₹1 crore	0.22	0.43	43.51	44.11

The growing importance of direct, even income tax collections are a testimony to India's tax burden turning progressive. But there is a deeper inequality story inside this progressive turn. It might not be hurting the fisc at the moment, but is definitely fuelling an aspirationality gap in the country.

{ MY INDIA } 'RULES-BASED ORDER'

House of Lords report hails India trade deal

The British government believes a trade deal concluded with India last year demonstrates that the rules-based order is "worth adhering to and supporting" at time of growing protectionism and global instability, said a report from the House of Lords on Monday. The report was issued after a scrutiny of the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement by the international agreements panel of the upper house of the UK Parliament. →PI2



{ MY DELHI } AWAITS AERODROME LICENCE

Noida airport ready, may open this month: UP CM



Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath announced on Monday that the Noida International Airport at Jevaw is likely to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi later this month. Officials familiar with the developments in the project confirmed that the aerodrome licence from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) remains the last major prerequisite. →PI2

{ MY INDIA } SC GROUPS FACE-OFF

26 booked for clashes amid Haridwar event



At least 26 people were booked after two people died and several others were injured during clashes in Bihari village in Haridwar district, police said on Monday. Police said an argument broke out between two groups from the same SC community during a feast organised as part of the 649th birth anniversary procession of Sant Ravidas. The argument quickly escalated into a physical clash, during which the groups exchanged gunfire. →PI2

Bad Bunny, Kendrick share Grammy spoils

Landmark wins, unforgettable performances, and political firestorms defined the 68th edition of music's biggest annual celebration

Top of the charts

ALBUM OF THE YEAR
DEBÍ TIRAR MÁS FOTOS: BAD BUNNY

RECORD OF THE YEAR
LUTHER: KENDRICK LAMAR WITH SZA

SONG OF THE YEAR
WILDFLOWER: BILLIE EILISH

BEST NEW ARTIST
OLIVIA DEAN

BEST RAP ALBUM
GNX: KENDRICK LAMAR

BEST POP VOCAL ALBUM
MAYHEM: LADY GAGA

A Spanish takeover

Global superstar Bad Bunny, born Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, won Album of the Year for Debi Tirar Más Fotos, blending traditional Puerto Rican sounds with booming electronic beats. It was the first time an album in Spanish took home the Grammys' most prestigious prize.

Rap icon cements legacy

Kendrick Lamar won five awards, including Record of the Year, Rap Song, and Rap Album, as he became the most-awarded rapper in Grammy history, surpassing Jay-Z. He now holds 27 coveted golden gramophones.

Legendary filmmaker joins elite club

Steven Spielberg achieved EGOT status – winning an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony – after taking home the award for Best Music Film for the documentary John Williams. He joined an elite group that includes Audrey Hepburn, Mel Brooks, Elton John, and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Historic 'spiritual' win'

The Dalai Lama won in the Best Audio Book, Narration & Storytelling Recording category, with musician Rufus Wainwright accepting the award on his behalf. The 90-year-old described his first Grammy win as "a recognition of our shared universal responsibility". Beijing criticised the Dalai Lama's win, describing it as "a tool for anti-China political manipulation".

Politics takes centre stage

The ceremony also sparked controversy, with US President Donald Trump threatening to sue Trevor Noah following swipes on Trump's past friendship with Jeffrey Epstein and plans to take over Greenland. Several artists also used the platform to protest the Trump administration's immigration crackdown as they pushed back against ICE.

{ SETS ASIDE U'KHAND HC ORDER }

SC cautions HCs against interference in election

Utkarsh Anand

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday cautioned high courts against interfering with the election process, underscoring that constitutional courts must refrain from granting liberal interim reliefs to individuals and remain conscious of the larger public interest in ensuring smooth and uninterrupted conduct of elections.

A bench of justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta held that since the right to contest or challenge an election is statutory in nature, it must be strictly construed and exercised only in accordance with the law governing the field. Courts, it said, must exercise restraint once the electoral process has commenced.

The high court must, therefore, eschew the favour of liberal interim reliefs in favour of individuals and instead remain mindful of the overarching public interest in ensuring the smooth and uninterrupted conduct of elections across the state," the bench emphasised.

The court made these remarks while setting aside an interim order of the Uttarakhand high court that had directed the returning officer to allot an election symbol to Narendra Singh Deoja and permit him to contest the election to the post of Zila Panchayat member. Allowing an appeal filed by Sandeep Singh Bora, the Supreme Court held that the high court had exceeded its jurisdiction by interfering mid-way in the electoral process.

It final judgment, the Supreme Court held that the division bench had "transgressed the limits of its jurisdiction" and acted in disregard of a revised notification issued by the state election commission in June 2025. Deoja had filed his nomination for the post of Zila Panchayat member from a constituency had accorded constitu-

tional status to Panchayati Raj institutions and introduced Article 243-Q, which expressly bars judicial interference in panchayat elections except through an election petition.

Article 243-O(b), the court emphasised, makes it clear that no election to a panchayat can be called in question except by an election petition presented before the authority and in the manner prescribed by state law.

While the power of judicial review remains intact as part of the Constitution's basic structure, the provision channels such review through a statutorily prescribed mechanism.

In Uttarakhand, the bench noted, the Panchayati Raj Act, 2016 provides a comprehensive framework for resolving election disputes, including challenges to improper rejection of nominations under Section 13H. If Deoja was aggrieved by the rejection of his nomination, the appropriate remedy lay in filing an election petition before the designating authority, and not by invoking the high court's jurisdiction.

Deoja challenged the cancellation before the Uttarakhand high court. An objection was later raised alleging that he had failed to make mandatory disclosures, following which the returning officer cancelled his candidature on July 9, 2025.

Deoja challenged the cancellation before the Uttarakhand high court. A single judge dismissed his writ petition on July 11, 2025, noting that once the election process had set in motion, judicial interference was impermissible at that stage. On the same day, Bora was declared elected unopposed after the remaining candidates, including Deoja, were disqualified.

However, in an intra-court appeal filed without implying Deoja as a party, a division bench of the high court stayed the single judge's order and directed that Deoja be allotted a symbol and allowed to participate in the election. The Supreme Court stayed this interim order on July 23, 2025, clarifying that while the election process could continue, the result would be subject to the outcome of the appeal.

In its final judgment, the Supreme Court held that the division bench had "transgressed the limits of its jurisdiction" and acted in disregard of a revised notification issued by the state election commission in June 2025. Deoja had filed his nomination for the post of Zila Panchayat member from a constituency had accorded constitu-

AIR INDIA

that inadvertent operation that could result in an unintended consequence, such as an illegal engine shutdown."

The directive was triggered by reports from operators of Boeing 737s that the switches were installed with the locking feature disengaged. The FAA said it was told by the company that the fuel control switch design, including the locking feature, is similar on various Boeing models. While it advised checks on the fuel control switches and the replacement of certain models, the recommendations were not mandatory.

A Boeing spokesperson said Air India said in its statement that it had checked the fuel control switches on all Boeing 787 aircraft in its fleet, after a directive from the DGCA following the preliminary report, and had found no issues. AAI's report had said that there was no "recommended action" for either Boeing, the aircraft manufacturer, or GE, the engine maker, at that time.

Safety Matters Foundation, an independent aviation safety education platform, said the pilot of Flight AI132 reported an issue in the left engine fuel control switch on the aircraft that bears the tail number VT-ANX.

"During engine start, the switch failed to remain locked in the RUN position on two attempts, moving towards CUTOFF," it stated. SMF also highlighted a bulletin by the US aviation regulator warning about the possibility of such behaviour.

In 2018, the US FAA issued an airworthiness bulletin for multiple Boeing aircraft models, including the 787-8, that said the fuel control switches, manufactured by Honeywell, could inadvertently move from run to cutoff without their locking mechanism engaging.

When the locking feature is engaged, the switch has to lift the switch deliberately to change its position. If it is disengaged, the switch would be exposed to the potential of inadvertent operation," the FAA said. The agency said, "The growing importance of direct, even income tax collections are a testimony to India's tax burden turning progressive. But there is a deeper inequality story inside this progressive turn. It might not be hurting the fisc at the moment, but is definitely fuelling an aspirationality gap in the country.

{ FROM PAGE 1 }

AIR INDIA

that inadvertent operation that could result in an unintended consequence, such as an illegal engine shutdown."

The directive was triggered by reports from operators of Boeing 737s that the switches were installed with the locking feature disengaged. The FAA said it was told by the company that the fuel control switch design, including the locking feature, is similar on various Boeing models. While it advised checks on the fuel control switches and the replacement of certain models, the recommendations were not mandatory.

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MY DELHI

Won't enforce pvt school fee law in 2025-26: Govt tells SC

Abraham Thomas and

Akhil Das
htreporters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi government has decided against implementing the fee regulation law for private schools this year, it told the Supreme Court on Monday. The move came after the court asked the Directorate of Education (DoE) to reconsider its decision on implementing the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Act, 2023.

Private schools moved the court seeking a stay on the implementation of the law from the academic year 2025-26.

Additional solicitor-general (AGG) SV Raju, appearing for the Delhi government, presented a February 1 (Sunday) gazette notification of an order to a bench of Justices PS Narasimha and Alok Aradhe, saying the schools shall not charge any fees over and above what has been charged from April 1, 2025, for the academic year 2025-26.

"Any exorbitant fee charged by schools for the academic year 2025-26 shall be regulated and dealt with in accordance with law, subject to the final outcome of the proceedings challenging the vires of the Act and the Rules presently pending before the High Court of Delhi and the Supreme Court," said the order.

The decision brought relief to private schools, which have been flagging challenges in implementing the new regime mid-session.

The Delhi government,

A pause, not a rollback

WHAT SC OBSERVED ON JANUARY 19
No doubt, the fees are phenomenally high. But, in your over anxiety, you are creating institutions which are not viable... You are forcing people to get up overnight.

SC'S FEBRUARY 2 ORDER
In view of the clarification that the legal regime will not be implemented from 2025-26, no further order is required to be passed at this stage.

This decision represents a positive development, affording ample time for a thorough analysis of the provisions. This deferral will enable all stakeholders to participate constructively, address concerns, and collaborate toward establishing a balanced framework.

—Principal, Modern Public School

meanwhile, maintained that the law itself remained intact and would be implemented after addressing procedural hurdles flagged by the courts.

The bench considered the order and observed that its only concern was the "hurry" with which the law was sought to be implemented from the current academic year.

"In view of the clarification, no further order is required to be passed," said the bench as it closed the appeals of schools.

On January 19, the Supreme Court observed that implementing the law for the present academic session would be "unviable". Schools appealed against

an interim order of the high court on January 9, refusing to stay the law and the December 24 circular mandating its implementation. The schools were mandated to set up fee regulation committees by January 2026, instead of the July 15 deadline in the law.

Reacting to the development, school managements described the decision as a pragmatic pause rather than a rollback.

Alka Kapur, principal of Modern Public School, said the deferral would allow space for a detailed examination of the law. "This decision represents a positive development, affording ample time for a thorough anal-

ysis of the proposed provisions and an assessment of their potential implications... This deferral will enable all stakeholders to participate constructively," she said.

Parents' groups, while welcoming the clarity on the law's timeline, said the larger issue of unchecked holes remained.

Aprajita Gautam, president of the Delhi Parents' Association, said the decision had removed immediate uncertainty but stressed the need for retrospective scrutiny. "We urge the government to initiate a financial audit of schools on DDA land. The approved and the hiked fee structure for 2024-25

are beyond the approved mining site at the Charkhi Dadri area of the Aravallis.

Observing that, "At this stage, we do not rule out the possibility that the part of the responsible officers were in consonance with the duty to ensure compliance of laws," the court directed the Haryana chief secretary to examine extent of environmental plundering and fix accountability in violation of mining norms in the area. In an order on Saturday, the two-judge bench of justices Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Rohit Kapoor further said, "Unfortunate aspect noticed by us is the

coldness on part of the State authorities in discharge of their duties which had led to such unfortunate situation."

The court was hearing a petition filed by locals and a local stone crusher owner in Pichpura Kalan village in the Charkhi Dadri area who alleged that state authorities have allowed indiscriminate illegal mining by private respondents on their plots as well as adjoining areas despite the approved mining site, causing damage to the ecological balance in the area.

Subsequently, serious allegations were levelled against a private firm, which got license in 2016 alleging that they have not got royalty from the firm and the firm mined area far more than the IL hectare allotted to it in Khasra Nos. 109 and 110.

In December 2025, the court appointed a lawyer as local commissioner who, after a survey of

and 2025-26 should be placed in the public domain," she said.

A February 1 Gazette notification titled the "Delhi School Education (Removal of Difficulties) Order, 2026" acknowledged procedural difficulties had arisen in implementing the Act for 2025-26, noting that the July 15 deadline for forming School Level Fee Regulation Committee (SLFRC) could not be met as the law was notified only on December 10, 2025.

Despite this, parents said fear-related concerns persisted and also raised concerns about the manner in which fee regulation committees were being formed. A parent of a Class 7 student at ITL Public School said that parent participation in the committee was limited. "There has been no transparency in the process. Parents who want to be actively involved are being discouraged," the parent said.

The Delhi government defended its approach, asserting that the pause sought by the court did not dilute the intent of the legislation. Education minister Ashish Singh said, "It has become clear that due to the chief minister's vision, no school in Delhi will be able to make decisions about fees without forming fee regulation committees," he said.

Parents such as Moushumi Gupta, whose child studies at Modern School, Barakhamba Road, said clarity on timelines was only the first step. "Audits must be conducted, and fee hikes from the last two academic sessions should be made public," she said.

The site filed a report confirming that the integrity of the mining block boundary had been compromised. The report said the mining site stretched far beyond the areas earmarked for the purpose. It said that the depth of mining was only visible to 47 metres after which the pit was obscured by water. It also said that some fresh saplings had been seen, but at least 6,000 trees that the firm had to plant were not "there" at the time of mining.

The court directed that status quo be maintained at the site and the entire mining area should be sealed within forty days of issuance of the notice area.

It also asked the director, Haryana Space Application Centre, to place on record the satellite imagery of the mining site in question from 2016 onwards and made the secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change party in the case.

The court also found that, now, after the filing of the petition, the local mining department had recommended cancellation of lease

to the firm, raising question over the timing and the manner of the department's order.

"These prima facie findings persuade us to probe deeper in the matter," the court said, directing the state to place measures on record to ensure that such "rampani loot and plundering of natural resources is not allowed in the name of mining."

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The court has sought response by February 25, the next date of hearing.

The exhibition is free and open Tuesday to Sunday. SANCHIT KHANNA/HINDUSTANTIMES.COM

Chandrawal WTP project work likely to begin this yr: CM

Saloni Bhatia

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NEW DELHI: Chief minister Rekha Gupta announced on Monday that the Chandrawal water treatment plant (WTP), a project approved over a decade ago, is expected to be commissioned this year.

The announcement was made after Gupta chaired a review meeting of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) at the Delhi Secretariat on Tuesday.

The state-of-the-art ₹599 crore plant, which will have a capacity of 105 million gallons per day, is designed to serve approximately 1% of Delhi's population. It is being constructed at Chandrawal near Civil Lines in north Delhi and will cover an area of approximately 92 square kilometres – or 6.2% of Delhi's total geographical area.

CM Gupta said during the meeting the plant would significantly strengthen Delhi's water supply infrastructure, according to officials aware of the meeting's details. The meeting was also attended by the water minister Parvesh Verma, along with DJB officials.

The project is expected to strengthen water supply and

reverse in several densely populated areas in the city such as Model Town, Sadar Bazar, Chandni Chowk, Matia Mahal, Ballimaran, Karol Bagh, Patel Nagar, Rajinder Nagar and RK Puram. These areas, the officials cited above said, have long been facing issues related to water availability and pressure.

Originally approved in 2012, the project faced prolonged delays due to tender cancellations and non-compliance with guidelines of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which is assisting in the project, resulting in cost escalations of nearly ₹400 crore.

In addition to the treatment plant, a parallel pipeline replacement project costing ₹1,331 crore is underway. New distribution networks are being laid across nine constituencies covering key localities such as Karol Bagh, Civil Lines, Kamla Nagar, Malka Ganj, Shaheed Patel Nagar, Shastri Nagar, Naraina, Zakir Hussain, Noida Sector 1, Rambagh, Jhandewalan, Ridge Road, Ramla Ground and Subhash Park to reduce leakage and contamination.

Officials stated the overall target is to reduce non-revenue water from 30-45% to below 15% within three years.

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The project is expected to strengthen water supply and

'SATISH GUJRAL 100: ARCHITECTURE' EXHIBITION IN LAJPAT NAGAR

'Space for people, ideas, conversations': Architect's home studio opened to public

Snehal Sinha

snehal.sinha@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Overlooking narrow lanes of the Lajpat Nagar market lies an elegant exposed-brick bungalow that sits calmly in the midst of surrounding bustle. Few, who have paused outside its facade would be aware that the structure was designed more than five decades ago by Satish Gujral as his home and studio.

On January 30, his son, Mohit Gujral opened the doors of Gujral House – as this building on Feroze Gandhi Marg is called – to the public to commemorate his father's centenary year. "Satish Gujral 100: Architecture" highlights 12 projects, including cultural spaces, embassies and institutions, using drawings, models, photographs and archival documents to demonstrate a little-known aspect of the polymath's oeuvre.

The shift from residence and artist studio to cultural space was long-imagined and dated, Gujral said.

"My father and I had spoken about opening the house as a space for people, as an exhibition or a place for ideas and conversations. He loved the idea. We started working on this after my mother passed away two years ago," Gujral, an architect, said.

Satish Gujral, a former prime minister Inder Kumar Gujral, died aged 94 on December 25, 2025. Satish Gujral was not only a renowned artist, sculptor and muralist but also designed many iconic buildings through the course of his storied career. His own home, built with the help of a much younger Raj Rewal, stood as an icon of his practice: monumental, grounded and emphatically human.

"I've not really had a fixed bedroom. At least five different spaces have been used as a dining area at different points in time. We lived like nomads in an

artistic world. One fine day he would say, this room is a studio, and the entire setup of that room would move," he said.

The exhibition begins in the basement, where early works and murals from the 1930s establish Satish Gujral's artistic inspiration. Wall texts articulate his formative years in Mexico, spent around the likes of Diego Rivera and poet Cesar Vallejo, where he encountered Latin American muralism and absorbed the idea that walls were not boundaries but carriers of memory and narrative.

"The family had an exact idea of what was expected from the space. The execution was the dif-

Saloni Bhatia
saloni.bhatia@hindustantimes.com

{ UNION BUDGET 2026-27 } CM REKHA GUPTA

'Will push for Narela in varsity township plan'



CM Gupta at Delhi Secretariat on Monday. ARVIND YADAV/HINDUSTANTIMES.COM

Union Budget, Gupta highlighted the Chandrawal Water Treatment Plant as a project that will improve water supply and preserve in older areas.

She said the entire expenditure of Delhi Police is borne by the Centre, with ₹12,503 crore provided in the budget for salaries, operations, vehicles, technology and security infrastructure. This, she said, enables Delhi government to allocate its own resources to schools, hospitals, roads, water and welfare schemes.

She also highlighted the budget's provisions for youth and the services sector. She particularly welcomed initiatives to build hostels for women and create opportunities in skills, technology, and employment. She pointed to the proposal for tax-free cloud storage to promote data centres and the plan to establish Content Creation Labs in thousands of schools and colleges to boost the animation, visual effects, gaming, and comics (AVGC) sector.

"Delhi is a services-sector driven state. Our effort will be to ensure that Delhi's youth get platforms for their creative talent and employment opportunities within the city," she said.

The chief minister also cited the Delhi-Haridwar high-speed rail corridor and a new ₹10,000 crore fund for small businesses.

Gupta added that the philosophy of the Union Budget 2026-2027 aligns with accelerating growth and expanding public welfare, and that improved dialogue with the central government ensured Delhi's interests were prominently addressed.

Chief minister also cited the SASCI scheme, which provides 50-year interest-free loans for infrastructure. The national outlay for SASCI has risen from ₹15.5 lakh crore to ₹20 lakh crore which she said would directly benefit Delhi as well as other UTs. Delhi received ₹825 crore under this scheme in the current fiscal year for projects including Delhi Metro Phase-IV, road upgrades, and anticipates a larger share from the enhanced pool.

"SASCI funding for the three UTs has nearly doubled. Delhi will try to achieve maximum benefit from this central assistance to fast-track roads, flyovers, buses, water supply and sewerage projects without putting additional pressure on the state budget," Gupta said.

The SASCI scheme was introduced in 2020-21 to address financial stress triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic and UT with legislatures were brought under its ambit last year.

Further direct central assistance of ₹1,244 crore has been earmarked for Delhi in Sunday's

Delhi cybercrime: 376 cases of over ₹50 lakh fraud in 2025

Hemani Bhanderi

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court authorities or government officers and threaten victims with arrest. Other financial frauds accounted for 29 cases, while impersonation and non-financial cyber offences stood at 10 and 11 cases respectively, the data showed.

Though exact figures of overall cybercrimes were not disclosed, investigators familiar with the statistics said UPI-linked scams made up around 40-45% of total complaints in Delhi, followed by investment frauds at 30-35%. Digital arrest scams accounted for 10-15% of cases. Internet banking frauds contributed 5-10%, impersonation scams 5-10%, job-related frauds 5-10% and social media-linked frauds around 5%, the data showed.

"These are no longer random opportunistic scams. Most high-value cyber frauds are carefully planned operations," said a senior police officer. "Criminals use fake identities, forged documents, multiple SIM cards and

mule bank accounts to move money quickly. In digital arrest and investment fraud cases, victims are often psychologically pressured into transferring large amounts within a very short span."

Arrest-related data indicates that many cyber fraudsters were traced to Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Haryana. While Jharkhand's Jamtara is widely known as a cybercrime hub, police said cyber crime operators are rarely based there.

"Most arrests involve people who have bank accounts or those who facilitate fund movement," the officer said. "This data also points to inter-state networks operating through call centres and encrypted messaging platforms."

Data from the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCCP) shows maximum complaints are from Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

DELHI HC DENIES BAIL TO TWO CAs IN ₹640-CRORE CYBER FRAUD CASE

Shruti Kakkar

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NEW DELHI: Delhi High Court on Monday denied anticipatory bail to two chartered accountants (CAs) who allegedly arranged mule bank accounts to launder proceeds of crime in a ₹640-crore cyber fraud, observing that the case involved an intricate web of money movement fraudulently siphoned from guilty middle-class investors.

The present cases exhibit a vast intricate mesh of movement of money, fraudulently extracted out of the pocket of guilty investors, who appear to be primarily belonging to the middle class. It is the hard-earned money of the victims," Justice Girish Pathak said in the order dated February 2.

Acting on a Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI)'s FIR filed under the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act in August 2022, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) registered a case against the two suspects, Bhaskar Yadav and Ashok Kumar Sharma, in March 2024. The ED alleged that the two were involved in large-scale laundering and siphoning off public money by duping innocent citizens through fraudulent investment schemes, betting and gambling platforms, phishing operations and fake part-time job offers.



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Western Europe - England to Italy

Tour Name	Ex-Mumbai	J&L
Swiss Paris Austria Germany (eo)	175K-190K	10K-125K
European Panorama (eo)	250K-260K	180K-190K
European Splendours (eo)	275K-285K	205K-215K
London Paris Swiss Italy (eo)	285K-295K	205K-215K
European Highlights (eo)	305K-320K	225K-240K
European Delight (eo)	370K-385K	290K-305K
European Jewels (eo)	410K-425K	330K-345K
European Essence (eo)	400K-425K	330K-345K
Multi-Country Europe (eo-zro)	465K-495K	385K-415K
Amsterdam Brussels/Swiss Paris (eo)	230K-345K	160K-275K
England Scotland /Ireland (eo-zro)	315K-440K	245K-370K
Swiss Paris/French Riviera (eo-zro)	285K-310K	210K-240K
Swiss Paris London (eo)	375K-400K	290K-315K
Swiss Paris Italy (eo)	320K-335K	250K-265K
Swiss Austria/Italy/eos (eo)	275K-335K	205K-265K
Swiss Paris Austria (eo)	330K-340K	260K-270K
Italy (eo/zro)	295K-465K	230K-395K
Switzerland (eo/zro)	275K-300K	205K-230K
Best of Austria (eo)	275K-290K	205K-220K
Best of France (eo)	325K-340K	255K-270K

Northern Scandinavian Europe

Tour Name	Ex-Mumbai	J&L
Highlights of Scandinavia (eo)	250K-275K	175K-200K
Best of Scandinavia (eo)	335K-360K	250K-275K
All of Scandinavia (eo)	475K-500K	385K-400K
Scandinavia Iceland (eo)	565K-590K	475K-500K
Scandinavia Eastern Europe (eo)	525K-550K	440K-465K
Scandinavia Russia (eo)	435K-460K	365K-390K
Scandinavia Midnight Sun (eo)	535K-550K	455K-470K
Scandinavia Midnight Sun (eo)	375K-400K	295K-420K

Southern Europe, Mediterranean Europe

Tour Name	Ex-Mumbai	J&L
Highlights of Spain (eo)	200K-225K	130K-155K
Best of Spain (100/11D)	265K-280K	195K-210K
All of Spain (eo)	375K-400K	305K-330K
Spain Portugal (eo)	335K-360K	260K-285K
Spain Portugal Morocco (eo)	575K-400K	420K-450K
Greece Athens Santorini (eo)	200K-225K	135K-160K
Greece Athens Santorini Mykonos (eo)	250K-275K	185K-205K
Greece Athens Santorini Rhodes (eo)	300K-315K	235K-250K
Greece Athens Santorini (eo)	325K-350K	260K-285K
Rhodes Mykonos (eo)	325K-350K	240K-265K
All of Greece (eo)	425K-450K	360K-385K
Egypt Greece Turkey (eo)	—	—
Greece Turkey (eo)	350K-375K	270K-295K
Turkey (100/10D)	225K-350K	155K-180K
Best of Egypt (eo)	175K-200K	105K-140K
Egypt Greece Cyprus (eo)	390K-415K	310K-330K
Egypt Morocco (eo)	240K-265K	170K-195K
Egypt Jordan (eo)	295K-320K	230K-255K
Best of Jordan (eo)	200K-225K	135K-160K

Central, Eastern Europe, Mediterranean Europe

Tour Name	Ex-Mumbai	J&L
Vienna Prague Budapest (eo)	250K-275K	175K-200K
Berlin Warsaw Krakow (eo)	240K-255K	170K-195K
Croatia Slovenia Slovakia Hungary (eo)	330K-345K	255K-270K
Central & Eastern Europe (7D)	400K-425K	325K-350K
Uzbekistan Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan (eo)	215K-230K	160K-175K
Tashkent Samarkand (eo)	180K-195K	120K-135K
Georgia Armenia Bakur (eo)	81K-95K	61K-65K
Georgia Armenia (eo)	175K-200K	125K-150K
Georgia (SD/ED) Mer 17	99K-175K	49K-130K
Baku (SD)	99K-150K	64K-110K
Baltic Europe Estonia Latvia Lithuania (eo)	250K-275K	180K-205K
Baltic Europe & Scandinavia (eo)	500K-525K	420K-445K
Baltic Berlin Warsaw Krakow (eo)	390K-415K	330K-355K
Balkan Romania Bulgaria Serbia North Macedonia (eo)	405K-430K	335K-360K
Best of Morocco (eo)	225K-250K	155K-180K
Tunisia Malta Sicily (eo)	375K-400K	295K-320K

The Americas

Tour Name	Ex-Mumbai	J&L
Vienna Prague Budapest (eo)	250K-275K	175K-200K
Ts 98% (NA/ED)	175K-200K	105K-130K
Antarctica The 7th Continent (eo)	13,35,000 (JUL)	11,35,000
USA East Coast (SD/ED)	—	—
USA West Coast (7D)	—	—
USA East & West Coast (Chicago)	—	—
USA East & West Coast+ Orlando Disneyland (eo)	—	—
USA East & West Coast+ Chicago & Death Valley Yosemite (eo)	—	—
USA East & West Coast+ Orlando & Bahamas Cruise (9D)	—	—
USA East & West Coast+ Chicago & National Parks (22D)	—	—
USA California Carnival with Death Valley & Yosemite (10D)	—	—
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Yamuna board to take up 1,100 infra projects

Snehil Sinha

snehil.sinha@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Days after the Delhi government approved ₹728 crore for the reconstituted Trans Yamuna Development Board (TYDB), senior officials said on Monday that the board proposes to undertake over 1,100 small infrastructure projects across East Delhi.

According to officials, the projects will be kicked off during the current financial year.

Officials said that over 90% of the infrastructure works pertain to road, drainage and sewer networks, which largely to be executed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Delhi Jal Board (DJB).

TYDB chairman Arvinder Singh Lovely said on Monday: "In the first meeting of the board after nearly 15 years, we approved a comprehensive standard operating procedure (SOP) that defines the nature of works to be taken up, and the process through which funds will be released to executing agencies. Over 1,100 small projects across all 16 assembly constituencies under the TYDB in East Delhi have been approved. Once the basic civic issues are addressed, bigger projects will be taken up from next year."

₹728 crore in kitty for E Delhi
Key objective Upgrade road, drainage and sewer network

Where Across East Delhi

When To begin this financial year

Status Standard operating procedures approved

Scope of work Government schools, community halls, libraries, sports complexes and parks, roads, drains, subways and footbridges, etc

Key agencies MCD and DJB

Lovely said.

The proposal also includes a flyover from Shyamali College to Ghaziabad, for which a site inspection has already been carried out, officials said.

"We carried out an inspection with irrigation and flood control minister Parvesh Verma to assess the feasibility as a flyover above the drain can reduce congestion along this stretch on Road No. 57, near Dayanand Marg. The Irrigation department is now formalising a proposal," Lovely said.

According to the documents issued by the urban development department, the SOP's lay

down permissible works under the TYDB. These include upgrading water network (tubewells, water tanks and piped supply), construction of government schools, classrooms and community halls, development of libraries, sports complexes and parks, construction of roads, drains, subways and footbridges, street lighting and repair of solar lights, and repair and maintenance of public assets.

The SOP also allows procurement of medical equipment for government hospitals and dispensaries, installation of gym equipment in parks and con-

struction of hostels, particularly for working women.

The guidelines clearly bar the use of TYDB funds for works in unauthorised colonies, stating that such projects fall under separate schemes handled by other departments. Proposals must also comply with the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) manuals, general financial rules (GFR) and the latest Delhi Schedule of Rates (DSR), officials said.

Under the approved procedure, TYDB members, including MPs and MLAs from the Trans Yamuna area who are special invitees, will submit detailed proposals specifying the nature of work, location, cost estimates, layout plans and timelines. Senior officials added that the executing agencies will be responsible for preparing consolidated estimates, securing no-objection certificates from land-owning agencies where required and ensuring geotagged photographs of proposed sites are submitted along with proposals.

"We are hoping that with better funding next year, we will be able to take on larger projects, like the Habitat Centre. For now, the focus is on basic amenities, such as roads, drainage and sewer networks," said Lovely.

The SOP's also allows procurement of medical equipment for government hospitals and dispensaries, installation of gym equipment in parks and con-

Agencies invited to revamp select liquor vending outlets

Snehil Sinha

snehil.sinha@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited (DSCSC) has invited agencies to undertake renovation and modernisation of selected liquor retail vends across the Capital, officials said on Monday.

The work will include site surveys, preparation of two-dimensional (2D) concept designs with multiple alternatives, three-dimensional (3D) walkthrough visualisations, and detailed layouts covering civil works, flooring, faade, electrical systems, air-conditioning, fire safety, CCTV and IT infrastructure,"

said an official.
THE DSCSC HAS LISTED OUTLETS ACROSS THE CITY, INCLUDING IN PAHARGANJ, HAUZ KHAS, DWARKA, AMONG OTHERS

Singh Market and Bali Nagar.

Officials said that DSCSC, one of the four government-run corporations that runs retail liquor vends in Delhi, aims at standardising retail formats while ensuring compliance with excise and safety regulations.

"Several outlets in neighbour-

ing cities have well-lit displays that give a luxury feel. That is what we are aiming to achieve along with a sense of safety for all consumers," said the official.

The move comes amid ongoing efforts by the Delhi government to frame a new excise policy. The previous liquor policy, introduced in 2021, was withdrawn following allegations of irregularities. Since then, liquor retail has been operated by government corporations under an interim arrangement.

Senior officials said that the new liquor policy that also looks at improving retail experience in the capital is likely to be introduced by March.

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{ ASOLA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY }

Neeli Jheel may be city's 1st Ramsar site

Jasjeet Gandhiok

jasjeet.gandhiok@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The government is planning to get the 5.16 hectare Neeli Jheel at Asola Bhatti wildlife sanctuary notified as Delhi's first Ramsar site, environment minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said on Monday, adding that the ministry is in talks with the Centre on the matter.

Sirsa said the government is also in the process of identifying and protecting over 1,000 water bodies in the Capital.

"It is a matter of pride for Delhi that the Neeli Jheel, present inside the Asola Bhatti wildlife sanctuary, is being looked at as a possible Ramsar site," Sirsa said at a World Wetlands Day event at the sanctuary, where Union environment minister Kirti

Vardhan Singh was also present.

A Ramsar site is categorised as a wetland of "international importance" under the Ramsar Convention's list, which is an environmental treaty signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran. The basis on which a wetland is considered to be Ramsar site is biodiversity conservation, ecological balance, and providing critical habitats, particularly for migratory waterbirds.

The event kicked off with dignitaries inaugurating an exhibition featuring institutions and organisations working on wetlands, biodiversity and environmental conservation. The programme also included the felicitation of states for newly designated Ramsar Sites. Later, a plantation drive was carried out.

India, one of the parties to the



The Neeli Jheel is spread over 5.16 hectares. HT ARCHIVE

will be shared with the Centre," Sirsa told HT.

The minister also said that the process to identify and demarcate boundaries of 856 water bodies in Delhi is complete, another 174 have seen revival and rejuvenation.

"Delhi once had more than 1,000 water bodies, many of which fell prey to encroachment and neglect. The Delhi government has resolved to revive all water bodies and set a target to restore the maximum possible water bodies by the end of 2027," he said on Monday.

Speaking at the event, MoS Kirti Vardhan Singh said: "Wetlands are deeply connected with culture, festivals and religious sentiments and were traditionally places where people would gather and interact," he said.

Restore native fish, control exotics in Yamuna, says NGT

Jasjeet Gandhiok

jasjeet.gandhiok@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed Delhi and neighbouring states to urgently restore native fish populations and curb exotic species in the Yamuna.

NGT directed Delhi, Uttarakhand, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh to implement and consider the recommendations submitted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CIFI) to control non-native species in the river.

The order was issued on January 29 after NGT took cognisance of a news report highlighting the issue. The report was based on a survey conducted by ICAR-CIFI, Prayagraj (2020-24), which recorded 126 fish species along the Yamuna from Yamunotri to Prayagraj.

The survey noted that the populations of native species — Catla, Rohu, Mahseer, and Eel — were declining, while exotic species like Common Carp, Nile

Tilapia, and Thai Mangud had increased, especially in polluted stretches of the river.

"One of the main reasons for the decline of fish, especially native, in the Yamuna is the pollution in the river," the bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Prakash Starivastava noted, calling for construction of fish ladders at major barrages to help native fish migrate.

The recommendations also include banning juvenile fishing and illegal gear, such as mosquito drag nets, strengthening monitoring during fishing bag periods, and maintaining proper records of fish catch data.

It also suggested strategic ranching of native species Mahseer in upper stretches, Indian Major Carps and other commercially important species in middle and lower stretches, and air-breathing fish in designated sections of the Delhi stretch.

According to the institute, other measures include improving water quality, continuous monitoring, maintaining a minimum e-flow, and regulation of sand mining.

{ 'DELHI KHEL MAHKUMBH' }

Month-long sports event to start Feb 13; 20k will participate

Aheli Das

aheli.das@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Delhi education and sports minister Ashish Sood on Monday announced the launch of 'Delhi Khel Mahakumbh', a month-long sporting event, starting February 13, which will be inaugurated by chief minister Kirti Singh.

The initial phase will feature seven sports, including kabaddi, football, athletics, wrestling, basketball, volleyball, and squash, across 16 different stadiums and venues in the capital such as Bawana, Vikaspuri, and Noida.

The aim is to ensure equal opportunity for youth in the capital. The event will see participation from over 20,000 athletes.

The first-ever sports 'Mahakumbh' is a state-level event, with the motto 'Aao dashedh Kehle' which aims to integrate sports with education and youth development, an official said.

Sood stated that in team events, the gold-winning team

will get ₹1.75 lakh, silver will get ₹1.51 lakh, and bronze ₹1.31 lakh. In individual events, the gold medalist will receive ₹1.00 lakh, bronze ₹9,000, and silver ₹7,000.

Sood also unveiled 'Ranveer', the official mascot for the event and said, "Ranveer symbolises energy, courage, and sporting spirit of Delhi's youth."

Addressing a press conference at the Delhi Secretariat on Monday, Sood said that under the leadership of chief minister Kirti Singh, the Delhi government has accorded renewed priority to sports and resolved to transform Delhi into the sports capital of India.

"The previous government failed to allocate adequate budgetary support for sports. The sports budget stood at ₹60 crore in 2021-22, which was reduced to ₹41 crore in 2022-23, further slashed to ₹26 crore in 2023-24, and remained stagnant at ₹26 crore till 2024-25. The present government has tripled the allocation to ₹76 crore in 2025-26."

RAIL COACH FACTORY, KAPURTHALA

Dy. Chief Plant Engineer-II, RCF-L, Rail Coach Factory, and Kapurthala on behalf of President of India invites E-Tenders against Open Tender No. RCF-EL-MTC-84-ET-25-26. Closing Date/Time 20.02.2026 at 15.00 hrs. Tenderer will be able to submit revised/revised bids upto closing date and time only. All tenders or offers are not binding against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Tenderer are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand Draft, Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR and DD will not be accepted.

1) Open E-Tender No.: RCF-EL-MTC-84-ET-25-26, 2) Name of Work: Supply, Installation, testing, Commissioning of DSL in Extended Wheel Shop (6x40) M. 3) Approx. Cost: Rs. 31,93,114.00, 4) Earnest Money: Rs. 63,900, 5) Tender Cost: Nil, 6) Completion Period: 90 days, 7) Tender Closing Date & Time: 20.02.2026 at 15.00 hrs. 8) Validity of Offer: 30 days from the date of closing of tenders, 9) Technical Compliance: Contractor has to submit a copy of valid Electrical Contractor License for carrying out installation work of voltage class involved, issued by any State/Central Government along with a supervisor competency certificate as per Regulation 29 of the Central Electricity Authority (Measure relating to Safety and Electric Supply) Regulation 2010 or latest 1 as per Rules 45 of the Indian Electricity Rules 1956 along with the tender documents, failing which the offer is liable to be rejected.

Dy. E-Tender No.: RCF-EL-MTC-84-ET-25-26, Name of Work: Supply, Installation, testing, Commissioning of DSL in Extended Wheel Shop (6x40) M. 3) Approx. Cost: Rs. 31,93,114.00, 4) Earnest Money: Rs. 63,900, 5) Tender Cost: Nil, 6) Completion Period: 90 days, 7) Tender Closing Date & Time: 20.02.2026 at 15.00 hrs. 8) Validity of Offer: 30 days from the date of closing of tenders, 9) Technical Compliance: Contractor has to submit a copy of valid Electrical Contractor License for carrying out installation work of voltage class involved, issued by any State/Central Government along with a supervisor competency certificate as per Regulation 29 of the Central Electricity Authority (Measure relating to Safety and Electric Supply) Regulation 2010 or latest 1 as per Rules 45 of the Indian Electricity Rules 1956 along with the tender documents, failing which the offer is liable to be rejected.

Date of tender: 20.02.2026
Time of tender: 15.00 hrs
Location: Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala

Note:- Tender document can be downloaded from the website address www.ireps.gov.in and <https://fccl.com>. Terms and conditions and other information are available on website. Any further addendum/conendum for this tender will be posted on www.ireps.gov.in and <https://fccl.com>. Manual tenders/offers are not allowed and will not be accepted.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Tender No.	Name of Goods	Quantity	Earnest Money	Closing date & time of tender
012670	PVC Insulated Armoured, unscreened, underground Railway Signalling Cable in 3 Core 1.5 Sq. mm (i) 12C x 1.5 Sq. mm (ii) 12C x 2.5 Sq. mm (iii) 12C x 5.00mm	5 Kilometre	Rs. 2,93,110.00	06.03.2026 15.00 hrs.
012697	Underground Railway Jiley filled Telecom Cables in 4 Core 0.90 mm	41 Kilometre	Rs. 1,49,870.00	06.03.2026 15.00 hrs.
	4 Quad x 0.9 mm Underground Railway Jiley filled Telecom Cables in 4 Core 0.90 mm	12 Kilometre	Rs. 1,79,60,613.08/-only	06.03.2026 15.00 hrs.

Note:- Tender document can be downloaded from the website address www.ireps.gov.in and <https://fccl.com>. Terms and conditions and other information are available on website. Any further addendum/conendum for this tender will be posted on www.ireps.gov.in and <https://fccl.com>. Manual tenders/offers are not allowed and will not be accepted.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE (Through e-tendering)

Tender No. 558-Sig-16-Tel-OT-1 Date : 02/02/2026

Provision of Balanced Coach Guidance System (BCGS) at Noida, SSB, NBB, BVB, 8, Passenger Amenities (Telecom) at newly constructed platform at Anand Vihar Railway Station and balanced IPSU auto announcement, TIDB etc at stations where train handling facility is to be started due to Station Redevelopment of NDSL station.

App. Cost of the work (₹) ₹ 1,79,60,613.08/-only

Earnest Money Deposit (₹) ₹ 2,39,800.00-only

Address of the office Northern Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annexe-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055

Date & time for upload the tender/procurement of tender 25/02/2026 upto 15.00 hrs

Website/particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen www.northernrailways.gov.in & Notice board at SBT branch, 3rd Floor, DRM Office, State Road, New Delhi-110055, India

Opening Date & Time 26/02/2026 at 15.00 hrs

Documents to be submitted E-tender bid document

Other Information Bid opening will be held on 26/02/2026 at 15.00 hrs in the Committee Room attached to the office of Medical Superintendent, Nehrul Hospital, PGIMER Chandigarh.

The tender will be opened at Committee Room attached to the office of Medical Superintendent, Nehrul Hospital, PGIMER Chandigarh. Details of Tender Notice & Tender Form are available at our website pgimer.edu.in & procure.gov.in

PGI Advt. 2026 HR-00071 Officer In-charge(HPO), Proc. Drugs & Dressing

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH TENDER NOTICE

Sold tenders are invited from the manufacturers, or their sole authorized distributor/s on the premises for below mention items for two years.

Sr. No. **Name of Drug/Material** **One Date** **Opening Date**

I. 1. Natural Surfactant (Phospholipid-80/100mg / ml with surfactant associated protein) 1.5ml

II. PWD2526WSOB125194

III. PWD2526WSOB125195

IV. PWD2526WSOB125196

V. PWD2526WSOB125197

VI. PWD2526WSOB125198

For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.reps.gov.in

23/2/26 (D)

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in www.cprncr.gov.in

DIPR/C1/626/2026

Officer In-charge(HPO), Proc. Drugs & Dressing

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Person/s) Mohd Chand, S/o: Munna R/o: 17B, Jhuggi Wali Road, Jagmal Enclave Roshan Nagar Part-1 Faridabad, Haryana has committed or is suspected to have committed the offence in FIR. No. 29/2014, U/s: 392/411/34 IPC. Dt. 08.01.2014 P: Govindpuri, Delhi and it has been returned to me a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person/s) Mohd Chand, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person/s) Mohd Chand, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person/s) Mohd Chand, of FIR No. 29/2014, U/s: 392/411/34 IPC. Dt. 08.01.2014 P: Govindpuri, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 06.05.2026.

By Order

Devanshi Jamneja

Judicial Magistrate First Class-04

South East District, Court No. 10

Saket Court Complex, New Delhi



Jitin Chawla, Eminent Career Counsellor and Study Abroad Expert

Crucially, India does not recognise foreign degrees in isolation. It recognises processes and outcomes. In these five countries, medical education is inseparable from national licensing examinations, structured internships, and supervised clinical practice. One cannot simply graduate and claim competence. The system itself filters, tests, and trains. By the time a student is eligible for licensure, their skills have already been scrutinised at multiple levels. From India's perspective, FMGE becomes redundant. This clarity is missing in how foreign medical education is marketed to Indian families. Thousands continue to excel concurrently in sports and academics.

Father held for raping 14-yr-old in Paharganj

Hemani Bhandari
hemani.bhandari@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her father in central Delhi's Paharganj on Saturday, police said on Monday, adding that the accused has been arrested and sent to judicial custody.

According to the police, the girl told investigators and counsellors that she was raped four times in the last 10-15 days.

The matter came to light on Saturday night when the police control room received a call from a woman reporting the assault, said a senior police officer.

"When the police reached the spot they met the caller, the owner of the house where the family lived. "The woman informed the police that the girl's father, 40, originally from Bihar's Darbhanga, raped her. The victim then narrated the ordeal to the police," said deputy commissioner of police (central) Anant Mittal.

Police said the girl lives in the rented accommodation with her parents and 13-year-old sister. "The girl said that the father used to regularly beat up the two sisters and their mother. On three occasions, he raped the victim, including on Saturday," the officer said.

The victim confided in her younger sister, who then informed the house owner who

Raped multiple times

What happened?

- A 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her father four-five times in the last 10-15 days in Paharganj, central Delhi
- Girl lives in a rented accommodation with her parents and 13-year-old sister
- Investigation reveals the father regularly assaulted both daughters and mother
- Medical examination confirms sexual assault
- Police suspect the victim might have informed her mother about the assault
- Bedsheet and clothes of the victim sent for forensic examination

lived in the same residential building.

"The victim may have told the mother also but she did not take any action. The mother will be questioned about the same," the officer said, adding that the mother was not at home at the time of the incident took place.

The mother had gone to Bihar for the last 15 days, Mittal added.

A case of charges of rape under sections of BNS and POCSO Act was registered early on Sunday and the accused was arrested the same day, police added.

Medical examination confirmed that she had been raped. She was under observation for a few hours and then discharged late on Sunday, police said. Police have recovered bedsheet and clothes of the victim for forensic examination.

Last month, a six-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped by three minors in north east Delhi's Bhujaipura. The girl was lured by the boys - friends of her late brother - to a secluded building in the neighbourhood where they raped her taking turns. The girl was unable to walk or sit for longer periods when HT met her last week in January. The two accused were apprehended, while the third accused is still absconding, police added.

On January 31, chief judicial magistrate Harshita Mishra of Tis Hazari Courts took cognizance of a chargesheet filed by the Delhi's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) in March 2022, based on the complaint filed by MGF Developments Ltd., against M3M India and its directors, including Basant Misbal, Roori Bansal and Pankaj Bansal, among several subsidiaries and allied companies.

The order read, "It prima facie appears that the accused induced the complainant company into entering into an agreement quo the exchange of land in Gurugram and fraudulently got the land mutated for a building project". It also dismissed an application filed by the M3M developers, alleging MGF had made false statements

COURT SUMMONS M3M DIRECTORS IN GURUGRAM LAND DEAL CASE

Arnabjit Sur

arnabjit.sur@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court last week summoned the directors of real estate developer, M3M India Pvt. Ltd., accused of allegedly inducing another real estate firm into a fraudulent land deal in Gurugram valued at around ₹450 crore.

On January 31, chief judicial magistrate Harshita Mishra of Tis Hazari Courts took cognizance of a chargesheet filed by the Delhi's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) in March 2022, based on the complaint filed by MGF Developments Ltd., against M3M India and its directors, including Basant Misbal, Roori Bansal and Pankaj Bansal, among several subsidiaries and allied companies.

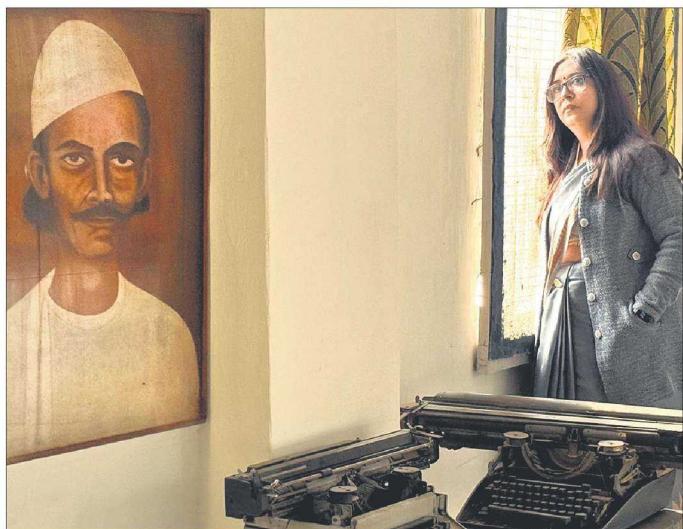
The order read, "It prima facie appears that the accused induced the complainant company into entering into an agreement quo the exchange of land in Gurugram and fraudulently got the land mutated for a building project". It also dismissed an application filed by the M3M developers, alleging MGF had made false statements

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Ritu's many identities

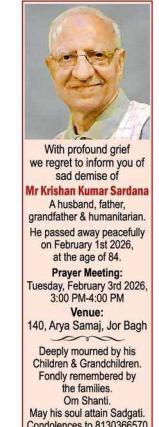
On a poet's sense of belongings, and her poems

PRIVATE CAPITAL

Ritu Chowdhry began writing poetry while growing up in Kanpur. After her marriage, she took the name Ritu Asthana and moved to Faridabad in Delhi-NCR, where she has lived for over two decades now. Over time, her writing and identity as a poet became closely tied to the city. Today, she signs her work as Ritu Asthana "Ruhî" Faridabadi. This name reflects her personal and geographical sense of belonging. "Life for a girl, when she is living with her parents, is simpler," she says this afternoon, over an encounter in a literary academy, where the hushed hall is filled with portraits of dead writers and out-of-typewriters. Ritu observes that "after my marriage, my life became more layered." She describes her years in Faridabad as a period of emotional, spiritual, and social growth—one that, she believes, shaped her voice as a poet. This is why she added "Faridabadi" to her name. The other adopted word, "Ruhî," in her name comes from the Urdu word "ruhî," meaning soul—Ruhî writes in both Urdu and Hindi. She graciously agrees to share a selection of couplets written over the last two years, often on the family dining table. Although Ritu has produced enough poetry to publish a collected volume, she has chosen to wait, out of respect for her guru, Ustad Mohan Taran Prakash Khubchhan.



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With profound grief we regret to inform you of sad demise of
Mr Krishan Kumar Sardana
A husband, father, grandfather & humanitarian.
He passed away peacefully on February 1st 2024, at the age of 84.
Prayer Meeting:
Tuesday, February 3rd 2024,
3:00 PM-4:00 PM
Venue:
140, Arya Samaj, Jor Bagh
Deeply mourned by his
Children & Grandchildren.
Family members by the grace of
Om Shanti
May his soul attain Sadgati.
Condolences to 813036570



Man, 22, killed after quarrel in S Delhi

NEW DELHI: A man, in his 20s, was allegedly killed after a quarrel at his home on Monday in south Delhi's Tughlakabad, police said. Police have yet to ascertain the motive and identify the suspects. The victim was Himanshu Kumar Chauhan, said Hemant Tiwari, DCP (southest).

22-year-old stabbed 10 times in Mayur Vihar

NEW DELHI: Arun Raj, a 22-year-old delivery agent, was allegedly stabbed at least 10 times by juveniles in east Delhi's Mayur Vihar on Monday over an earlier altercation, said DCP (east) Abhishek Dhania. A suspect has been apprehended.

4k fined in spl Karol Bagh traffic drive

NEW DELHI: At least 4,233 motorists were issued challans for no-entry violations and improper parking as a 16-day special zero-tolerance traffic enforcement drive—from January 16 to February 1—was carried out at Bikane Chowk in central Delhi's Karol Bagh, with the aim of ensuring smooth traffic flow, improving road safety, and mitigating chronic congestion in the Karol Bagh market area, said traffic police on Monday. The enforcement action included 968 vehicles being towed away for violations, particularly illegal parking, of police (central range traffic) Nishant Gupta.

COPS FOIL HIT ON WITNESS LINKED TO HASHIM BABA

NEW DELHI: Four men, including jailed gangster Irfan alias Chhenu Pehlwan, have been arrested, police said, claiming to have averted contract killing of a witness in murder of Hashim Baba gang member.

The accused had planned to kill the witness after the Republic Day. However, one of the conspirators, Adeeb Jafarabadi, 22, was arrested on January 24 with a pistol and five cartridges and his interrogation led to the arrest of key planner, Chhenu Pehlwan, and the other two men, Mohammad Usman, 37, and Farman Khan, 24, special cell officers said on Monday.

On October 30 last year, Mohammad Misbal, member of the Hashim Baba gang, was returning to his northeast Delhi's Jafrabad residence after attending a wedding when he was shot dead by at least four members of the Chhenu Pehlwan gang.

"As Chhenu wanted to weaken the case, he planned the killing of the prosecution witness and roped in his associates to execute it," said one of the officers.

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THE WEEK THAT WAS

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IBC overhaul, relief for SEZs in few months: FM

Rajeev Jayaswal
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The government's reform express will see a slew of actions in next couple of months such as structural overhaul of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), a one-time relief to special economic zones (SEZs), new elements in the ₹2 lakh crore special assistance to states and a people-friendly income-tax law, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday.

A day after presenting the Union Budget, she said the government is all set to introduce the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 in the second half of the Budget session beginning March 9. The bill proposes the next generation of IBC reforms. Experts said the legislation aims to reduce resolution timelines, empower creditors, enhance roles of insolvency professionals and introduce a new creditor-initiated insolvency resolution process. A parliamentary committee has already submitted its report on the bill in December 2025.

"I expect, subject to conditions, to table the IBC (Amendment) Bill in the second half of the Budget session," Sitharaman said at a post-budget media interaction on Monday.

She also holds the portfolio of the ministry of corporate affairs. The government introduced the bill in the Lok Sabha in August last year. Sitharaman said that the budget proposal allowing eligible manufacturing units in SEZs to sell in domestic tariff areas (DTAs) is a one-time, temporary measure because of global trade disruptions. The government will frame rules in such a manner that it would not hit the DTA players, she said.

A senior government official,

| NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER



I expect, subject to conditions, to table the IBC (Amendment) Bill in the second half of the Budget session



who did not wish to be named, said that units of SEZs will remain exporters. But due to global headwinds, they would be able to sell in DTA by paying customs duties at concessional rates.

According to him, rates will be determined in such a manner that it would not put units in DTA at any disadvantage. "There will be a level playing field between units of SEZs and DTAs. And the facility will be available for a limited time," he said.

The government will make necessary regulatory changes to this effect which will also specify quantities of sales by SEZs in DTAs, he said.

According to him, the government is working on a simplified and technology-driven system of income-tax that aims to make the lives of taxpayers easy. "After trials, the system will be rolled out on April 1," he said.

In her budget speech on Sunday, the finance minister had said, "In July 2024, I announced a comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act, 1961. This was completed in a record time and the Income Tax Act, 2025 will come into effect from 1st April, 2026."

Speaking about enhanced budget allocation Special Assistant

to States for Capital Investment (SACSI) scheme, the finance minister said the government may add some new reforms to nudge states. The government raised the budget estimate (BE) for the SACSI scheme from ₹1.5 lakh crore in FY26 to ₹2.2 lakh crore in FY27, a 33.3% jump. Under the scheme, the Centre extends 50-year, interest-free loans to states for capital investments.

The SACSI scheme was launched after the Covid pandemic to boost the economy by nudging states for capital investments. Because of its efficacy that scheme continued and the Union Budget for 2025-26 allocated an outlay of ₹1.5 lakh crore for the 50-year interest-free loans to states for capital expenditure and incentives for reforms.

Union minister of state for finance Pankaj Chaudhary on December 9 told the Rajya Sabha that the total amount released to various states under SACSI since its inception from the financial year 2020-21 to 2025-26 (till December 3, 2025) was ₹42,44,225.95 crore. The scheme – special assistance to states for capital expenditure – was first launched with a small corpus of ₹12,000 crore in 2020-21.

RECORD ALLOCATION FOR RAILWAYS IN BUDGET: VAISHNAW

Press Trust Of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Union railway minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Monday said record allocations have been made for his ministry in the Budget to complete pending projects and undertake new works in all states for people's benefit.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday announced a budgetary support of ₹2.78 lakh crore and a total capital expenditure of ₹2.93 lakh crore for the Railways.

She also proposed seven high-speed corridors connecting major cities and a new East-West Dedicated Freight Corridor between Dhanbad in West Bengal and Surat in Gujarat.

Providing reporters with a state-wise breakup of expenses earmarked for railway projects from the total capital expenditure outlay, Vaishnav noted that Uttar Pradesh will receive ₹20,02 crore, Rajasthan ₹10,228 crore, Madhya Pradesh ₹15,188 crore, Chhattisgarh ₹7,470 crore, and Maharashtra ₹24,000 crore.

He mentioned allocation figures for other states and ongoing projects, stating these amounts are several times higher than those made 10 years ago during the Congress rule. "We had promised projects worth ₹1 lakh crore in Uttar Pradesh. Now, projects worth ₹9,200 crore are underway in UP," he said.

Adding that the seven bullet train projects and a dedicated freight corridor announced in the Budget would benefit multiple states.

Wangchuk's speech secessionist, SC told

Abraham Thomas
letters@hindustantimes.com



Sonam Wangchuk

NEW DELHI: The references to Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in the speech made by climate activist Sonam Wangchuk are sufficient to be termed "secessionist" activities, the Ladakh administration told the Supreme Court on Monday, justifying his arrest under the National Security Act (NSA) last September for instigating violent protests over statehood for Ladakh.

Responding to Wangchuk's submissions that none of his speeches gave a call to violence as he accused the detailing authority of ignoring parts of his speech glorifying the path of non-violence, the UT administrator told the court that reference to "Father of the Nation" was deliberate in order to "protect" cover at the beginning and end of the speech, which itself is inflammatory," the SG said.

"Gandhi was never required to say he will self-immolate," Mohan said, remarking that Wangchuk's speech referred to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka with violent protest to the recent past.

"The use of these three words – Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are enough for the district magistrate to issue an order under the NSA," the solicitor said. "He wants a Nepal, Bangladeshi-like

situation and he is misleading the young generation by remarking about it. This is a call for secessionist activity... In a country bound by the Constitution, you cannot do such a thing."

Mehta referred to another portion of the speech where the climate activist made reference to the choice available to each region to decide on which "side" to be. Citing the grave implications of such an utterance, he said, "...He is giving that call which once used to be given earlier in Jammu and Kashmir. The region of Ladakh, being a part of J&K having a common border with Pakistan and China, can say one says what to decide which side to belong to? If this should not be the ground of detention, I wonder what else will?"

The bench of justices Arvind Kumar and PB Varade hearing the submissions remarked, "What he (Wangchuk) has done is that the ground of detention passed by the district magistrate (DM) are based on borrowed material."

Mehta told the court that the DM has gone by the materials placed before him and the overall

impact it will have on the public order. "His speech says that we are willing to give as many lives through self immolation only then they (Centre) will decide. This 'us' and 'them' is sufficient to impose the NSA. There is one single threat that unites us all that we are Indians."

Mehta also referred to other portions of the speech referring to the Indian Army and a Hindu goddess, which were also cited as reasons necessary for his detention. "A person instigating that there will be an imminent war and we will not support. This is enough venom to be spread...the DM will be guilty of dereliction of duty if the does not take notice of these statements that are sensitive," he said.

The court permitted Mehta to continue on Tuesday as the arguments remained inconclusive. Wangchuk was released on September 26 last year following the violence in which four people were killed. On Monday, the court opened the medical report submitted by Jodhpur jail authorities in a sealed cover, but did not disclose its content.

INDIGO SPENT ₹22.6 CR TO COMPENSATE PASSENGERS: GOVT

NEW DELHI: Indigo has shell out ₹22.68 crore towards compensation and facilitation of passengers following flight disruptions in December last year, according to official data.

The civil aviation ministry on Monday shared data with the Rajya Sabha on the amount spent by domestic scheduled airlines towards compensation and facilitation of passengers in December and the total amount is little over Rs 24 crore. The amount pertains to denied boarding, cancellation of flights and delays in flights.

Indigo shell out Rs 22.68 crore while Air India Group – Air India and Air India Express – paid Rs 74.61 lakh, SpiceJet and Alaska Air spent Rs 40.09 crore and Rs 21.06 crore, respectively, as per the data shared by minister of state for civil aviation Murlihand Mohol in a written reply. "Indigo (till 28th January, 2026), has made compensation of ₹22.68 crore. The process of compensation is under progress subject to necessary confirmation from passenger and documentation verification," according to the reply.

Stuck in Dubai, unpaid for 3 months: 14 workers in video

Raj Kumar
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ACCORDING TO A CLIP CIRCULATING ONLINE, THE 14 WORKERS ARE FROM GIRIDHIL, HAZARIBAG AND BOKARO DISTRICTS

facilitate their repatriation. "The lack of funds has left them struggling to afford basic necessities, including food and adequate accommodation."

HT could not independently verify the veracity of the video.

Joint Labour commissioner, Jharkhand, Pradeep Robert Lakra said steps were being taken for their safe return.

"Information has been sent to the protector of emigrants (PoE) in Ranchi to ensure that the matter comes into the knowledge of the Indian embassy through the Union government," Lakra said. "It will take at least 10 days to complete the process for return."

"The workers have not been paid for three months and are being coerced into working overtime without compensation," Ali said, calling upon both the Union and state governments to initiate diplomatic channels to

facilitate their repatriation. "The lack of funds has left them struggling to afford basic necessities, including food and adequate accommodation."

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The workers who are stranded in Dubai include Jageshwar Mahato, Phalendra Mahato, Bajnath Mahato, Dilip Mahato, Gangadar Mahato, Trilok Mahato, Deepak Kumar, Rohi Mahato, and Seva Mahato, all from Hazaribag. Roshan Kumar, Ajay Kumar, Rajesh Mahato, and Ajay Kumar from Giridih; and Daleswar Mahato from Bokaro, Ali said.

The ministry of external affairs was yet to issue a statement on the matter till going to press.

Activist Ali said that despite previous rescue missions involving migrants from Jharkhand, workers continue to fall prey to such situations in pursuit of higher earnings. "Migrant workers in the past have also been harassed overseas, and with a lot of difficulty, they have been brought home. Still the migrants continue to go overseas to earn a living," he said, urging the government to take "proper initiative" in this regard.

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In continuation to this Office Bid Identification No. CCERCWSB-Online-29/2025-26 invited this office Notice No.61/2025-Dtd 28.11.2025, partial modification of NCB has been made as follows:

1. Availability of Tender online for bidding. Extended up to Oct 20, 2026 5.00 PM
2. Last Date and Time of seeking tender clarification Dtd 10.02.2026 up to 2.00 PM
3. Date & Time of opening of tender (Technical Bid) on Dtd 21.02.2026 at 11.00 AM.
4. Date & Time of opening of tender (Price Bid) Will be informed later
All other terms and conditions will remain unaltered.

Chief Construction Engineer
Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda
OIPR - 25001/25182/25-260016

Indore contaminated water: Toll rises as 65-year-old dies

Shruti Tomar
letters@hindustantimes.com



A gastrointestinal epidemic triggered by contaminated water broke out in Indore's Bhagirathpura in December.

water supply due to a leakage in the drinking water pipeline. Since December 24, around 1,600 people have fallen ill, with 460 requiring hospitalisation. An audit report by the health department on 23 deaths concluded that 16 were directly linked to the epidemic, while the rest were associated with comorbidities.

Centre: Helping the state with financial support

Meanwhile, the Union government informed Parliament on Monday that the ministry of housing and urban affairs (MoHUA) has taken note of the incident but refrained from specifying the death toll.

MoHUA maintained that as water is a state subject, the ministry's role is limited to helping states through financial assistance and technical support.

"The area has old pipelines 1997 and some of it was damaged, so municipal administration identified the old stretches of pipeline and included them in AMRUT 2.0." Union minister of state at MoHUA, Tokhan Sahu said, attributing the information to the state government.

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GRADUATES (MEN & WOMEN)
HIGHLIGHTS

(Information given below is for general awareness only)
(Course Notification published on www.joinindianarmy.nic.in should be referred for detailed information about the entry)

Category	Description	Notification Paragraph No.
Type of Entry	Short Service Entry (JAG)-124 Course	Para 1
Age	21 to 27 Years as on 01 Jul 2026	Para 2(b)
Open for	Unmarried Male & Unmarried Female (Law Graduates)	Para 1
Education Qualification	Minimum 55% aggregate marks in their LLB Degree. Should have appeared for CLAT PG Exam - 2025	Para 2(c)
Vacancies	08	Para 3
Selection Process	Application > Shortlisting > SSB > Medical > Merit List > Joining Letter	Para 10
Date for shortlisting for SSB(based on CLAT PG score)	Second week of Mar	-
Likely Duration and dates for SSB	Upto five days SSB in May/June 2026 (Choice for SSB Centre and dates open for two weeks in May)	Para 10(c)
Medical Standards	As given on www.joinindianarmy.nic.in	Para 11
Pre Commission Training Academy	Officer Training Academy, Chennai	Para 5(a)
Duration of Training	49 weeks from Oct 2026	Para 5
Stipend during Training	Rs 56,100 Per month	Para 7(d)
Rank after Training	Lieutenant	Para 7(a)
Salary on Commissioning	CTC approx. 17-18 Lac per annum	Para 7(d)
Type of Commission	Short Service Commission	Para 4(a)
Option for Release	First- After 05 Years, Second After 10 Years Third-After 14 Years	Para 4(a)
Option for Permanent Commission	After 10 Years	Para 4(a)
Primary Arms/ Service for Commission	JAG Branch	-
Release Benefits	Depending on service on release	-

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CBC 10601/11/0069/2526



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CBC 10702/11/0074/2526

BJP appoints observer to elect Manipur legislative party leader

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party's parliamentary board on Monday appointed Tarun Chugh as the central observer for election of legislative party leader, a day before the central leadership is set to meet the party's lawmakers in New Delhi.

The party election process indicates movement towards government formation in the strife-torn state that has been under President's Rule for almost a year now. The BJP has 37 lawmakers in the 60-member assembly—and has the requisite strength to have the government on its own.

"On Sunday, all legislators asked to come to Delhi for a meeting on Monday. All 37 MLAs are in Delhi for the meeting. The meeting was supposed to be held Monday evening but after the latest announcement about the central observer, we all received information saying that the meeting has been postponed to 3 pm tomorrow," one state BJP leader said. Another legislator aware of the matter said among the 10 Kuki-Zo legislators most of them have also reached for the meeting.

Among the front runners to



Over the last one year, at least 56 state BJP legislators expressed their wish to become the chief minister and claimed to have the numbers.

become the legislative party chief are CM Biran Singh, Satyabrat Singh, Yumnam Khemchand Singh, Govindar Komathang, Basanta K Singh, K Iboacha Singh and Dipu Ganguly.

Ghugh, the national general secretary of the party, was appointed ahead of February 13, which marks a year of President's Rule in the state. Over the last year, the government extended the President's rule twice, each time for a duration of six months by bringing a legislation in Parliament. President's rule can be extended up to three years. "BJP

parliamentary board has appointed Shri Tarun Chugh, national general secretary as central observer for the election of the legislative party leader in Manipur," said a statement released by Arun Singh, national general secretary and headquarter in charge of the BJP.

At least 260 people have died and over 50,000 were rendered homeless in the ethnic clashes between Meiteis and Kukis-Zo in Manipur which started on May 3, 2023. The two communities are still divided on ethnic grounds and live in separate districts.

A second party functionary

said dynamics in Manipur are fluid. "There is no clarity yet. If the central leadership chooses a Meitei leader in the interest of Manipur, everyone will have to fall in line and support each other. Even if Kuki-Zo MLAs don't support then the party has the required numbers. Second is Kuki-Zo MLAs being given more ministerial posts in this cabinet. This too is in the interest of the state and the peace process. And the third is having a neutral person (non-Meitei-non Kuki-Zo) as the CM, who may not be a mass leader but could be accepted by everyone under certain circumstances," the functionary said.

Over the last one year, at least 56 state BJP legislators expressed their wish to become the chief minister and claimed to have the numbers.

On December 14, Santhosh also held a joint meeting including Meitei and Kuki-Zo MLAs in the same room (a first since ethnic violence broke out on May 3, 2023) and said that the centre would choose the CM face for Manipur.

The Manipur assembly is currently in suspended animation.

In another development, the MHA has called a meeting with representatives of indigenous groups under Suspended of Operations pact on Tuesday.

The SoO meeting is at 4 pm, an hour after the BJP legislators are set to meet in another meeting for the formation of a state.

A person aware of the proposed SoO meeting said, "there are three issues to be discussed. First is the directions issued by SoO groups asking their Kuki-Zo MLAs to support the government only if there is a written commitment by the new government to push for a UT for hill districts, second is the payment of wages to SoO cadres and third is relocation of camps."

With inputs from Thomas Ngangom

Police seek to trace bodies after suicide of 4 girls reported in Bihar

Avinash Kumar

letters@hindustantimes.com

PATNA: Five girls from a hamlet comprising 25 Mahadalit households allegedly consumed poison together in an agricultural field, with four allegedly succumbing to the toxin and one undergoing treatment, in Bihar's Aurangabad district, police said on Monday even as search continues for the bodies.

According to the police, the incident came to light on Monday when the surviving girl informed them that she, along with four of her friends, had consumed poison on January 29 in an agricultural field allegedly because they were upset over being scolded by their family members who spotted them with some boys.

Inspector general of Magadh range Kshatrijan Singh said when he and his team reached the spot, a local chowkidar informed them that all four girls had been cremated.

However, locals residents, mostly women and children, refused to speak and "we only found one partially burnt pyre," Singh said.

"The houses belonging to the four deceased were found locked and the family of the lone survivor had fled the village. The village is completely deserted. No one is saying anything..." said an officer familiar with the matter.

Another officer said: "When we reached the village, we found one

THE SURVIVOR SAID THEY WERE UPSET AFTER THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS SCOLDED THEM AFTER SPOTTING THEM WITH SOME BOYS

partially burnt pyre. Normally one would expect four pyres, but it remains unclear which girl's body was cremated there, with no clear information available, as the deceased's family members and co-villagers feigned ignorance."

IG Singh said: "An inquiry has been ordered into the incident. The truth will be out after full investigation. The father of the girl, who is said to be alive, has not appeared before the police and is said to be out of the village at the moment. All the angles are being looked into."

Neighbours found them unconscious and rushed them to a nearby hospital, en route to which the eldest sister died, said the officer, adding that the youngest sister died during treatment the next day and the last sister died on Monday.

"A suicide note has been recovered from the house. In it, they wrote that they had been generalised and harassed and bouts of loneliness with no one to take care of them. Neighbors told the sisters did not keep in touch with others," said the officer.

3 ELDERLY SISTERS DIE BY SUICIDE IN KERALA'S THRISSUR

Vishnu Varma

letters@hindustantimes.com

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Three elderly sisters allegedly died by suicide in Kerala's Thrissur district, a police officer aware of the matter said on Monday.

The deceased were aged 83, 80 and 75, said the officer, adding that they are suspected to have consumed poison together at their residence in Mullurkara on January 30. All three were unmarred, he added.

The deceased were aged 83, 80 and 75, said the officer, adding that they are suspected to have consumed poison together at their residence in Mullurkara on January 30. All three were unmarred, he added.

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Porsche case: 3 accused of tampering evidence get bail

Abraham Thomas

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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to three men accused of evidence tampering in the 2024 Porsche crash case, even as it observed that parents are to be blamed for such incidents involving juveniles as they do not have control over their children.

A bench of justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhattacharya directed the three persons—the father of one of the juveniles present in the car, Ashish Sand Mittal and Amrit Santosh Gaikwad—to be released on bail on conditions to be imposed by the trial court. The bench further directed them not to establish any contact with the witnesses in the case, either directly or indirectly, violation of which will result in can cellation of bail.

The court further asked the three accused to cooperate with the trial after the state government, represented by its chief



On May 19, 2024 the 17-year-old accused rammed the car into a bike, killing two people.

standing counsel Siddharth Dharmadhikari, alleged that the accused had held up the proceedings and had even obtained a copy of the framing of charges.

The bench said, "You focus on the offence, prosecute on the offence, and do not interfere with them. The accused here are alleged to have helped two juveniles who are not the main accused in the crime. Can there be a punishment before conviction?"

Another fact that weighed with the court was the 18-month-long incarceration undergone by

the three accused. Senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi, Siddharth Dave and Siddharth Aggarwal, appearing for the accused, told the court that the allegation against their clients is of helping two younger who were not driving the car.

The father is accused of changing the blood sample of his minor son, while the other two—Mittal and Gaikwad—are middlemen who allegedly accepted a bribe for facilitating the swapping of the blood samples of the two minors at Sason Hospital.

The main accused, who is a child in conflict with law (CCL), is being tried as a juvenile, while his father is also alleged to have been part of the conspiracy in evidence tampering. It is yet to approach the top court against the Bombay High Court's commision order of December last year denying bail to seven people.

The state, in its affidavit, told the court that the investigation of the case has revealed a "dis-

turbing pattern of criminal conduct" as the family of the main juvenile accused is known to resort to "influence, money power and unlawful means" and any relief shown to the accused will impact the trial of the case.

The bench agreed that the conduct of the juvenile offenders are not acceptable at all. "Allowing children to consume alcohol and giving them a car for celebrating like this," ultimately it shows parents are unable to control children and see how innocent people have been killed in the name of celebration," the bench observed.

According to the prosecution, on May 19, 2024, the car was driven by a 17-year-old boy, under the alleged influence of alcohol, during a late night party with his two friends. The crash occurred a little after 2am when the car rammed a bike near Kalyani Nagar in Pune, killing the two IT professionals — Anis Awadhaya and Ashwini Koshta.

state was dismissed by the top court last year.

The court's order added that the appellant has been in custody for the past seven months and a charge sheet has already been filed by the police. The allegations of disproportionate assets relate to the period of 2007-17 based on a first information report (FIR) filed in 2025.

"We are inclined to grant bail in the matter. It will be open for the prosecution to request the trial court to impose stringent conditions while ordering the grant of bail," the order said.

Majithia is charged under sections 13(3)(b) and 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act. He was released in this case on June 25, 2025.

and the officers conducting the probe have allegedly been threatened for pursuing the probe.

The court considered the fact that Majithia is already out on bail in a 2021 case under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. He was released in this case on June 25, 2025.

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The land regularization process by the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) came under strong criticism from opposition YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, who accused chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu of handing 54.79 acres of prime land worth nearly ₹5,000 crore to his family member Srihari.

The encroached land was recovered and fenced during the previous YSRCP regime but it was now being gifted to Naidu's family member free of cost," Reddy alleged.

Sribharat is son-in-law of actor and TDP legislator Namadumari Balakrishna, who is Naidu's brother-in-law.

On January 30, the GVMC, in its council meeting, adopted a resolution regularizing 54.79 acres of land at Rushikonda and Venduda villages, adjacent to GITAM campus in Visakhapatnam.

Refuting the allegation that the land was being regularized for energy transition, it also reflects our determination to avoid being stuck in China's clutches. The fiscal ease for batteries and solar panels and the associated system is also an aim," he said.

This budget has invested in decarbonisation via infrastructure, technology and manufacturing. But, the original purpose of the budget is to combat climate change, despite the global trend by wealthy nations to deplete fossil fuels.

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What is interestingly missing is allocation of funds to combat air pollution in North India, especially the NCR Delhi. While reduction in the NCAP budget doesn't surprise me since it is chronically under spent by the government, investment in airshed based impacts like cleaning coal-based thermal power plants or boosting electric vehicles ecosystems in the NCR could have given us cleaner skies.

(The writer is the founder and director of Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group)

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The rare earth minerals sector has also received a boost in the Budget as Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala will be set up critical mineral corridors, integrating all the related activities. This can reduce our import-dependence for energy transition. It also reflects our determination to avoid being stuck in China's clutches. The fiscal ease for batteries and solar panels and the associated system is also an aim," he said.

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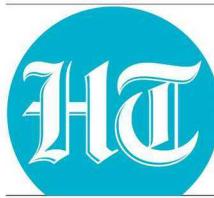
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NARAVANE'S CLAIM

ces before writing about sensitive operational matters, especially when the standoff was still raging at the time.

Naravane did not respond to phone calls and text messages by HT. However, in October 2025, he said the book was still under review by the defence ministry.

The government and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) responded to Gandhi's attempt to raise the issue by referencing the 1962 war with China in which India ceded territory (and which was fought when the Congress was in charge), and by pointing to Naravane's categorical comments after the standoff that China had not occupied any Indian territory.

Gandhi's repeated efforts to raise the issue eventually saw the House being adjourned on the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla referred to as "Rule 349 and 353, to disallow Gandhi from quoting from the book. Birla cited Rule 349 which says: "Whilst the House is sitting a member shall not read any book, newspaper or letter except in connection with the business of the House..." Rule 353 says: "No allegation of a defamatory or incriminatory nature shall be made by a member against any person unless the member has given adequate advance notice to the Speaker and also to the Minister concerned so that the Minister may be able to make an investigation into the matter for the purpose of a reply: Provided that the Speaker may at any time prohibit any member from making any such allegation if the Speaker is of opinion that such allegation is derogatory to the dignity of the House or that no public interest is served by making such allegation."

The 39-page Caravan article highlights Naravane's dilemma of how to respond to some aggressive Chinese manoeuvres near the Kailash range on the night of August 31, in the alleged absence of a clear directive from the Indian political leadership. According to the article, Lieutenant General JK Joshi, the Northern Army commander at the time, had alerted Naravane about the Chinese advances over the phone at 8.15 pm.

"Four Chinese tanks, supported by infantry, had begun moving up a steep mountain track towards Rechin La in eastern Ladakh...The tanks were within a few hundred metres of Indian positions on the Kailash range, the strategic high ground that Indian forces had seized, hours earlier, in a dangerous race with China's People's Liberation Army," it says, citing his memoir.

Gandhi mentioned the four tanks in Lok Sabha but wrongly referred to Doklam as the place of action.

Naravane was the army chief from December 31, 2019 to April 30, 2022 — a period of heightened military activity in eastern Ladakh in the backdrop of the standoff along the contested Line of Actual Control (LAC).

"The Chinese kept advancing. Naravane began making frantic calls to the defence minister who promised to call back. 'Time stretched. Each minute was a minute closer to Chinese tanks reaching the top,' Rajnath called back at 10.30 pm. He had spoken to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose instructions consisted of a single sentence: 'Jo uchit samjho, kaha kar -- do whatever you determine.'

The Indian Army, as reported by HT, had occupied a series of strategic heights to prevent the PLA from grabbing Indian territory on the southern bank of Pangong Tso in a stealthy, midnight move on August 29, 2020. In swift follow-up action that threw the PLA off balance, the Indian Army rushed its front-line tanks and infantry combat vehicles (ICVs) to the new heights held by its soldiers.

The Indian Army's control of ridge-line positions on the southern bank allowed it to completely dominate the sector and keep an eye on Chinese military activity.

However, the essay brings out Naravane's predicament on August 31. "I had been handed a hot potato," Naravane writes in his memoir, according to the article. "With this carte blanche (given by PM), should I teach others... You are a five-time MP."

Outside Parliament, Gandhi said: It is uncomfortable for defence minister [Rajnath Singh] and Prime Minister [Narendra Modi]. I understand... If it was not uncomfortable, they would have let me speak.

{ FROM PAGE 1 }

The Caravan article says Naravane had clear orders not to open fire "till cleared from the very top."

"His superiors did not give any clear directive. Minutes ticked by. At 9.10 pm, Joshi called again. The Chinese tanks continued to advance and were now less than a kilometre from the pass. At 9.25 pm, Naravane called Rajnath again, asking for 'clear directions.' None came," the article claims.

Naravane, it adds, made yet another call to the defence minister, who promised to call back. "Time stretched. Each minute was a minute closer to Chinese tanks reaching the top," Rajnath called back at 10.30 pm. He had spoken to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose instructions consisted of a single sentence: 'Jo uchit samjho, kaha kar -- do whatever you determine.'

In Parliament, parliamentary affairs minister Kiren Rijiju said: We must decide what to do with a member who doesn't want to follow the rule. You [Rahul Gandhi] should be teaching others... You are a five-time MP."

Outside Parliament, Gandhi said: It is uncomfortable for defence minister [Rajnath Singh] and Prime Minister [Narendra Modi]. I understand... If it was not uncomfortable, they would have let me speak.

Memoir in limbo

General Naravane's 448-page autobiography Four Stars of Destiny was supposed to be released by Penguin Random House India in January 2024 but was blocked by the defence ministry as the author had not obtained the necessary clearances before writing about sensitive operational matters, especially when the India-China military stand-off was still raging at the time.

Naravane was the army chief from December 31, 2019 to April 30, 2022 — a period of heightened military activity in eastern Ladakh in the backdrop of the standoff along the contested LAC. His account of the developments that took place on the Kailash range on August 31, 2020, and a purported lack of an immediate political directive on how the Indian Army should respond to the Chinese presence at the centre of the

tension before the disengagement took place, with Joshi admitting in February 2021 that India and China were on the brink of war after the actions on the southern bank.

Naravane earlier created a stir by revealing that the Agni-path scheme caught the army by surprise and was a bolt out of the blue for the air force and the navy. This wing comes under Deputy Chief of the Army Staff (Strategy).

Depending on the contents, the additional directorate general of strategic communication may send the manuscript for vetting to relevant directorates, including those dealing with military operations and military intelligence. A book can be published only after such clearance.

In the case of Naravane's book, the manuscript isn't submitted to the additional directorate general of strategic communication for necessary approvals. After some controversial excerpts were published in December 2023, the defence ministry wrote to Naravane and the publisher to submit the book for clearance to the army before publishing it.

The army went through the book in detail, recorded its observations on the subjects covered in it, and sent it to the defence ministry to take the final call. The defence ministry has thus far not given its clearance to the former chief's book.

controversy.

Norms for clearance

The manuscript of any book that contains sensitive operational details must be cleared by the army's additional directorate general of strategic communication before it can be published. This wing comes under Deputy Chief of the Army Staff (Strategy).

CCTV footage that has since surfaced appears to show the aircraft's left wing dropping suddenly moments before impact. In the brief video clip, the jet has been seen sharply veering to one side mid-air before crashing in a ball of flames, visible to three possible scenarios: an aerodynamic stall, a steep bank too close to the ground, or engine failure.

The aircraft's black box has

since reached Delhi and will be analysed by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB).

The investigation team has analysed all the evidence and other documents. The investigation is in final stages. The investigation team is trying their best to finalise the report on top priority," it said in the statement.

INDIA-US TRADE DEAL

Trade deal is finalised, it will actually help fuel a lot of momentum and create a lot of political goodwill that can be channelled towards specific tactical projects," Helberg added.

On X, Vaishnav called US and India's trade deal "the greatest of them all" he said. In another post, Trump shared a picture of Modi and him on a magazine cover for India Today.

Earlier in the event, Trump posted a photo of the India Gate, "India's beautiful Trimurti Arch. Ours will be the greatest of them all!" he said. In

another post, Trump shared a picture of Modi and him on a magazine cover for India Today.

Before Monday, Trump and Modi last spoke on phone in October 2025. The two leaders had agreed at a meeting in February last year to finalise the first tranche of a bilateral trade deal by the autumn. Though the two sides held several rounds of negotiations, forward movement on the trade deal stalled after Trump imposed 50% tariffs on Indian goods, including the 25% punitive levy.

While Russia had become one of India's largest energy suppliers after New Delhi began buying discounted Russian crude when the West imposed sanctions on Moscow over the invasion of Ukraine, these purchases had begun going down in recent months. The Indian side has maintained that its energy purchases will be decided according to market conditions and the need to ensure energy security.

Bilateral relations were also hit by other issues, including Trump's repeated claims of brokering a ceasefire to end the brief but intense conflict between India and Pakistan last May, the tightening of immigration regulations by the US and constant criticism by senior American officials of India's energy and defence ties with Russia.

Trade deal between US and India will lead to brighter future for both countries. India-US Trade deal is a win-win deal. Citizens and industries of both countries will benefit greatly...

ASHWINI VAISHNAW,
Union minister

were immediately available but the announcement came days after India and the European Union sealed a trade pact, dubbed by both leaderships as the "mother of all deals."

Earlier in the event, Trump posted a photo of the India Gate, "India's beautiful Trimurti Arch. Ours will be the greatest of them all!" he said. In another post, Trump shared a picture of Modi and him on a magazine cover for India Today.

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As "I have said many times, President Trump genuinely considers Prime Minister Modi a great friend! Thrilled by the news of the trade deal this evening. The relationship between the United States and India has LIMITLESS POTENTIAL" he posted on X.

No details of the trade deal

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Thrilled by the

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The relationship

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SERGIO GOR,

US Ambassador to India

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from the manufacturers or their sole authorized distributors/sole agents on the prescribed form for below mention items for two years.

Sr. No.	Name of Dmg/Material	Due Date	Opening Date
1	Syr Upseto IP 500ml	19.02.2026 upto 12:30 PM	19.02.2026 at 02:00 PM

The tender will be opened at Committee Room attached to the office of Medical Superintendent, Netru Hospital, PGIMER Chandigarh. Details of Tender Notice & Tender Form are available at our website pgimer.edu.in & procurement.gov.in

PGI RC Advt. 2026 HR-00073 Officer-in-charge(HPD), Proc. Drugs & Dressing



New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

Administrative Building, Sector-6, NOIDA-201301 (U.P.)

Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.in

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firm for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website : www.noidaauthorityonline.in & <https://etender.upnic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes / amendments & corrigendum etc.

A) Fresh-Tender Work :-

S. No.	Jobs No.	Name of the Work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
1.	07/GM/DGM(C)/SM (WC-10)/25-26	Construction of 12.00 mtr. wide road, drain and footpath near park-1 and balance service road along plot no. 9 to 10 Sector-156, Noida.	136.87
2.	20/GM/DGM(C)/SM (WC-10)/25-26	Construction of boundary wall for park-1 near Electric Sub-Station Sector-156, Noida.	144.54
3.	21/GM/DGM(C)/SM (WC-10)/25-26	Strengthening of Road (Re-Surfacing of 45.00 mtr. wide road (Main Carriageway) along Sector-153 parallel to Expressway) Noida.	216.65
4.	22/GM/DGM(C)/SM (WC-10)/25-26	Strengthening of Road (Re-Surfacing at 45.00 mtr. wide road (Main Carriageway) along Sector-153 parallel to Expressway) Noida.	237.03
5.	23/GM/DGM(C)/SM (WC-10)/25-26	Strengthening of Road (Re-Surfacing of 45.00 mtr. wide road (Main Carriageway) between Sector-153, 154 and Sector-154, 155) Noida.	333.73
6.	24/GM/DGM(C)/SM (WC-10)/25-26	Construction of footpath on 45.00 mtr. wide road from Metro Line towards Pusta side in Sector-147, Noida.	196.84
7.	25/GM/DGM(C)/SM (WC-10)/25-26	D/o Sector-148 (C/o Service Road Opposite to GST Office along with Taj Expressway and Painting on Central Verge and Footpath in Sector-148) Noida.	165.43

The above Tenders can be uploaded by dated 17.02.2026 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 18.02.2026 at 11.00 AM. **General Manager (Civil) NOIDA**

For Power Grid Corporation of India Limited

Sd/-

Satyavrat Dash

Company Secretary and Compliance Officer

POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED

Corporate Office: Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurugram, Haryana - 122001 Phone No.: 0124-3822000, 2823000

Cop Off: Sustaining, Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurugram, Haryana - 122001 Phone No.: 0124-3822000, 2823000

Regd. Off: B-9, Outstation Area, Kaveri Sarovar, Gachibowli, Hyderabad - 500032, Email ID: investors@powergrid.in, CIN: L40101DL1999G0138121

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{ OUR TAKE }

Balancing for fiscal federalism

The 16th Finance Commission has done well to lean on the side of prudence and justice in its award

Federalism is one of the key tenets of our constitutional framework and national unity. Its fiscal component, which determines how resources and responsibilities are shared among the Centre and the states, is critical to preserving its sanctity. Fiscal federalism debates have become more acrimonious over time thanks to the growing divergence in India's demographic and economic fortunes. States which have done well on economic growth in the medium term have also done well on population stabilisation. This created a situation where they increasingly felt short-changed as their demographic (out)performance was actually taking away the fruits of their economic performance by giving less to them in central taxes. This divide had also become congruent with India's political geography as the BJP was more successful in the low economic growth but more populous states. It politically weaponised this anxiety. Left unresolved, it would have made the forthcoming political delimitation exercise a tinderbox.

The 16th Finance Commission (FC) has done well to douse these fires without upsetting the overall fiscal federalism balance. States will continue to get 41% of the divisible pool of central taxes, which is as much as what the 15th and the 14th FCs decided. But richer states have seen an increase in their share and the poorer (and more populous ones) have seen a fall. What is even more important is the fact that a state's share in national GDP is now a determinant of its share in central taxes. This is an extremely important correction of incentives in the fiscal federalism framework. When read with the fact that the 16th FC has also abolished the revenue deficit grants — not all states gained from it — this also disincentivises lack of fiscal prudence. Things such as the proliferation of cash transfers targeted at winning elections called for a strong nudge of this sort. The 16th FC deserves unambiguous praise for having taken this problem head-on and deciding on the side of prudence and justice rather than a counterproductive status quo.

This is not to say that fiscal federalism tensions or fault lines will disappear overnight. Structural problems such as growing squeeze of centrally sponsored schemes on the fiscal space available to the central government or attempts to rejuvenate third-tier governments have tested previous FCs. These challenges might remain. But what is important is to recognise what the FC has done to address the most pressing issue confronting fiscal federalism.

Pakistan's theatre of the absurd

Stepping into the world of cricket increasingly feels like stepping into the theatre of the absurd: Some characters are often spouting gibberish, situations are downright bizarre, and nothing seems logical. The latest is the threat by Pakistan, which has confirmed that while it will play the ICC T20 World Cup, it will boycott its league game against India.

The announcement, resulting from Bangladesh's decision not to play in India (but which began with the Indian board's order to an IPL team to release one of its Bangladeshi players), is ludicrous. On Sunday, India and Pakistan played in the U-19 World Cup in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. It too was a World Cup, and it too featured India and Pakistan. So, why did Pakistan allow its juniors to play in a neutral venue if it won't let its seniors do so? Then, there is the matter of what Pakistan will do if it boycotts the league match but runs into India in the knockout rounds. Will it pull out of that game?

But there are other larger questions as well. ICC is yet to offer a satisfactory explanation on why India was allowed to play the Champion's Trophy in the UAE (instead of in Pakistan, the host country), and why the same courtesy wasn't extended to Bangladesh. The two situations (and countries) may not be comparable — India and Pakistan were just coming off a military fracas sparked by the Pahalgam terror attack by Pakistan-supported terror groups, and Dhaka really had nothing to complain about — but ICC hasn't exactly covered itself in glory over its handling of Bangladesh. Ironically, ICC has said (in the context of the latest crisis) that this position of "selective participation" is difficult to reconcile with the fundamental premise of a global sporting event where all qualified teams are expected to compete on equal terms per the event schedule". But even more bizarre is Pakistan's approach (it has written itself into a crisis it wasn't originally part of). After all, the decision could cripple Pakistan's cricketing economy.

Budget sets the course for making India competitive

The emphasis shifts away from episodic interventions toward the steady accumulation of capability with lower costs through productivity, buffers through diversification, and credibility through consistency

Budget 2026-27 elevates competitiveness, rather than welfare, stimulus, or even growth, to a *kartavya* (duty). In doing so, it signals a quiet but consequential shift in how India understands its economic challenge. Growth, the budget implies, is no longer the hard part; remaining competitive in a fractured global economy is. This shift reflects a global environment that has become less appreciative of macroeconomic performance alone. Trade is increasingly shaped by geopolitics rather than efficiency; supply chains are being reconfigured under strategic pressure, and capital flows have grown more volatile and uncertain. In such a world, growth alone no longer guarantees stability or insulation.

India enters this phase with notable strengths — real growth near 7% inflation anchored, banks healthy, and the Union fiscal deficit contained at 4.8% of GDP. Public capital expenditure has risen from ₹2 lakh crore in FY17 to ₹12.2 lakh crore in FY27, and credit ratings have improved. Yet capital remains cautious and the rupee fragile. India, as the Economic Survey observes, is "punching below its weight" in global markets. The

reason is structural. As a savings-deficit economy that runs a current account deficit in normal growth phases, India depends on foreign capital to support investment. The Survey highlights that this makes the economy more sensitive to global capital flows and limits the scope for sustained currency stability. Services exports, especially IT and business services, have provided an important buffer by growing faster than merchandise exports, but it is now evident that external resilience cannot anchor long-term external resilience or raise economy-wide productivity.

At India's scale, competitiveness has, therefore, become a binding constraint in the sense of demanding greater productivity. Economies that rely on shelter or suppression eventually trade growth for fragility; those that raise productivity can sustain higher incomes, export resilience, and macroeconomic stability simultaneously. It is against this backdrop that the budget's competitiveness agenda should be read. Under its first *kartavya*, the budget identifies six intervention areas pointing at two key directions:

The first is that competitiveness must be built through production ecosystems, not protection. Hence the sharp focus on scaling manufacturing in strategic and frontier sectors, reviving legacy industrial clusters, and creating "champion MSMEs". The emphasis is revealingly institutional. In biopharma, semiconductors, electronics, capital goods, and rare earths, the budget invests in regulatory testing, infrastructure design capability, and supply-chain depth, along with capacity. The ₹10,000 crore Biopharma SHAKTI programme, for instance, devotes as much attention to

clinical trials networks and regulatory strengthening as to production itself. MSME policy similarly pivots away from protection toward lowering the cost of capital via ₹10,000 crore SME Growth Fund, expanded Trade Receivables Discounting System (TRDS) financing, and securitisation of receivables, aligning somewhat with the Survey's argument that capital costs, not labour costs, now bind competitiveness in India.

The second proposition is that competitiveness is increasingly determined by economy-wide factor efficiency — how infrastructure, energy, and urban systems lower transaction costs and raise productivity. Rising public capital expenditures have now tightly linked to logistics efficiency through freight corridors, waterways, asset recycling via REITs, and risk-sharing mechanisms designed to crowdfund private investment. Energy is framed explicitly in terms of stability and cost discipline, echoing the Survey's warning that inverted tariffs and poorly sequenced green transitions can undermine industrial viability. The emphasis on City Economic Regions reflects a recognition that productivity growth is now predominantly urban, constrained as much by governance and coordination failures as by capital scarcity.

Read this way, the budget is internally coherent and notably restrained. It largely avoids the temptation of tariffed protectionism, another point of alignment with the Survey, which cautions that upstream protection often acts as tax on downstream exporters and erodes competitiveness rather than enhancing it. Instead, the State positions itself as an enabler of scale, speed, and discipline.

Where this logic acquires a sharper



Protectionism eventually trades growth for fragility; raising productivity can sustain export resilience and macroeconomic stability simultaneously.

edge is in the treatment of energy and climate as in the budget. Climate policy is understood as an industrial and technological strategy in its own right. The global turn toward carbon pricing, carbon border adjustments, and green procurement is already reshaping manufacturing cost structures. Export competitiveness, particularly in carbon-intensive sectors, will now be determined as much by energy systems and emissions intensity as by productivity on the factory floor. At the same time, there is a notable realism about the risks.

Poorly sequenced transitions can push up energy costs, worsen input-price inversion, and erode precisely the manufacturing base they are meant to future-proof. The budget's choice to embed energy security and price stability within the competitiveness framework rather than treating decarbonisation as a standalone objective reflects an implicit recognition of this trade-off.

Whether India can convert its net-zero commitments into an advantage will depend not on targets alone, but on its ability to combine low-cost renewable energy, grid reliability, domestic manufacturing of green technologies, and regulatory predictability.

Turning competitiveness from intent to action will hinge on more than just policy design. The agenda set out in the budget operates in an environment where outcomes will be shaped by coor-

{ GRAND STRATEGY }

Happymon Jacob



The age of militarised middle powers is here

In Davos last week, a justifiably unhappy Canadian Prime Minister, Mark Carney, delivered what could read as the funeral speech for the post-Cold War (America-led) world order. Emphasis was that it is a "rupture, not a transition"; the banker-turned politician introduced a term that should resonate well with New Delhi's view of the world — variable geometry. Two days later, in his speech at the Bundeskanzleramt, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz echoed this transatlantic counterpart's sentiment, declaring that Europe must learn the "language of power politics". When two of the world's most influential nations — Canada and Germany — start speaking the language of hard power and strategic autonomy, we are not too far away from the end of the post-World War II order. For India, this is a moment of vindication: The country's commitment to strategic autonomy is proving to be the template for other middle powers to navigate the vagaries of great power politics.

History is often a story of unintended consequences, especially in world politics. The current middle-power scramble for security is a direct by-product of the strategic decisions, or overreach, of the Big Three: Russia, the US, and China. In his quest to rebuild the long-eclipsed Russian empire, President Vladimir Putin may be inadvertently helping to make a Germany military powerhouse. Not just yet, but give Berlin some time.

In 2022, Putin launched a "special military operation" to neuter NATO and prevent the emergence of a militarised West on Moscow's doorstep, and in his sphere of influence. Four years later, he may have instead achieved the exact opposite — the remilitarisation of Germany, or at least the beginning of it. Russia may win the war in Ukraine after all, but might find itself hard-pressed against a rearmed Europe. With an ₹63 billion defence budget for 2026 (which, in all probability, will be more than India's annual defence budget) and a commitment to continue to invest in defence, Berlin is on its way to becoming a major military power in Europe. What Putin wanted was a buffer; he now has a rising military power next door.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, in his pursuit of America First, President Donald Trump may have taught his country's closest allies how to, eventually, survive without Washington. By treating his allies with contempt, Trump has forced his northern neighbour out of its geopolitical vacuum. But the US might soon find that an autonomous, well-armed North American partner is far less pliable than one dependent

FOR DECADES, NEW DELHI WAS THE OUTLIER, CRITICISED, AND SOMETIMES EVEN LAUGHED AT, FOR ITS REFUSAL TO JOIN FORMAL BLOCS AND ITS INSISTENCE ON SEEING ITSELF AS A POLE IN ITS OWN RIGHT

on it for its security. The objective of making America's allies more self-sufficient in security was reasonable, but the arrogant manner in which Trump did it bound to have a blowback for the US eventually.

In the meantime, buoyed by Trump's second coming, Beijing has been quietly upping the ante. And for the superpower-in-waiting, it has been displaying open aggression against Taiwan, bullying Japan, and upsetting the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific. And yet, Beijing may soon realise that Europe's many autonomous, well-armed middle powers is far harder to dominate than a world led by a single, tired, wobbling superpower.

Rearmament in Berlin and Ottawa will not remain confined to the Atlantic. A Germany that speaks the language of power and a Canada that prioritises strategic insurance will not only project some power to protect their trade interests in the Indo-Pacific but might also inspire Japan and South Korea to raise the stakes in the region.

The scramble for security currently underway in Europe could eventually create a new equilibrium in Europe and beyond. For China, this means the Indo-Pacific will become increasingly congested with several new and autonomous powers with their own individual and collective redlines.

This unforeseen middle-power scramble for security is giving rise to what Carnegie calls "variable geometry" — a world where traditional, rigid military alliances are replaced by fluid, mission-specific coalitions of the willing, with or without the backing of the US. Even if a Beijing-Washington bipolarity eventually forms, the international order will feature several centres of gravity, with middle powers pursuing strategic insurance against the whims of major powers.

For India, this militarisation by the erstwhile pacifist middle powers is a clear validation of its own tried and tested grand strategy rooted in strategic autonomy in security affairs. For decades, New Delhi was the outlier, criticised, and sometimes even laughed at, for its insistence on seeing itself as a pole in its own right. Today, New Delhi's quest is becoming a norm for middle powers across the world. In their desperate pursuit of strategic autonomy, India has the opportunity to become their logical non-western strategic partner. New Delhi recognises the strategic opportunity in co-developing high-tech defense platforms with emerging, and maturing, middle powers. A growing group of unhappy middle powers — uneasy about Chinese assertiveness and US transactionalism — now speaks the same language as India.

In their quest for absolute security, Putin, Trump, and Xi may have inadvertently empowered a new class of militant middle powers who are likely to come together to hedge against great-power coercion and bullying.

Happymon Jacob is distinguished visiting professor, School of Humanities and Social Science, Shiv Nadar University, and editor, INDIA'S WORLD. The views expressed are personal.

{ THE DALAI LAMA }

I don't see it as something personal, but as a recognition of our shared universal responsibility



On the Grammy win for "Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama"

Shweta Saini and Pukit Khatri are with Arcus Policy Research. The views expressed are personal

Budget implications for the agriculture sector

Budget 2026-27, presented on Sunday, and Economic Survey 2025-26, presented on Friday, both referenced the "reform express" that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken about earlier, highlighting the pace of structural changes underway. Finance minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman noted on Sunday that over 350 reforms have been undertaken since August 15, 2025, and indicated that the coming year would continue this momentum. Against the backdrop of such dynamism, one expected agriculture — so central to inflation, livelihoods, sustainability, and food systems — to feature prominently in Sitharaman's speech, in its outlining of the FM's priorities for growth. It did not. The budget documents, however, present nuances worth discussing.

Agriculture and farming did not explicitly appear among the six focus areas identified for accelerating and sustaining economic growth in the financial year 2025-27. These priorities are: (i) scaling up manufacturing in seven strategic and frontier sectors; (ii) rejuvenating legacy industrial sectors; (iii) creating "Champion MSMEs"; (iv) delivering a powerful push to infrastructure; (v) ensuring long-term energy security and stability; and (vi) developing City Economic Regions.

However, the announcement of Bharat-VISTAAR — a multi-lingual Artificial Intelligence (AI) advisory platform integrating Agri-Stack and ICARs expertise — is a significant step in digitising such services to farmers. With an allocation of ₹50 crore, this initiative attempts to bring real-time, credible advisory services to farmers by leveraging India's growing digital agriculture architecture. This digital leap is in contrast with the budgetary trajectory for agricultural R&D. The allocation for the department of agricultural research and education (DARE) has declined marginally compared to the previous year. While the reduction is small, the signal is important: Digital dissemination is being prioritised without a corresponding strengthening of the knowledge-generation backbone, at a time when climate variability, emerging pests, and yield pressures demand stronger research investment.

The Economic Survey made a strong case for redesigning fertiliser subsidies through direct benefits transfer (DBT) to farmers on a per-acre basis, to correct nutrient imbalance and fiscal distortions. In contrast, the budget does not advance this reform direction. Allocations linked to DBT in fertiliser appear to have been reduced to negligible levels, suggesting that this reform pathway is not an immediate priority in FY27.

Allocations under irrigation programmes have seen moderation. Funding under the Har Khet Ko Pan component and the broader Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchay Yojana has declined compared to the previous year's budget estimates.

With nearly 45% of India's gross cropped area still dependent on rainfall, the pace of expanding irrigation remains a critical determinant of agricultural stability.

The budget expands the articulation of "high value agriculture". Beyond the conventional fruits and vegetables, explicit mention of coconut, cashew, cocoa, almonds, walnuts, and pine nuts signals a push towards diversified, plantation-based and tree-crop agriculture with export and income potential.

The announcement of SHE-Marts to create market access for women-owned enterprises is an important gender-inclusion measure. Building on the SHG ecosystem, these women-owned retail platforms can become critical nodes for marketing processed foods, livestock products, fisheries produce, and horticulture goods.

Finally, the Budget's most powerful indirect support to agriculture comes through its deep push to infrastructure and logistics. Trust-based customs, a single digital clearance window for food and biological cargo, AI-enabled container scanning at ports, electronic cargo tracking, warehouse digitisation, and removal of export bottlenecks for small consignments collectively create the backbone for faster and more predictable movement of goods.

While not framed as agricultural measures, these reforms directly ease the farm-to-market and farm-to-port journey for perishables, fisheries, livestock products, horticulture, and processed foods — where logistics costs and delays have historically eroded value realisation for farmers.

Shweta Saini and Pukit Khatri are with Arcus Policy Research. The views expressed are personal

WORLD

{ INTERVIEW } JACOB HELBERG, U.S. UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

Trade deal impetus for more industrial collaboration: US

Shashank Mattoo

letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON: Hours after the announcement of the India-US trade deal, HT sat down with Jacob Helberg, US Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy and Environment, who said the agreement creates a lot of positive momentum. Helberg, in his comments by phone to HT's administration office after the deal, said it will free up a lot of political oxygen that can be channeled towards specific, tactical projects. He also spoke about his plans for a visit to India for the AI Impact Summit this month and the Pax Silica initiative, which India has invited him to join.

The US-India trade deal has just been announced. How will this impact bilateral ties?

Discussions between the US and India had been ongoing on critical technologies, even while the trade deal was being negotiated and finalized. Those discussions never stopped, and we're excited that the successful conclusion of the US-India trade deal actually creates a lot of positive momentum to deepening our industrial collaboration. Our latest initiative Pax Silica is not a trade deal. It is really a framework to enable industrial collaborative projects, especially between companies, and we think that now that the trade deal is finalized, it will actually help create a lot of momentum and free up a lot of political oxygen that can be channeled towards specific, tactical projects.

You are headed to India soon for the AI Impact summit. Talk to us about your plans.

JACOB HELBERG } U.S. UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENERGY

The deal frees up a lot of political oxygen that can be channelled towards specific projects.



So we're very excited to be heading into India. We're going to have a very large Trump administration delegation. Under Secretary of Commerce Jeffrey Kessler, Under Secretary William Kimmitt and the director of the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy Michael Kratsios will be joining. So we're going to be very well represented. Part of what I'm hoping to achieve going to India is not only introducing India into the Pax Silica family of nations, but also starting to have tactical conversations with my Indian counterparts on specific projects that we can actually use to hit the ground running on this partnership and build off of the incredible momentum of the US-India trade deal. There are a number of very interesting complementary skills that India brings to the table to this partnership. Obviously, India is the largest country of the group. It's also one of the fastest growing countries. It has a very, very deep pool of talent, and it's arguably, it's really the only country that can rival China in terms of the depth of its talent base. So those kinds of advantages

lend themselves very well for labor intensive initiatives, especially when we think about embodied AI and the need in order to have the most advanced embodied AI systems on the technology supply chain, ranging from embodied AI to critical minerals and logistics. And we're hoping to come out of these conversations with more definition on a path forward.

You recently unveiled the Pax Silica initiative that aims to dominate the future of AI semiconductors and critical minerals. India was initially not invited and that caused some controversy. Can you tell us more?

So we started Pax Silica as a group of countries that were very focused on the manufacturing part of the supply chain. So a lot of the countries that are involved in Pax Silica are countries that are home to some of the world's most

technologically advanced companies, including South Korea, which is home to SK Hynix and Samsung, Japan, which obviously has Mitsubishi and Mitsubishi and Toyota, among many others. Singapore, which has produced, as manufacturers, 10% of the world's semiconductors. So that was our initial focus. We knew that India was the starting point. It wasn't the end destination. We don't want to grow the group infinitely, but we also knew that we were going to add additional partners, so we started with that set. Obviously, it didn't get lost upon us that India not being part of the initial set got a lot of attention in India. Ultimately, we were actually having conversations with the Indian government in order to make sure that they were included and in a matter of days, we actually agreed that this would all come together very nicely.

You have said that your Pax Silica initiative is about winning the race for AI innovation, diffusion and dominating supply chains. How does India fit into each of these three races?

So it really starts with supply chain security. We can't have diffusion and innovation without supply chain security. Our companies collectively need to be able to build products in order to have products that are both innovative and sold on the global market. And they can't do that if supply chains are brittle, geographically over-concentrated and unreliable. And so part of the goal is Pax Silica is a conscious choice where countries are picking who their friends are going to be for the next 25 to 50 years, in terms of who we are trusting to be part of this supply chain ecosystem.

Israel opens Rafah crossing



A child waves from the window of a bus evacuating patients and their relatives as they leave the Gaza Strip for treatment abroad through the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt in Khan Younis on February 2, after Israel reopened the crossing. AFP

Trump threatens Grammys host over Epstein joke

Asian News International

letters@hindustantimes.com

LOS ANGELES: US President Donald Trump lashed out at the "pathetic" and "talentless" Trevor Noah, who hosted this year's Grammy Awards, describing the ceremony as "the worst" and "virtually unwatchable."

During Sunday night's Grammys, host Trevor Noah took a swipe at Trump and his one-time friendship with Jeffrey Epstein.

"The Grammy Awards are the WORST, virtually unwatchable! CBS is lucky not to have this garbage litter their airways any longer. The host, Trevor Noah, whoever he may be, is almost as bad as Jimmy Kimmel at the Low Ratings Academy Awards," POTUS told the social media network Truth Social.

After Billie Eilish won the "Song of the Year" Grammy, Noah transitioned for a moment with a joke at Trump's expense.

"There you have it, song of the year! Congratulations, Billie Eilish. Wow. That's a Grammy that every artsy-fartsy—almost as much as Trump wants Greenland. Which makes sense because, since Epstein's gone, he's had a new island to hang out with Bill Clinton. I told you, it's my last year! What are you going to do about it?," Variety

Trump posts India Gate photo, says he's building bigger arch



cities throughout the world that have them. Washington, DC is the only major city that doesn't," he said. He said he is setting up a committee for the construction of the arc. "We're the most powerful nation. I'd like our arc to be the greatest of them all."

While talking to reporters on board Air Force One, Trump had said that his administration is considering building an arc, similar to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. "For 200 years, they wanted to build an arc. They have 57

straight fast. It looks like I'll be sending my lawyers to sue this poor, pathetic, talentless, dope of an M.C., and suing him for plenty." Ask Little George Slopadopoulos, and others, how that all worked out. Also ask CBS! Get ready Noah, a total loser, better get his facts straight, and get them

cited Noah's remarks from the award ceremony.

Trump took to Truth Social platform to hit back. "Noah, INCORRECTLY about me, that Donald Trump and Bill Clinton spent time on Epstein Island. WRONG!! I can't speak for Bill, but I have never been to Epstein Island, nor anywhere close, and until tonight's false and defamatory statement, have never been accused being there, not even by the fake News Media."

Calling the host a "total loser," the US President wrote, "Noah, a total loser, better get his facts straight, and get them

straight fast. It looks like I'll be sending my lawyers to sue this poor, pathetic, talentless, dope of an M.C., and suing him for plenty."

Noah also joked about the news cycle. While explaining a Korean drinking game linked to Bruno Mars and Rose's hit song APT, he compared it to life in the US. He told the audience: "In America, every time you turn on the news, you drink."

Indian-origin scientist wins Crafoord Prize in Geosciences

Press Trust of India

letters@hindustantimes.com

HOUSTON: Indian-origin climate scientist Veerabhadran Ramanathan has been awarded the 2026 Crafoord Prize in Geosciences by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Often described as the "Nobel of Geosciences," the prize recognises Ramanathan's decades of research on super-pollutants and atmospheric brown clouds, which have reshaped understanding of global warming.

Ramanathan, 82, made a landmark discovery in 1975 while working at NASA: chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), widely used in aerosols and refrigeration, trap heat in the atmosphere up to 10,000 times more effectively than carbon dioxide.

"Until 1975, we thought global warming was mainly from CO₂. I was shocked at the capacity of



technology and human beings to change the environment," Ramanathan told the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

The study linked air pollution to a weakened Indian Monsoon and accelerated melting of Himalayan glaciers.

Now, a Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego, he has also advised global leaders and the Vatican on climate ethics.

The Crafoord Prize carries a cash award of \$8 million Swedish kronor (approximately \$900,000) and a gold medal. The award will be presented during Crafoord Days in Stockholm and Lund in May 2026.

Ramanathan's work underpins key international treaties, including the Montreal Protocol, which has prevented millions of tons of harmful emissions from entering the atmosphere.

technology and human beings to change the environment," Ramanathan told the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Born in Madurai and raised in Chennai, Ramanathan began his career as an engineer in a refrigerator factory in Secunderabad, where he first handled CFCs.

Later earned degrees from Anna Maria University and the Indian Institute of Science.

His Indian roots informed his work in the Indian Ocean Experi-

Iran, US to hold nuclear talks; allies to take part

Reuters

letters@hindustantimes.com

DUBAI: Iran and the United States will resume nuclear talks on Friday in Turkey, Iranian and US officials told Reuters on Monday, while a regional diplomat said representatives from countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt would participate.

Turkey and other regional allies have sought de-escalation.

"Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Egypt, as well as some other countries, will attend the Istanbul



Fighter jet launches from the deck of USS Abraham Lincoln in the Arabian Sea on January 28. AFP

bul meeting. There will be bilateral, trilateral and other meetings," the diplomat said.

Tensions are running high amid a US naval buildup near Iran, following a violent crackdown against anti-government

demonstrations last month, the deadliest domestic unrest in Iran since its 1979 revolution.

Iranian sources told Reuters last week that Trump had demanded three conditions for resumption of talks.

The court also fined them one lakh Taka each in each of the cases, directing them to suffer six months' additional imprisonment in default of payment. Only one of the 16 accused, a senior official of Rajuk, which allocates the plots, was tried in person and was present at the court when the verdict was delivered.

Hasina and her relatives were handed down prison terms after trial in absentia.

The court also fined them one lakh Taka each in each of the cases, directing them to suffer six months' additional imprisonment in default of payment. Only one of the 16 accused, a senior official of Rajuk, which allocates the plots, was tried in person and was present at the court when the verdict was delivered.

In an attempt to boost European industries in the face of cheaper imports from China,

the European Commission plans to propose a so-called Industrial Accelerator Act this month that will likely set requirements to prioritise locally manufactured products. But the approach has split EU countries. "Without an ambitious, effective and pragmatic industrial policy, the European economy is doomed to be just a playground for its competitors," Sejourne said in the article, which was published in news papers across Europe.

British Lord under probe over Epstein ties, pressed to quit

Agencies

letters@hindustantimes.com

LONDON: A year ago, Peter Mandelson was Britain's ambassador to Washington, but friendship with Jeffrey Epstein cost him that job, AP reported. Now, after new revelations, he is facing demands he come clean about his relationship with the late sex offender. Mandelson resigned from the governing Labour Party on Sunday following new claims he received payments from Epstein two decades ago. He said he wanted to avoid causing further embarrassment to the party—and denied all allegations.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who fired Mandelson from his ambassadorial job over earlier revelations about his Epstein ties, now faces pressure to get Mandelson to testify in the case about what he knew of the financier's activities.

Starmer on Monday ordered an urgent inquiry into Mandelson's ties with Epstein during the former's time as a government minister. Downing Street said, AP reported. On Monday, Starmer also urged Mandelson to resign from the House of Lords—Parliament's unelected upper chamber of politicians, donors and assorted nobility—to which he was appointed for



Peter Mandelson

life in 2008, AP reported. That would also mean relinquishing the noble title, Lord Mandelson.

If he refuses, ejecting him would be a lengthy process requiring Parliament to legislate for an amendment to the law—a process last undertaken more than a century ago to remove the titles of aristocrats who sided with Germany in World War I.

Documents also suggest Mandelson sent details of sensitive UK government discussions to Epstein after the 2008 global financial crisis. The files suggest Mandelson emailed Epstein about the EU's rescue facility for struggling member states, telling him the deal should be announced tonight, Bloomberg reported. The emails are dated May 9, 2010. On May 10, European policymakers announced a €50 billion (\$59 billion) loan plan, sending the euro on its big gest rally in two years.

EU official pitches 'Made in Europe' strategy push

Reuters

letters@hindustantimes.com

BRUSSELS: Europe needs to protect its own industries with a "Made in Europe" strategy, EU industry chief Stephane Sejourne said in a newspaper article published on Sunday that was co-signed by more than 1,100 CEOs and other business leaders.

In an attempt to boost European industries in the face of cheaper imports from China,

the European Commission plans to propose a so-called Industrial Accelerator Act this month that will likely set requirements to prioritise locally manufactured products. But the approach has split EU countries. "Without an ambitious, effective and pragmatic industrial policy, the European economy is doomed to be just a playground for its competitors," Sejourne said in the article, which was published in news papers across Europe.

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ICE, and to automatically record and upload the encounter to cloud storage. The app, which has 285,000 users, and offers a \$99 annual subscription, was created by attorney Jazz Hampton and his team after the 2020 murder of George Floyd. "We don't just provide lawyers, we provide peace of mind... allowing your child to go to the grocery store and have confidence that someone will be there with them if you can't be," Hampton, 35, said.

Surveillance tech

As the government ramps up its efforts to arrest and deport immigrants, authorities have increasingly turned to technology to target individuals for arrest and deportation. In September 2025, ICE spent \$3.75 million on software and related services from facial recognition company Clearview AI. ICE officers deployed to Minnesota have been using that tool to track not only migrants but US citizens protesting the crackdown. Officials have also bought products to extract data from mobile phones.

Undeterred, activists in Minnesota have sought to turn the tables by creating "Defrost MN," a searchable database of ICE vehicles active in the city.



People at a vigil for Alex Patti, who was shot and killed by ICE agents, in Minneapolis on February 1, 2024. AFP

ICE agents shot and killed Alex Patti, a Black man, in Minneapolis on February 1, 2024. The killing has sparked outrage and protests across the country.

HIGH COURT OF DELHI, NEW DELHI
SHORT VACANCY NOTICE

JUNIOR JUDICIAL ASSISTANT/RESTORER (OPEN) EXAMINATION-2026

Online applications are invited from persons, who are citizens of India or subjects of Nepal as per instructions issued by the Government of India from time to time, for filling up following existing vacancies for the post of Junior Judicial Assistant/Restorer and preparing a panel thereof:

Post	Classification and Level	No. of Vacancies					Total
		GEN	EWS	SC	ST	Other	
Junior Judicial Group- 'B' Assistant/Restorer - Level of Pay-matrix 7th CPC.		62	12	44	20	14	152
Out of the aforesaid total 152 vacancies:-							
(i) Total Vacancies reserved for PMBD on horizontal basis -							
(ii) Break-up of aforesaid 10 total vacancies reserved for PWBD on horizontal basis:-							
a) Blend (B), Low Vision (LV) (1%)							4
b) Deaf (D), Hard of Hearing (DH) (1%)							3
c) One Arm (OA), Both Arms (BA), One Leg (OL), Both Legs (BL), One Arm One Leg (DAL), Cerebral Palsy (CP), Leprosy Cured (LC), Deafism (DC), Acid Attack Victim (AAV) (1%)							1
d) Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Mental Illness (MI) and Multiple Disabilities (MD) involving (a) to (e) above (1%).							2

Essential Qualifications (As on 23.02.2026):

Graduate from a recognized University and having typing speed of not less than 35 words per minute on Computer. (Only such candidates, who possess essential qualifications as on the last date of submission of online applications, need to apply.)

Schedule of Dates:

Commencement Date for submission of online applications	04.02.2026 (1100 hours)
Last date and time for receipt of online applications	23.02.2026 (2300 hours)
Last date and time for making online fee payment	23.02.2026 (2355 hours)
Last Date of Closing of Window for Correction of Application Form and Online payment of Correction Charges	27.02.2026 (2000 hours)
Downloading of Admit Card from Delhi High Court website i.e., www.delhighcourt.nic.in	To be announced later through public notice on official website
Date, Time & Venue of Examination	To be announced later through public notice on official website

Note: Eligible applicants in Bandana's age should not be below 18 years and over 32 years as on 01.01.2026. These eligible applicants should have been born not earlier than 02.01.1994 and later than 01.01.2006. Candidates should note that Date of Birth as recorded in Matriculation / Secondary Examination Certificate / Mark-Sheet or an equivalent Certificate will only be accepted for determining the age eligibility and no subsequent request for its change will be considered/entertained.

The detailed advertisement, containing information with respect to age relaxation to certain categories, reservation, mode of selection, examination fee, how to apply, other general instructions, etc., is available on the website of Delhi High Court i.e. www.delhighcourt.nic.in.

Sd/-
(ARUN BHARDWAJ)
REGISTRAR GENERAL

Date: 30.01.2026

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH.	NAME OF WORK	OPENING DATE/CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/END (APPROX.) IN RUPES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP./AUTH.	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	HSMBD ROHTAK	COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF ELECTRONIC SYSTEM AT ASRO MALL, ROHTAK FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025-26, I WORK	30.01.2026 / 10.02.2026	Rs. 78,865/-	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9812100311 xenelectro@tak2025.hsmhb@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

RD No: 13/2026/40/2625/1/197

WORKS DEPARTMENT 34001/14/2526

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, EASTERN CIRCLE (R&B), BALASORE
e-mail : sec_bis@edmifilm.com
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.: CCCEC-18/2025-26
No. 999 D/30/1/26

Nature of work - Building Works
Number of works - 1 No Building
Amount put to Tender - Rs. 448.83 lakh
Class of Contractor - "A" Class

Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal - Dt. 05.02.2026 at 10:00 AM

Last Date / Time of receipt of bid in the portal - Dt. 19.02.2026 up to 05:00 PM

Date of opening of bid - Dt. 20.02.2026 at 11:00 AM

Name & address of the Office inviting bid - Chief Construction Engineer, Eastern Circle (R&B), Balasore

The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen in the E-procurement portal "<http://tendersodisha.gov.in>". All future contingent will be available on the portal only.

Chief Construction Engineer, Eastern Circle (R&B) Balasore

OPR - 34001/34026/1/25-26/004

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Crude drop, rebound from oversold zone lift market

Sensex rallied 1.17%, to settle at 81,666 pts, while Nifty climbed 1.06% to end at 25,088

Dipti Sharma

dipti.sharma@livemint.com

MUMBAI: The bloodbath in the markets of budget day was a prising cut short on Monday as investors stepped in to bottom-fish and buy beaten-down stocks, especially those of blue chip companies that are part of benchmark indices.

With much of the budget disappointment already priced in and global cues turning slightly supportive, the benchmarks recovered even as concerns over near-term growth and earnings lingered. After closing nearly 2% down on Sunday, the Nifty 50 climbed 1.06% on Monday to close at 25,088.40, and the Sensex rose 1.17% to 81,666.46. Reliance Industries jumped 3%, while other Nifty constituents such as HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, and Bharti Airtel gained around 1% on Monday.

However, analysts said the recovery does little to change the bigger picture.



The benchmarks recovered even as concerns over near-term growth and earnings lingered.

MINH

"Today's rebound looks more like a pause than a trend reversal, with the market still searching for direction," said Kunal Parar, vice president - technical research and algo at Choice Equity Broking. He expects the Nifty to decline another 200 points from the 25,000 mark before attempting a recovery, signalling a phase of range-bound and largely directionless trade.

Apart from a fading budget effect, what also helped was that oil prices slipped nearly 4% on Monday after reports said US President Donald Trump indi-

cated Iran was "seriously talking" with Washington, signalling a possible easing of tensions with the Opec member.

"The budget had a very granular focus on laying the building blocks for the future and maintaining policy continuity, but could have been punchier from the point of addressing near-term concerns with regard to growth," said Taher Badshah, president and chief investment officer of Invesco Mutual Fund, while adding that Monday's market rally was somewhat unexpected.

In a post-budget analysis note,

Elara Capital said markets reacted negatively on Sunday as the budget failed to anchor FY27 earnings, despite its focus on macro stability and capex. The note added that while initiatives like data centres and AI support mid-term growth, they do little to boost India's net export outlook among emerging market (EM) peers. Further, higher STT (securities transaction tax) on futures and options (F&Os) is unlikely to spur FPI inflows without an earnings recovery or relief from rupee weakness.

Goldman Sachs' post-budget analysis echoed a similar view, noting that policymakers continue to prioritise macro and market resilience over near-term growth spurts. This is reflected in steady fiscal consolidation and the timing of the STT hike, which appears aimed at curbing derivatives-market speculation, "at the cost of near-term equity upside".

"We do think the last 15 months have been a reboot opportunity with significant political resets in the backdrop of geopolitical developments and global macro uncertainties," said Harish Krishnan, chief investment officer - equity at Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC.

RUPEE RISES 42 PAISE TO CLOSE AT 91.51 AGAINST US DOLLAR

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

MUMBAI: The rupee gained 42 paise to close at 91.51 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, a day after the Union Budget 2026-27 was presented, largely as crude oil prices retreated from their elevated levels. Forex traders said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) seemed to be defending the 92 per dollar level with a lot of resolve.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 91.95 against the US dollar and then gained some ground to touch an intraday high of 91.45 and a low of 91.95 against the greenback.

At the end of the trading session on Monday, the rupee was quoted at 91.51 (provisional) against the greenback, registering a gain of 42 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee hit a record low of 92.02 before ending 6 paise higher at 91.93 against the US dollar.

For the rupee, the Budget offered reassurance, not relief, and the government's high borrowing plan is likely to weigh on investor sentiments going ahead. The government is likely to borrow ₹17.2 lakh crore in the next financial year to fund its fiscal deficit projected at 4.3% of the GDP.

India eyes aircraft assembly by 2028

Neha LM Tripathi

neha.tripathi@htlive.com

NEW DELHI: India aims to roll out its first locally assembled civilian aircraft by 2028, with the customs duty exemptions on plane components announced in the budget expected to accelerate the process to set up the country's first final assembly line, said civil aviation minister K Ram Mohan Naidu.

"This has been the priority focus area at least for the last one year where we are trying to address the challenges of aircraft issues and the objective of right from the start our own aircraft industry will improve ahead," the minister told HT in an exclusive interview, adding that focus on boosting the component manufacturing ecosystem has been there for quite some time. The minister said the budget sector two specific things: viability gap funding for seaplane manufacturing, and customs duty exemptions for the component manufacturing ecosystem.

The duty exemption specifically for aircraft components is a "dream come true" for the objective of building an aircraft in the country, he said. "2028 is when we want to see the Made in India aircraft being done. With these budgetary announcements, it feels much more likely."

The Union budget, presented



K Ram Mohan Naidu, aviation minister.

PT

by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, allocated ₹4,469 crore to the civil aviation ministry for the financial year 2027.

Naidu said that the final assembly line is a steel stone for us to build our own aircraft right from the start and indigenous will improve ahead, "...this customs duty exemption absolutely hits the point in giving that kind of boost to the final assembly line," he said.

Citing recent partnerships such as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Adani Group and Embraer, and HAL and the government of Russia, the minister said, "Considering the growth story of India, everyone wants to associate with it and similar interest is being seen in civil aviation also. In that regard, we have already had these MoUs, and their execution and achieving our objectives will become much more accelerated."

All 190,000 shareholders of the exchange will be given the option to participate in the secondary sale as part of the IPO, the person said.

LIC holds a 10.72% stake in NSE and Temasek has about 4.5%, according to data published on the exchange's website. SBI Capital also held roughly 4.5% as of December 31, 2025, while SBI's stake is about 3.2%, the data show.

The SBI's board is likely to form a committee comprising its top executives and the representatives of major shareholders including LIC and SBI in a few days to oversee the IPO process, the person said.

The board is scheduled to meet on February 6 to approve the financial results for the quarter ended December 2025 and is also likely to decide on the formation of the committee.

Shares of NSE are trading at about ₹2150 in the unlisted market, according to Incredimoney.com, implying a valuation of about ₹55 billion, making it the world's fourth-most valuable exchange among listed peers, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

The committee's mandate is expected to include assisting the board in appointing investment bankers, negotiating fees, determining the amount of shares to be sold by existing investors, and filing the draft prospectus.

Industrial Relations Code rules in final stages: Centre to HC

Shruti Kakkar

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NEW DELHI: The Union government on Monday told the Delhi high court that the rules to implement the new Industrial Relations Code ("Code") shall be finalised by the end of February.

The Industrial Relations Code, 2020, which is one of the four Labour Codes that replaced 29 older labour laws, came into force on November 21. The Industrial Relations Code, 2020, is a specific, single code within the larger Labour Codes. It replaces previous acts such as the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, and the Trade Unions Act, 1926, to govern industrial relations.

The Union government's lawyer, solicitor general Tushar Mehta, along with standing counsel Ashish Dixit, submitted before a bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyay and Justice Tejpal Karia that the rule-making process is continuing and that objections and suggestions from the public have already been invited.

The law officer further submitted that the Centre issued two notifications on Monday to ensure continuity of the adjudication process in the interregnum, pending finalisation of the code.

In their petition, the lawyers argued that although the code establishes an entirely new adjudicatory framework—an Industrial Tribunal with a distinct composition, authority, and jurisdiction, including the transfer of pending Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 cases—the government has failed to notify the rules governing the tribunal's constitution, as well as the terms and qualifications for appointing its members. Such inaction, the lawyers said, has a paralysing effect on the adjudicatory machinery.



The Industrial Relations Code, 2020, is a specific, single code within the larger Labour Codes.

ISTOCKPHOTO

function until corresponding authorities are appointed under the Industrial Relations Code.

Considering the intentions, the court disposed of the petition filed by advocates practising before the labour courts and industrial tribunals, including N SA Sebastian, challenging the Centre's decision to quash the notification operationalising the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, from November 21.

"The concerns raised in this petition are addressed, and therefore, continuance of the proceedings would not be required," the bench said in its order.

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INDIA IN TALKS WITH ALIPAY+ TO LINK IT TO INSTANT PAYMENTS

Reuters

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NEW DELHI: India is in talks with China-related Ant International to allow digital payment platform Alipay+ to be linked to India's leading instant payments system for cross-border transactions, two government sources told Reuters. The move would help make payments easier for Indian tourists as they would be able to use India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with merchants in countries that have signed up with Alipay+.

The talks between Indian government and central bank officials and Singapore-based Ant International, which was founded by China's fintech giant Ant Group and now operates independently, reflect further warming of ties with China.

Alipay+ connects about 1.8 billion user accounts with over 150 million merchants across more than 100 markets, according to its website. The company has presence in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Hyundai India misses Q3 view on rising raw material, labour costs

Reuters

feedback@livemint.com

SOUTH KOREA'S Hyundai Motor, told express delivery rates 8% during the quarter, with raw material costs spiking 14.8%. Employee benefits expenses climbed 15.2% to ₹690 crore as Hyundai recognised the impact of India's newly enacted labour codes. It did not share further details on the impact.

Quarterly revenue for the October-December period stood at ₹17,973 crore, topping analysts' estimate of ₹17,841 crore, on the back of strong exports. Shares jumped 1.3%, compared to a 0.2% rise before the results.

Overseas shipments were up 17% during the quarter, lifting total sales 5% higher. Domestic sales, on the other hand, were flat, hurt by competition from Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles and Mahindra & Mahindra's newer, features-loaded utility vehicles.

Analysts have also pointed to Hyundai's increased reliance on its top-selling Creta SUV.

THE CROSSWORDS

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Monk has no hesitation in providing soup (5)
- 4 See cinders scattered all over the place (7)
- 8 Poem due for recitation (3)
- 9 Notice dual replacement when taking off (9)
- 10 Teach me to twist the knife (7)
- 11 He goes out with Irene (5)
- 12 He is a real estate agent (6)
- 13 Reformed gambler (6)
- 14 State remanagement seems safe (5)
- 15 Withdraw escort (4,3)
- 21 Might the couple become attached to the yard? (9)
- 23 Where to buy a drink and some chocolate (3)
- 25 Prison for a debt-collector who has gone wrong (7)
- 26 Looks for spinning reels (5)

DOWN

- 1 A mistake in the garden (7)
- 2 Success in arranging some cover (9)
- 3 A row between neighbours? (5)
- 4 Artful Dickensian character (6)
- 5 Hide away or gradually let out (7)
- 6 Priest gives Delta heart (3)
- 7 Once led by a pony for the time being (5)
- 12 No having Russian money is not a problem (7)

- 13 Shudder when music starts in highest register (7)
- 14 Sends back the proceeds (7)
- 17 Remove liquid under pressure (6)
- 19 Lovely and good (7)
- 20 Lower oneself (5)
- 22 In a refreshing place (3)

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QUICK CLUES

- 1 General meaning of what is said (5)
- 2 Not joking (7)
- 3 Banned by social convention (5)
- 4 Opportunity (6)
- 5 Repudiated region of south Asia (7)
- 6 Be in debt (3)
- 7 Descriptive (5)
- 8 Corn (5)
- 9 Saturate (6)
- 10 Commune (7)
- 11 Indian corn (5)
- 12 Proliferate (6)
- 13 Saturate (6)
- 14 Happening now (7)
- 15 Responsible use of freedom (7)
- 16 A danger (6)
- 17 A general (6)
- 18 Irreversible (5)
- 19 Loveliest and good (7)
- 20 Generally reckoned (7)
- 21 Generally reckoned (5-4)
- 22 Perhaps (5)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS (17398)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Very loving (7)
- 2 Not joking (7)
- 3 Banned by social convention (5)
- 4 Opportunity (6)
- 5 Repudiated region of south Asia (7)
- 6 Be in debt (3)
- 7 Descriptive (5)
- 8 Corn (5)
- 9 Saturate (6)
- 10 Commune (7)
- 11 Indian corn (5)
- 12 Proliferate (6)
- 13 Saturate (6)
- 14 Happening now (7)
- 15 Responsible use of freedom (7)
- 16 A danger (6)
- 17 A general (6)
- 18 Irreversible (5)
- 19 Loveliest and good (7)
- 20 Generally reckoned (7)
- 21 Generally reckoned (5-4)
- 22 Perhaps (5)

- 23 Ban on meat (7)
- 24 Generally reckoned (7)
- 25 Perhaps (5)

SUDOKU



Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 9x9 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

GAME ZONE: Scan the QR code for more daily puzzles and brain teasers

Apple hits 28% value share in Indian smartphone mkt

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com



India's smartphone market grew 1% y-o-y by volume and 8% y-o-y by value in 2025.

role of EMIs on enabling consumers to upgrade to higher-end devices.

The report defines premiumisation as the increasing consumer preference, with the segment growing faster than the entry-level and budget segments, which were previously the primary drivers of the Indian market.

The premium segment (> ₹30,000) emerged as the fastest-growing in 2025 in volume terms, expanding 11% y-o-y and accounting for 22% of overall shipments, the highest share ever recorded, driving the market's highest-ever annual value growth of 8% y-o-y." Counterpoint Research Director Tarun Pathak said. Pathak further added that market dynamics point to a more polarised market structure in early 2026, as premiumisation continues to support value growth while entry-tier volumes remain under pressure.

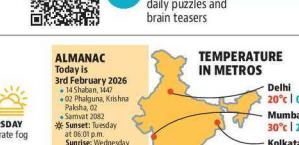
Motorola (54% y-o-y) was the fastest-growing brand in 2025 by volume, while CMF (83% y-o-y) was the fastest-growing sub-brand.

India's smartphone market is forecast to experience a single-digit volume decline in 2026, driven by rising memory and component costs that curb demand, particularly in the sub-₹25,000 segment.

At the same time, price increases and a stronger premium focus by leading manufacturers are set to raise average selling prices by 5-7% year-on-year.

White Apple leads in value, followed by Samsung, Oppo, and Vivo. The report highlighted a significant shift in the world's second-largest smartphone market, noting that while volume growth remains steady, the total market value is expanding at a much faster clip as Indian buyers trade up to more expensive models.

According to Counterpoint's latest insights, Apple had a 23% value share in India in 2024. The success of the iPhone 16 series, coupled with aggressive financing schemes and trade-in offers, has pushed the Cupertino-based company to its high-



SPORT

Informal talks on after Pak's boycott call



*File photo of fans at Champions Trophy 2025 match in Dubai. PPI

Rakesh Mandani

rakesh.mandani@htlive.com

MUMBAI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is yet to formally write to the International Cricket Council (ICC) following up on its government's social media post on Sunday that the team will not be taking field in the league match against India in the T20 World Cup.

A day after their bombshell announcement, "there have been some backchannel talks between the PCB and the ICC," an official in the know of things told HT.

A line in ICC's statement on Sunday had left open room for negotiations. "The ICC expects the PCB to explore a mutually acceptable resolution, which protects the interests of all stakeholders," the statement said.

The teams are scheduled to play their Group A match in Colombo on February 15.

The nature of the talks, whether they have been direct or routed through intermediaries, is not known. With the money-spinning India-Pakistan clash in limbo, influential member boards in the ICC led by England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and Cricket Australia (CA) are known to have privately expressed their displeasure with PCB over the turn of events. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) understandably has had no communication with PCB.

"The ICC has issued a big statement, they have spoken about sportsmanship. We completely agree with the ICC. The

BCCI won't make any comments on it until we speak with the ICC," Rajiv Shukla, BCCI vice-president, told reporters on Monday.

With less than a fortnight to go for the India-Pakistan clash, there could still be a resolution. In the absence of it, a farcical situation may play out where India have to make the trip to Colombo, Pakistan do not turn up and their league points are forfeited.

The ICC has the option of calling a board meeting to take a collective view against PCB's unilateral decision. It has been trained from doing so as yet in virtue of the ongoing talk. For the record, PCB has not written to ICC wanting to categorise this as a government diktat. But is unlikely to escape sanctions. There could be

wide ranging implications, unless PCB engages in constructive talks.

Earlier, when the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) refused to budge from its stand that it will take part in the World Cup only if the matches were moved out of India, the ICC board voted them out of the competition and called up Scotland as replacement.

The commercial worth of the India-Pakistan contest is still being computed. If the PCB sticks to its stand, ICC is sure to pin the blame on it to bear the losses arising from the boycott. "An independent survival could be conducted to draw opinions from commercial partners on what they stand to lose, which becomes recoverable from the PCB," another official in the know said.

A number of differing figures have been doing the rounds over the worth of the India-Pakistan contest in the ICC media rights cycle.

At the time of bidding, no match-specific valuation is worked out.

For 2024-27 world events, ICC had secured a whopping \$3 billion deal from the Indian market. If the T20 World Cup is computed to be worth \$750 million on average, the India-Pakistan clash alone could be in the range of \$100 million, according to one industry estimate.

The knockout matches in two sets and the final would be the India machine, another significant new era, among which the Pakistan clash unfailingly delivers.

It is this bargaining tool that the PCB wants to weaponise against ICC, with political leverage at play too. PCB chairman Mohsin Nagvi is also the interior minister of Pakistan.

With Nagvi at the helm - he

also heads the Asian Cricket Council - cricketing relations between the two countries have nosedived as was evident in last year's Asia Cup.

The Pakistan cricket team

reached Colombo on Monday to

prepare for their tournament

opener on February 7 against

Netherlands. Pakistan will be

playing their first warm-up

match against Ireland in Colombo on Thursday.

"That is not our decision. We

can't do anything. What our go-

vernment, our (PCB) chairman

says, we have to do that," skipper

Salman Agha told reporters

before flying out to Colombo

when asked about the boycott call.

Abhishek Sharma: India's T20 poster boy, demolition man

A unique way to manifest success, grit and a lot of guts has made Abhishek Sharma a freakish T20 run machine

Somshuvra Laha

somshuvra.laha@htlive.com

KOLKATA: Lay out a plan, set yourself milestones and work towards the goal hoping that luck too will side with you—individual excellence in a professional team sport normally revolves around these basics. Avishhek Sharma plots a different course though. To manifest success, Abhishek already imagines himself at the top, consequently allowing himself a psyche that frees him up from the burden of performance for survival. To the world, Abhishek may be barely 18 months old in international cricket. Internally though, he is already at his peak, hence the drive to stay ahead of the competition.

"Shikhar (Dhawan) paaji was the one who taught me to manifest success," Abhishek said in an interview on the YouTube show 'Breakfast with Champions' last year. "But I think that is already achieved. He kind of mentored, advised me to take on my journey and visualise success. The first type is normally the kind of success yet to happen. But he advised me to already tell myself that I'm India's best player, that I have helped India win matches, and I have my choice of top endorsements."

That piece of advice changed Abhishek's life forever.

That he has been able to train his mind on these lines so early into his career alone makes Abhishek a rare cricketing brain. But also understand the factors working behind the scenes. Born in Amritsar, raised by a hard

nosed cricket nut father who had his own academy, and later mentored by Yuvraj Singh in a highly competitive Punjab cricket landscape, Abhishek had no other option but to forge a decisive path ahead. First through domestic cricket, then IPL and finally international cricket, one season at a time, the obtrusive way.

From very early it was clear that Abhishek's novelty was beyond the sum of his runs or the strike rates he was having manufactured. In his shot selection, he is both old-fashioned and new-fangled, his vision and instinct stemming from rare clarity of thought. Within a few months Abhishek has transformed himself into a batter of unrelenting reliability who believes in blending a classic bat swing with modern-day acuity. Spinners stumb, pacers are forced to vary lengths, field settings feel out-dated the moment he gets going.

The modern gospel of victory in T20 cricket is built on the ability to take off from the first ball and never look back. Safe to say Indian cricket rose to that echelon once Abhishek started opening India's batting.

From 2020 to 2024, Abhishek's debut, India had crossed 200 or more 18s. Since then, India have already achieved it 13 times in less than a year. To dream again. Continue to upgrade again. Abhishek's free-flowing wheelhouse of shots. He can flick, glance, lift inside out and pull. Long hands acting as levers, aided by a little side step or a small skip down the pitch. Basically, the higher Abhishek scores, the quicker he goes. All through basic shots, though nothing too extravagant.

"It's always about me backing my shots because I don't have a lot of shots," Abhishek said during the recently concluded series against New Zealand. "It's just a few shots. I'm going to practice a lot and just execute it."

Notwithstanding what Abhishek says, you can't always train for this. Nor can you preempt this brand of batting as a bowler. Exceptional talent that Abhishek is, the onus basically was on coaches and selectors to fast-track him. Ricky Ponting was there before anyone else. "I was his first IPL coach. He debuted with me, I think, as a 17-year-old at Delhi, and made an immediate impact," Ponting said in the ICC Review.

"I think he hit his first ball for four or six straight back over the bowler's head with that classical sort of straight bat and held the pose. And you could just see then, as a 17-year-old, that there was something extra special." Ponting wanted to hold on to Abhishek, but Delhi had other ideas.

"We ended up trading him away from Delhi, but I pleaded and pleaded and pleaded and said, 'Please don't do this. We've got to keep him, there's an absolute superstar in the making here,'" he said.

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Varma hits 24-ball 38 in warm-up tie

MUMBAI: Tilak Varma returned from injury ahead of the T20 World Cup at a warm-up game for India A against USA at the Dr DY Patil Stadium. Varma came out to bat at No 3 and hit a 24-ball 38 with three fours and two sixes. India scored 238/3 in 20 overs and USA were all out for 200 in 19.4.

IOC denies Manjeet's entry, Lundup waits

NEW DELHI: Indian cross-country skier Stanzin Lundup's participation at Winter Olympics became uncertain as his entry was challenged by Manjeet. The Delhi HC directed IOA to include Manjeet. However IOA's request

FanCode bags ISL12 broadcast rights

KOLKATA: FanCode bagged the global broadcast rights of ISL12 with KPS Studios winning the bidding to be production partners. AIFF announced on Monday, An AIFF official said FanCode's bid of ₹8.62 cr was the highest and they will pay KPS Studios ₹5 cr for production. The rest will go to the central revenue pool.

SPORT TODAY

CRICKET

T20 WC warm-ups

- Sri Lanka A vs Oman (10.00pm)
- Netherlands vs Zimbabwe (3.00pm)
- Nepal vs UAE (5.00pm)

WPL: Eliminator

GG vs DC (7.30pm)

FOOTBALL

League Cup semi (leg 2)
Arsenal vs Chelsea (1.30am Wednesday)

Copa del Rey Quarter-finals

Alicante vs Barcelona (1.30am Wednesday)

BADMINTON

Asia Team Championships in Qingdao (China)

Alcaraz: The game's little titan is driven by his own standards

Youngest to the career Slam, the Spaniard is racking up numbers that rivals that of the Big 3

Rutwick Mehta
rutwick.mehta@htlive.com

MUMBAI: Seated between the shining Australian Open trophy he's had to wait to lay his hands on and a glint of sparkling champagne waiting to be finished, Carlos Alcaraz let out a big laugh.

"I'm trying, I'm trying," he said, when asked whether he could fully grasp the magnitude of what he had achieved at his age.

For now, Alcaraz gets the gist: "I know I'm doing history."

Sur, but it's history with staggeringly swift steps. It's history that, in the cold world of numbers, puts to shade even the sport-altering records of the Big Three.

Those three titans have been, individually and collectively, the benchmark of men's tennis. Now a "little titan", as Big Three torchbearer Novak Djokovic termed Alcaraz, is vaulting over at jaw-dropping velocity.

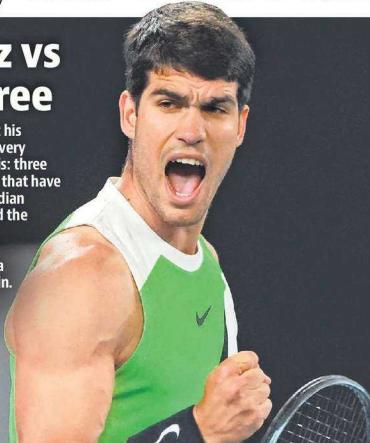
Rafael Nadal was 24 years and 102 days old when he scripted the career Grand Slam. Roger Federer (27 years, 303 days) and Djokovic (29 years, 15 days) were much older. Alcaraz did it at 22 years, 272 days on Sunday, the youngest man ever to complete the full set in tennis history.

Yet, age is one thing. The number of attempts to crack the vagaries of the four Slams through the season across three different surfaces is quite another.

Took Alcaraz just his 20th main draw Slam appearance to conquer all of the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and US Open. Nadal needed 26, Federer 40, and Djokovic 46.

Alcaraz vs Big Three

Alcaraz has now set his sights of winning every major prize in tennis: three Masters 1000 titles that have eluded him — Canadian Open, Shanghai and the Paris Masters — a season-ending championship and a Davis Cup with Spain.



AGE WHEN CAREER SLAM WAS COMPLETED

Carlos Alcaraz	22 years and 272 days
Rafael Nadal	24 years and 102 days
Roger Federer	27 years and 303 days
Novak Djokovic	29 years and 15 days

SLAMS APPEARANCE FOR THE FULL SET



YEARS FROM FIRST MAJOR TO ALL FOUR



Alcaraz took four years to go from capturing his first major to pocketing all four at least once (2022 US Open to 2026 Australian Open). Nadal took five years (2005 French Open to 2010 US Open), Federer six (2003 Wimbledon to 2009 French Open), and Djokovic eight (2008 Australian Open to 2016 French

Open).

This is where the freak of Alcaraz stands out. At 22, into only his sixth season of competing in these major stages, the Spaniard carries a high quality all-round, all-court, all-Slam game that most pros can't find through their careers.

"He has everything, the

whole package," said Djokovic.

Yet, it's one thing to have the whole package, and quite another to constantly refine it. This is where the dedication of Alcaraz stands out.

Cast your mind back to the 2023 French Open, Alcaraz's first Slam outing after becoming its newly-minted champion.

"He has everything, the

PTI

Playing Djokovic in the semi-final as the top seed who had blazed through the five rounds, the then 20-year-old began to cramp after levelling the match at one set apiece. Forgetting his service game at 1-1 in the third set to receive immediate treatment, Alcaraz won just one game from there to lose the last two sets 6-1, 6-1.

Compare that to how he handled the cramp situation against Alexander Zverev in the semi-finals of this Australian Open, and it's a testament to his mental and physical evolution.

He's also constantly looking to evolve facets of his game. And thus, after closing out a serving masterpiece en route to winning last year's US Open, Alcaraz chose to tweak his service motion in the off-season.

"He has improved physically, mentally, game-wise. He is constantly looking to innovate himself in his game. Which is exactly the kind of mentality that needs to be nurtured for a champion," said Djokovic, the 24-time Grand Slam champion. "It's never enough in terms of settling with your game. You have to progress, otherwise you regress."

Alcaraz sure is progressing. And he doesn't want to stop, even if he wrote "Job completed" on X after his Australian achievement. The 35-year-old Djokovic, whose service motion he mirrored, is also an inspiration to him. To not be content at any stage of the career.

"Well, I hate to lose. So that's my motivation. Trying to lose as less as I can," said Alcaraz of his future goals. "There are also some tournaments that I want to win at least once, a few Masters 1000. I want to complete all the Masters 1000, and the ATP Finals, and the Davis Cup."

At the pace with which he's scaling new heights, there could be no ceiling to Alcaraz's vaulting ways. Around the Big Three benchmark and beyond.

"A legendary tennis player that has already made a huge mark in the history books of tennis," said Djokovic. "I mean, he's only 22. It's unbelievable. Everything is possible in his case, no question about it."

in the semis.

Kennedy had beaten Anahat 3-0 in their previous meeting at the Canadian Women's Open last year. Anahat turned the tables spectacularly against the top seed in Washington, saving two game balls at 10-8 in the first game before clinically getting the job done in three.

"I'm extremely happy," Anahat was quoted as saying by PSA. "Coming into this event, I played the British Junior Open a few weeks back and I didn't play too well. I knew in between these events – ToC (Tournament of Champions) as well – I had some time to train and I did that to get the best out of my game."

"I knew I wanted to do well in these events, get my ranking up and also put on a performance. And I'm glad I was able to do that this time."

This was Anahat's 15th title overall on the PSA tour from just over 26 events. The fast-rising teen, though, said she wanted to scale down playing (and largely dominating) the Challenger events while testing herself more in the bigger tournaments against the top players this year. Her mindset has also changed.

"Last year my aim was just to get into the (bigger) tournaments and play a few matches," she told HT before departing for the US swing. "But now that I've been able to do that for the past couple of months, it's changed into trying to win matches."

And, perhaps, trying to win tournaments too now.



File photo of India's Anahat Singh.

Anahat beats world No.10 to win Squash on Fire Open crown

HT Correspondent

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: One of Anahat Singh's major goals from this year was to play a lot more of the big PSA tournaments, and start making bigger dents in them. Two tournaments of doing that two months into the year, India's teen squash talent has captured the biggest PSA title of her bright young career so far.

"He has improved physically, mentally, game-wise. He is constantly looking to innovate himself in his game. Which is exactly the kind of mentality that needs to be nurtured for a champion," said Djokovic, the 24-time Grand Slam champion. "It's never enough in terms of settling with your game. You have to progress, otherwise you regress."

The 17-year-old won the Squash on Fire Open 2026, a bronze level event on the PSA tour, stunning top seed and world No.10 Georgia Kennedy of England 12-10, 11-5, 11-7 in the final in Washington on Sunday.

The victory not only gave Anahat the biggest title of her career yet and her first in a PSA World event, but also propelled her to world No.19 in the latest rankings, a leap of 12 places.

That, a day after the qualification path to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics was announced by World Squash in which 8 spots per gender would be reserved through the world ranking route, is also significant.

After competing in the Sprot Tournament of Champions, a top-tier Platinum level event, Anahat went past a number of higher-ranked opponents in Washington.

The seventh seeded Indian beat Egyptian world No.17 and second seed Sana Ibrahim 8-11, 8-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-7 in the quarters and American world No. 23 Sabrina Sobhy 11-9, 11-3, 9-11, 11-5

Shri Umesh Kumar Modi
Chairman and Managing Director
Modi Industries Limited



"Committed to the development of Modinagar"

Late Rai Bahadur Seth Gujarmal Modi
(Padma Bhushan, Founder of Modi Group)
1902-1976

Modi Industries Limited
(Parent Company of Modi Group, Modinagar)
Incorporated in the year 1932

Heartiest Felicitations to Shri Umesh Kumar Modi

On his re-appointment as Managing Director of the company with effect from 1st December 2025, for another five years.

We express our sincere gratitude to the entire Modi family and all shareholders for their wholehearted support in the re-appointment of Shri Umesh Kumar Modi, and extend our best wishes for his continued leadership in driving the growth of Modi Industries Limited and the redevelopment of Modinagar.

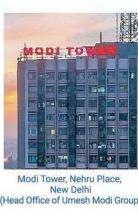
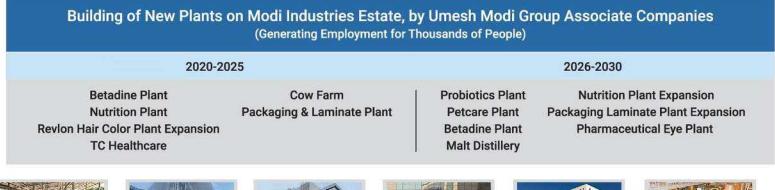
On behalf of the Board of Directors, Employees, Workers and their Unions, Associates of Modi Industries Limited, and all the residents of Modinagar.

Since 1932, Shri Rai Bahadur Seth Gujarmal Modi, founder of the Modi Group, led Modi Industries as its Chairman. In 1969, following the abolition of the managing agency system, he was appointed as the Managing Director of the Company. Upon his demise in 1976, his youngest son, Shri Umesh Kumar Modi, was appointed as the Managing Director of the Company in his place. In 2020, after a gap of 44 years, Shri Umesh Kumar Modi assumed the position earlier held by his father and was appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director of the Company. Late Shri Rai Bahadur Seth Gujarmal Modi was the last Chairman and Managing Director of the Company, a position he held until his demise in 1976.

Further, at the 91st Annual General Meeting of the Company held on 27th September 2025, the shareholders through Special resolution re-appointed Shri Umesh Kumar Modi as Managing Director with 100% of the votes casted in his favour by the entire Modi family, along with all other shareholders, reaffirming their trust and confidence in his leadership. Thus, he now holds the position of Chairman and Managing Director of the Company for another five years.

Over the past five years, with his leadership and strategic direction, Shri Umesh Kumar Modi has successfully revitalized Modi Industries and placed the Company on a trajectory of robust and sustainable growth. Several new plants and manufacturing facilities have been commissioned during this period, strengthening the Group's industrial footprint and driving long-term value creation. Looking ahead, the next five years will also see the implementation of an ambitious expansion plan, including the construction of new plants and infrastructure, further accelerating business growth. Shri Umesh Kumar Modi envisions transforming Modinagar into a thriving industrial hub, generating employment and contributing meaningfully to regional economic development, while preserving and advancing the legacy of his father.

The Government of India (Ministry of Corporate Affairs) has also approved the re-appointment vide Letter No. SRN AB8717059/2025-CL-VII dated 13.01.2026.



Modi Tower, Nehru Place,
New Delhi
(Head Office of Umesh Modi Group)