



UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

Uttarakhand, 2024



Uttarakhand

The nation's first state to ensure a uniform law for every citizen

Unified Rights | Unified Dignity

Property Rights

- 01 Equal property rights for sons and daughters across all sections of all religious communities.

Prescribed Marriageable Age

- 02 The minimum age for marriage is set at 21 years for males and 18 years for females across all religions.

Marriage Registration

- 03 Marriage registration is mandatory within the prescribed time limit. The monogamy rule (one husband-one wife) applies uniformly to all.

Equal Rights

- 04 A wife holds equal rights as her husband; men and women of all religions and sects are granted equal rights.

For Parents

- 05 In the event of an individual's death, the parents will have an equal right to the deceased's property.

Scheduled Tribes

- 06 Scheduled Tribes (STs) have been excluded from the ambit of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

Live-in Relationships

- 07 Children born out of live-in relationships are granted all legal rights equal to those of biological (legitimate) children.



There are two main pillars in building a Developed India of the 21st century. First, taking pride in our heritage, and second, making every possible effort for development. Today, Uttarakhand is strengthening both these pillars. This decade is the decade of Uttarakhand.

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

The Uniform Civil Code is a symbol of our commitment to providing equal rights, dignity, and security to every citizen.

Pushkar Singh Dhami
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

One Year of UCC

Online Registration

- Approximately 5 Lakh Marriage Registration.
- Nearly 100% Online Process
- Average of 1400 Registrations Daily.
- A significant leap compared to the previous average of only 67 registrations per day.
- Certificates are now issued within an average of 5 days.

UCC: Not Just a Law, but a Systemic Transformation

- Changed Perspective: A fundamental shift in how governance is viewed.
- Changed Processes: Streamlined and modernized procedures.
- Changed Systems: A complete overhaul of the administrative framework.
- Uttarakhand: The Model State: Setting a benchmark for the entire nation.

Protection of Women & Child Rights

- Uniform Rules for Marriage and Divorce: Ensuring equality in legal proceedings.
- Legal Security and Dignity for Women: Providing a robust framework for protection.
- Strengthening Children's Rights: Securing the future of the next generation.
- Effective Control over Malpractices: Eradicating regressive social customs.

A New Definition of Justice

- Beyond Law: Good Governance: Moving past mere regulation to proactive, people-centric administration.
- Equality in Action: A practical example of translating the principle of equality into everyday life.
- Strengthened Citizen Trust: Fostering deeper confidence between the public and the state.
- Empowering the Constitutional Spirit: Robust implementation of the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Digital Convenience Transparent System

- Online Application from Home: Apply for registration conveniently from the comfort of your home.
- Video Statement Facility: Verification through integrated video statements.
- Remote Completion of Process: Couples and witnesses can complete the entire process from any location.
- No Mandatory Visits to the Sub-Registrar's Office: Elimination of the requirement to physically visit government offices.

- Savings in Time, Labour, and Expenses: A more efficient system that saves citizen resources.
- AI-Powered Multilingual Support: Registration facility available in 22 notified Indian languages through Artificial Intelligence.



To register, please log in at: ucc.uk.gov.in

Issued in Public Interest by Department of Information & Public Relations, Uttarakhand, Dehradun

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE
The Divisional Railway Manager, E.C.Railway, Danapur is inviting online (E-Tendering) Open Tender for and on behalf of the President of India from reputed contractor with experience, financial capability including those registered/working with Railway/Irrigation/CPWD/MES or any other public sector undertaking for the following work:-
Tender Notice No.: W-7/E-Tender/26/Open/DNR/2025-26.

1. Name of the Work with its location : Provision of RDSO type standard height gauge at 25 Nos. LC in section of Sr. DEN/3/DNR. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹2,78,66,634.18, Bid security : ₹2,89,300/-

2. Name of the Work with its location : Transporting, carting & stacking of P-way materials from any store to works site or any place to PWD store under SSEP/Way/TD/DNR of Danapur Division. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹3,11,18,230.00, Bid security : ₹3,05,600/-

3. Name of the Work with its location : Improvement of damaged door, window in staffs quarter and officer quarter in Railway Colony at Danapur under ADEN/HOD/NR. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹1,42,24,763.96, Bid security : ₹2,21,100/-

4. Name of the Work with its location : Improvement of leaky roof of staff quarter and officer's quarters, Railway colony under ADEN/HOD/NR. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹1,51,32,956.31, Bid security : ₹2,25,700/-

5. Name of the Work with its location : Supply of 1,00,000 cum 50mm size machine crushed track ballastas per RDSO specification for B.G.Railway track & loading the same into any type of railway wagons F.O.R Bakudhi/Taljhari including all sorts of incidental charges for East Central Railway. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹19,85,03,000.00, Bid security : ₹11,42,500/-

6. Name of the Work with its location : Improvement of track geometry and track parameters by using Timble Gedo Vorsys trolley System or similar system using DGPS (i.e. Differential Global Positioning System) in the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/2/DNR. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹18,44,667.62, Bid security : ₹2,42,300/-

7. Name of the Work with its location : Cess Repairing/Standarization of bank under Sr.DEN/2/DNR (Total = ₹8,00,000.00, Approx. Cost of Work : ₹14,67,30,351.44, Bid security : ₹8,83,700/-

8. Name of the Work with its location : Reconditioning/Resurfacing of 52/60 kg point & crossing by Robotic reconditioning as approved by RDSO/LKO at various locations under section Sr. DEN/2/DNR. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹22,27,123.00, Bid security : ₹4,46,000/-

9. Name of the Work with its location : Through Sleeper Renewal (TSR/P) = 45,593 by TRTP/QRS, TRR(P) = 4,09 Tkm, TFR = 66,536 Tkm, TBR(T/O) = 16 Sets (1 in 12 & 3 Sets & 1 in 8.5 = 13 Sets) TBR = 22,632 Tkm & TTR (TWS + WCMSC) - 02 sets (1:12) under jurisdiction of ADEN/LN/1/DNR. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹1,48,66,667.62, Bid security : ₹24,42,300/-

10. Name of the Work with its location : Provision of approach road with sump and covered shed of Limited Height Subway No.05 (HxWxL) 3.60m in Danayani - Bihari Sharif section of Danapur Division. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹1,99,96,353.16, Bid security : ₹2,50,000/-

11. Name of the Work with its location : Execution of Alumino-Therm (SKV) Welding Work of Rail joints, including Supply of welding portions (52 Kg/90.72 UTS Rails) and provision of Labour, Tools & plants, Consumables, Supervision and All Ancillary Activities, under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/3/DNR. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹13,88,505.00, Bid security : ₹27,800/-

12. Name of the Work with its location : Patna-MGS- RCC jacketing of Piers No. 1,2,& Abutment No.1 of Bridge No.371 (3x18.6m Girder + 13x12.19m Arch) at Km.675/11 with Grade M-30 on Main Line. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹4,18,02,188.21, Bid security : ₹3,59,000/-

13. Name of the Work with its location : Improvement of track geometry and track parameters by using Timble Gedo Vorsys trolley system or similar system using DGPS (i.e. Differential Global Positioning System) in the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/1/DNR. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹92,54,456.25, Bid security : ₹1,85,100/-

14. Date & Time for submission of tender and opening of Tender: The tender have to be submitted online on www.reps.gov.in, upto 12.00 hrs. on the date of opening i.e. 16.02.2026 and will be opened on the same day after 12.00 hrs. 15. Website particulars, Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender from can be purchased etc. Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria & tender documents can be seen from the CRIS website: http://www.reps.gov.in & full details of notice can be seen on notice board. Amendments/modifications if any shall not be published in news papers, but the same shall be uploaded in the web-site. In case of any dispute in the English & Hindi version , modification/publication in IREPS will be acceptable. It is tenderers responsibility to view web-site for amendments/modifications and submit his tender accordingly.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.)/ ECR/Danapur PR/1697/DNR/Engg./T/25-26/160



Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority, Pune
New Administrative Building, Near Akurdi Railway Station,
Akurdi, Pune - 411044 Email: ce2wssd@gmail.com

E-Tender Notice No. 63 for FY 2025-26**Corrigendum**

PMRDA invites Bids through e-tendering for Work of "Appointment of a Contractor for Sewerage arrangement of 5 Clusters and 8 Villages in Taluka Haveli under the jurisdiction of the PMRDA region."

The Tender document can be downloaded from the website: https://mahatenders.gov.in from 06/02/2026 at 17.00 PM Hrs. onwards. Last date for submission of the proposal is 26/02/2026 upto 17.00 PM Hrs. The changes if any can be available on https://mahatenders.gov.in

Sd/-

CHIEF ENGINEER
(Engineering Division-2)

Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority, Pune.



BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Joint Commissioner, Zone-1,
Mayohall Premises, Residency Road, Bengaluru - 560001.

No: BCCC/JC-1/TEND/05/2025-26**Date: 27-01-2026****INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER**
(Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal only)

The Joint Commissioner (Zone-1), BCCC, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Contractors / Firm registered in BCCC or equivalent registration with Labour Department or any State Government Organizations for the Work detailed below.

SI. No.**Name of the Work**

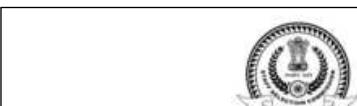
1 Availing Graduates / Diploma Civil Engineers for Bengaluru Central City Corporation. **Amount Put to Tender (Excluding GST) (Rs. in Lakhs): 238.06, EMD Amount (Rs. in Lakhs): 3.57**

Calendar of Events: 1) Tender document can be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 30-01-2026.

2) Pre Bid Meeting will be held on 06-02-2026 at 16.00 Hours in the Office of the Joint Commissioner, Zone-1, BCCC, Residency Road, Mayohall Premises, Bengaluru.

3) Tenders must be Submitted Online through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal on or before 16.00 Hours on 16-02-2026. 4) Technical Bids will be Opened on the Website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in at the Office of the Joint Commissioner, Zone-1, BCCC, Bengaluru on 18-02-2026 at 16.00 Hours. Further details can be had from the above office.

Sd/- Joint Commissioner, Zone-1, BCCC.

**Staff Selection Commission
Northern Region.**

The Staff Selection Commission (Northern Region) invites application for the engagement of four (04) Young Professionals (Information Technology) on contractual basis. For further details, kindly visit www.sscnr.nic.in

CBC 32203/11/0015/2026

KARNATAKA URBAN WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD
Jalabhanava, 5th Floor, No.5, 1st Stage, 1st Phase, BTM Layout, Bannerghatta Main Road, Bengaluru-560029

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)**No: KWB/TEC/CE(B)/PAVAGADA SPL-T-AMRUT 2.0 /1644/2025-26, Dated: 22.01.2026**

Name of the Work: Tender for Improvements of Water Supply System to Pavagada town with Tungabhadra dam (RWSSD Tapping Point) as source under AMRUT 2.0 including Operation & Maintenance for a period of 5 Years (including 1-year DLP) through design, build, operation and transfer (DBOT) mode"

Indent No.: KUWSDB/2025-26/WS/Work_INDENT480

For further details may be obtained through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

**Sd/-
Chief Engineer (B),
DIFR/CP/5219/CCL/2025-26 KUWS & D Board, Bengaluru**



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KENDRAPARA-JAJPUR

AT-CHANDIKHOLE, PO-SUNGUDA, Dist: JAJPUR, Email - serv_kpd@yahoo.com

Office Order No. 213 / Dtd. 22/01/2026

CANCELLATION OF TENDER

The following tender of RCK-20/25 invited via this office letter No. 4008 dttd 27.11.2025 & RCK-21/25 invited via this office letter No.4022 dttd. 29.1.25 is hereby cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

RCK-20/25

1. Consn. of road from Pundilo to Canal Bandha Mahanga Palasudha road under MMSYTRIP in the Dist. of Kendrapara for the year 2025-26.

RCK-21/25

1. Consn. of road from L023- Kantilo to Suniti road under MMSY-DRR in the Dist. of Kendrapara for the year 2025-26.

2. Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Kendrapara-Jajpur

O-2138:**Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Kendrapara-Jajpur**

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SAMBALPUR.

E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE**BID IDENTIFICATION NO. ROAD TENDER ONLINE RWCSBP-30/2025-26**

1. Name of the Work :: Road Works

2. Total No. of works :: No. 99 Road work

3. Estimated cost :: Rs.162.88 lakhs to Rs.735.21 lakhs

4. Class of contractor :: 'B', 'A' & 'Spl'

5. Other details :: As mentioned in DTCN

Procurement Officer Bid Identification Availability of Tender On-line for bidding No. From To

1	2	3	4
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur.	ROAD TENDER ONLINE RWCSBP-30/2025-26	31.01.2026 11.00 A.M	18.02.2026 05.00 P.M

Further details can be seen from the website : www.tendersorissa.gov.in

O-2057: Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur.

**UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LIMITED**

(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking), Corporate Identity No. U40109UR2001SC0258572358,

Victoria Cross Vijeta Garb Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwal Road, Dehradun-248001, telephone-(0135)-2763672-76, Fax-(0135)-2762089

Website: www.uktenders.gov.in

E-TENDER NOTICE (NIT)

Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd. Dehradun invites e-tender for following as detailed below:-

SI. No. **Name of work** **Tender Specification No.** **Estimated cost (in ₹ Lac)** **MAAT for best three years out of last five financial years (₹ in lac)** **Earnest Money (in ₹)** **Cost of tender document including GST (in ₹)** **Date & time of Prebid conference in online mode** **Last Date & time of online request for Tender and submission of tender in online & Offline mode** **Date of opening of bid Part-I in online and offline mode**

SI. No.	Name of work	Tender Specification No.	Estimated cost (in ₹ Lac)	MAAT for best three years out of last five financial years (₹ in lac)	Earnest Money (in ₹)	Cost of tender document including GST (in ₹)	Date & time of Prebid conference in online mode	Last Date & time of online request for Tender and submission of tender in online & Offline mode	Date of opening of bid Part-I in online and offline mode
1	Construction of 02Nos 2x5MVA Substation (Pakhi District Chamoli and Sara District-Dehradun) along with its associated 33KV Lines	CCP-I/27/2025-26	1253.76	1880.64	25.08 Lac	29,500.00	12.2.2026 at 12.00 hrs	20.2.2026 upto 17.00 hrs	21.2.2026 at 15.30 hrs

For further details, please visit the website www.uktenders.gov.in

No. 69/EE/(CM)/UPL/A-2 Dt. 27.01.2026

"SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION. Use LED Bulb, Save Electricity (Toll Free No. 1912). "Pay Electricity Bill Online 24x7 from www.upcl.org". (For information on Electricity theft, informer may report to Toll free No 1800 180 4185/ Fax No. 0133-2760911)"



South Bihar Power Distribution Co. Ltd, Patna Bihar

Registered Office: Viduy Bhawan, Bailey Road, Patna-21



A Govt. of Bihar undertaking



CENSUS 2021
Technical staff set
to be outsourced

NEWS » PAGE 10



NEW MEASURES
Karnataka
notifies gig
workers'
board

STATES » PAGE 5



BUDGET SESSION
Govt. rejects demand
for debate on jobs Act

NEWS » PAGE 11



CAPITAL OUTFLOWS
Solution to the
falling rupee lies
in diplomacy

India, U.S. need to come
to an understanding

EDITORIAL » PAGE 6



FOURTH T20I TODAY
India looks to sustain
the momentum

SPORT » PAGE 15

IN BRIEF



4-5 lakh 'Miya' voters
will be deleted
after SIR: Sarma

GUWAHATI
Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said that "four to five lakh 'Miya' voters" will be deleted when the SIR of electoral rolls takes place in the State. » Page 5

**Only Mamata is
taking on BJP in
country: Akhilesh**

KOLKATA
If anyone in the country is taking on the BJP, it is West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, said SP president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday after making a courtesy call on the TMC chairperson. » Page 4

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 5

'Mother of all deals': India and EU finalise FTA

European wines, luxury cars to become cheaper as negotiations, launched in 2007, conclude

Modi calls it historic pact, while Ursula says it will reduce strategic dependence amid global turmoil

Officials say document will undergo legal scrubbing before it can be ratified by European Parliament

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

NEW DELHI

After almost two decades of negotiation, India and the European Union (EU) finalised a free trade agreement (FTA) on Tuesday billed as the "mother of all deals", that will see the EU drop tariffs on 99.5% of Indian exports to the 27-nation bloc.

India has given tariff concessions on 97.5% of imports from the EU, with European wines and luxury cars set to become less expensive here as a result.

Beyond the economics, both sides stressed the geopolitical significance of a deal between two economies that together account for a third of global trade in the shadow of uncertainty sparked by the U.S. tariff regime.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that the partnership would "strengthen stability" at a time of

Landmark agreement

After almost two decades of talks, the European Union and India sealed a landmark trade pact, driven by U.S. tariff pressures. The deal aims at doubling exports to India



HOW DOES IT BENEFIT EU?

- Tariffs removed or cut on 90% of EU goods
- Wine duties cut from 150% to 20-30%; Spirits cut to 40%
- Car tariffs drop from 110% to 10% (250,000 vehicle quota)
- Tariffs eliminated on Airbus aircraft, and processed food
- 0% tax on most machinery, and pharmaceutical products

Diplomatic outreach: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Council President António Costa, on Tuesday in New Delhi. ANI

HOW DOES IT BENEFIT INDIA?

- Duty-free exports for items such as textiles, leather, gems, and spices
- A duty-free quota of 1.6 million tonnes for steel
- Easier for skilled Indian workers to work in the 27-country bloc
- Dialogue on carbon border tax; India set to be treated like other EU partners
- Phased-out tariffs on arms and ammunition, among other goods

WHAT THE DEAL DOESN'T INCLUDE?

- No concessions on items such as chicken and rice
- No agreement on government procurement on energy and raw materials
- A "sustainable development" chapter (rejected by India)
- Agreement on Geographical Indications

Source: AFP

global turmoil, while European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said it would reduce strategic dependency at a time when global trade is increasingly fractious.

"We have delivered the mother of all deals," she said. "Two giants who choose partnership, in a true win-win fashion. A

strong message that cooperation is the best answer to global challenges."

Largest-ever FTA

Noting that this is India's largest-ever FTA, Mr. Modi said: "This historic agreement will facilitate access to the European market for our farmers and small industries, create new opportunities in manufacturing, and strengthen cooperation in our services sectors."

Both sides, however, made sure to exclude their respective sensitive sectors. India's strategic agricultural and dairy sectors remain protected, while the EU will maintain its current tariffs on beef, su-

gar, rice, chicken meat, milk powder, honey, bananas, soft wheat, garlic, and ethanol.

India-EU FTA talks were first launched in 2007. Following several hiccups and pauses, they were resumed in 2022 with both sides agreeing to exclude issues on which agreement had been elusive.

According to Commerce Ministry officials, the language in the document will first be cleaned up over the next 10 to 15 days, following which it will undergo "legal scrubbing". It will then have to be translated and sent to all 27 EU member states, before it can be ratified by the European Parliament.

"We do hope that we should be able to celebrate the entry into force of this agreement within calendar 2026 itself," said Union Minister Piyush Goyal.

According to the Commerce Ministry, India has gained tariff reductions across 97% of tariff lines, covering 95.5% of trade value. Of this, 90.7% of India's exports will see duties eliminated entirely on the first day of the deal's implementation, including labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, apparel, leather, footwear, tea, coffee, spices, sports goods, toys, gems and jewellery, and certain marine products, amongst others.

Another 2.9% of India's exports will see duty elimination over three to five years.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
RELATED REPORTS ON
» PAGES 11 & 13

Soon, non-veg. food on Howrah-Guwahati Vande Bharat train

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Officials of the Eastern Railway confirmed on Tuesday that non-vegetarian food items will be made available in the next few days for passengers of the newly inaugurated Howrah-Guwahati (Kamakhya) Vande Bharat Sleeper Express.

The move comes after several passengers complained about the lack of non-vegetarian options on the menu and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) alleged that the BJP was against the dietary habits of people. TMC leader Arup Bhattacharya said BJP leaders had ridiculed the people of West Bengal

in the past for eating fish.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had flagged off India's first Vande Bharat sleeper train service - connecting the poll-bound States of West Bengal and Assam - on January 17.

Union Minister of State Sukanta Majumdar said on Monday that he spoke to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and "requested him to introduce non-vegetarian food choices" on the Vande Bharat train.

"The Railway Minister assured me that non-vegetarian food will also be made available for passengers soon. He said the notification will be issued within two or three days," BJP's Balurghat MP said.

Draped in white



Winter wonderland: Snow-covered vehicles on the outskirts of Srinagar on Tuesday. The Kashmir Valley received fresh snowfall, leading to closure of the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway and disrupting flight operations. IMRAN NISSAR (RELATED REPORT ON PAGE 12)

No discrimination under new UGC equity rules: Pradhan

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday sought to allay concerns over the new 2026 University Grants Commission regulations on promoting equity in higher education institutions, amid protests and allegations that the rules discriminate against "general category" students.

Speaking to presspersons in Rajasthan, Mr. Pradhan said the regulations had been notified under the supervision of the Supreme Court. He said "there will be no discrimination" and that "no one will have the right to misuse anything in the name of discrimination".

His remarks came against the backdrop of

protests against the UGC regulations in cities such as Lucknow, Indore, and New Delhi, with more demonstrations planned in the coming days, and multiple petitions filed in the Supreme Court challenging the framework.

The new regulations, notified on January 13, define "caste-based discrimination" as discrimination on the basis of caste or tribe against those belonging to the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, and the Other Backward Classes. The final version drops a provision proposed in an earlier draft to penalise false complaints.

Critics of the rules have argued that by not recognising students from the "general category" as potential victims of caste-based discrimination, the

definition itself is discriminatory. They also flagged the absence of a mechanism to act against complaints believed to be false. Mr. Pradhan said, "I want to assure everyone that no one will be subject to harassment and there will be no discrimination. No one will have the right

to misuse anything in the name of discrimination."

He added that whether it was the UGC, the Centre or any State governments, it will be their responsibility to ensure fair implementation.

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 10

Voice dissent: Students staging a protest against the new UGC regulations near Lucknow University on Tuesday. PTI

Students stage stir against rules in U.P.

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

The University Grants Commission (UGC)'s new regulations triggered protests in Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday, with a section of students demonstrating at Lucknow University against the rules, alleging they would affect their studies and future.

The protesting students staged a sit-in at the university's main gate and raised slogans against the UGC, claiming the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions)

Regulations, 2026 could lead to caste conflict and disrupt social harmony on campuses.

"We demand that the UGC reconsider the framework and initiate a wider, inclusive dialogue before enforcing the new rules. These rules disturb the social balance," said Anmol Singh, an LLB student, told presspersons.

The issue has sparked dissent within the BJP, with a few local leaders expressing anger over the regulations and resigning from party posts.

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 10

Place in electoral roll is a 'qualified right', poll body says in SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Even registered voters are required to "continuously fulfill" the essential condition of Indian citizenship, as laid out in Article 326 of the Constitution, to retain their place in the electoral roll, the Election Commission of India told the Supreme Court on Tuesday, during a hearing on the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) exercise.

Article 326 provides for adult suffrage, and requires that a person should be 18 years old, an Indian citizen, and not disqualified by law to be entitled to register as a voter.

"These are essential conditions. The fulfilment of these conditions is a continuous requirement. You cannot say once my name is entered, whether I lose eligibility or not, I am entitled to stay on in the electoral roll," senior advocate Maninder Singh, for the EC, submitted before a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant.

The Bench was hearing a batch of petitions challenging the constitutionality of the SIR exercise conducted in Bihar. "The SIR is a verification exercise," Mr. Singh argued.

Senior advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu, also appearing for the EC, said the SIR was not a determination of citizenship. "An exercise to verify citizenship is different from a process determining citizenship," he said.

He illustrated how young lawyers have their qualifications verified before becoming a member of the Bar bodies.

Mr. Naidu argued there was "not even one com-

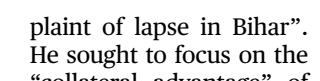
plaint of lapse in Bihar". He sought to focus on the "collateral advantage" of the SIR, explaining how voter turnouts rose in 2025 after the door-to-door survey conducted for the exercise.

"It had aroused the interest of the common man. It drafted enthusiastic voters and weeded out the dead, duplicates in the electoral roll," he submitted.

Mr. Dwivedi said the EC had not added any further limitations to the conditions prescribed in the Constitution under Article 326, and in Sections 16 (disqualifications for registration in an electoral roll) and 19 (conditions of registration) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

The fulfillment of these conditions [laid out in Article 326] is a continuous requirement. You cannot say once my name is entered, whether I lose eligibility or not, I am entitled to stay on in the electoral roll

MANINDER SINGH
EC counsel



IN BRIEF



Rain lashes Capital, mercury plunges, air quality worsens

The Capital received rain on Tuesday, lowering the maximum temperature but not improving the overall air quality, which worsened to 'very poor'. The city received the second spell of rain this winter season under the influence of a Western Disturbance. The average rainfall was 4.2 mm, with 14.6 mm recorded at Palam. With the latest spell of rain, Delhi has recorded the wettest January since 2022. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the maximum temperature settled at 16.9 degrees Celsius, 5.2 degrees below normal, while the minimum was 8 degrees Celsius, 4.2 degrees above normal. Despite the rain, the average air quality index at 4 p.m. was 336 ('very poor'), compared with the 241 ('poor') recorded a day earlier. The IMD has forecast another rainy spell between January 30 and February 1.

Woman convicted of attacking former employee with pet dog

A Delhi court has convicted a woman of attacking her former employee with her pet dog, causing grievous injuries to the victim's face and neck. In a January 24 order, Additional Sessions Judge Samar Vishal of the Saket Courts held Rajni Singh guilty under Sections 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) and 289 (negligent conduct with respect to animals) of the Indian Penal Code. On June 11, 2020, the complainant had visited Singh's residence in Malviya Nagar to collect her pending salary, the prosecution stated. Singh refused the demand and intentionally unleashed her pet dog, it added. The attack left the victim's face permanently disfigured and Singh refused to bear the medical costs, the prosecution said. PTI

Small businesses to get collateral-free loans up to ₹10 cr.

Delhi govt. signs MoU with CGTMSE; CM says deal a 'major boost' for small entrepreneurs and women-led start-ups; dedicated ₹50-crore fund set up

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) to provide collateral-free loans of up to ₹10 crore to new and existing micro and small enterprises (MSEs).

Terming the initiative a "major boost" for small entrepreneurs, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said loan guarantees will be jointly shared by the city government and CGTMSE, a Central government entity, under the Delhi Credit Guarantee Scheme.

According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), CGTMSE will provide guarantee cover of 75-90% of the loan amount while the remaining portion will be backed by the Delhi government.

"As a result, up to 95% of loans extended by banks will be government-guaranteed, reducing banks' exposure to just 5% and encouraging them to lend more confidently to small businesses," read a statement from the CMO.

The scheme aims to help small entrepreneurs



Chief Minister Rekha Gupta speaking on inking the agreement with CGTMSE, at the Delhi Secretariat on Tuesday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

by enabling them to secure loans without providing any collateral or security.

Ms. Gupta said lakhs of youth in Delhi aspire to start ventures in manufacturing, services, and allied sectors, but often struggle due to a lack of financial support. "This initiative will ease access to capital, reduce risks for banks, and improve Delhi's business environment while promoting innovation, employment generation, and an inclusive urban economy," she said.

The scheme will cover sectors such as manufacturing, services, retail, and education, and skill-training institutions. A dedicated fund of ₹50 crore has been created, which is ex-

pected to help banks extend loans, the CMO stated. "Leveraging this limited corpus, banks will be able to extend loans amounting to nearly ₹2,500 crore. The fund may be enhanced in the future if required," it stated.

'Robust ecosystem'

The government initially aims to reach one lakh beneficiaries with no upper cap. Special assistance will be extended to first-time and women entrepreneurs to encourage wider participation, it added.

"The initiative is expected to create new employment opportunities and foster a robust and sustainable MSE ecosystem in Delhi," the CMO stated.

Run-down school built by AAP a 'monument of corruption': Sood

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Describing a dilapidated government school building in north-west Delhi as a "monument of corruption", Education Minister Ashish Sood on Tuesday ordered officials to carry out urgent repairs. He also alleged that poor quality of construction under the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government had put students at risk.

After inspecting the school building, Mr. Sood shared photographs showing damaged ceilings and falling plaster. "The poor infrastructure built by the previous AAP government in 2020 is now costing innocent children dearly. The building of Lal School in Shahbad Dairy has also been declared 'dangerous,'" he said.

"I would call this school a monument of corruption. Because of this, children were forced to go far away from their own area, which is a matter of grave concern for us," the Minister said.

He added that the use of "substandard construction material" was behind the building's poor condition.

'Political stunt'

In a riposte, the Opposition AAP stated that the Minister "should have the matter investigated, fix responsibility, and take action instead of indulging in a political stunt".

Mr. Sood said he has di-



Education Minister Ashish Sood inspecting a damaged ceiling of the building in Shahbad Dairy on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

rected officials to carry out immediate repairs and take action against errant officials. He added that the school should be revamped with modern infrastructure on the lines of a CM Shri School.

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal called it an "expose". She said the school, inaugurated by party national convener Arvind Kejriwal and former Education Minister Manish Sisodia in 2020, developed "major problems" within months of opening.

"With this school now closed, thousands of girls have been transferred to other schools far from their homes," she said.

Ms. Maliwal also wrote to Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena seeking the construction of a new school building.

She demanded the lodging of an FIR and a time-bound probe into "how a five-year-old building deteriorated so severely".

Phansi-ghar
row: panel report sent to Kejriwal

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Assembly on Tuesday sent a report of the Committee of Privileges to former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and three other senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders who had allegedly overseen the inauguration of a "fake" 'phansi-ghar' (execution room) on the premises of the House in August 2022.

The committee had tabled its report in the Assembly on January 6 during the Winter Session. It recommended that the House take "proper action" against Mr. Kejriwal and the three senior AAP leaders in connection with the inauguration of the 'phansi-ghar' when AAP was in power.

Speaker Vijender Gupta had alleged that crores of rupees were spent on the "fake phansi-ghar and its advertisement" by the previous AAP government. He had referred the matter to the Committee of Privileges for an inquiry, following which Mr. Kejriwal and the others were summoned.

Mr. Kejriwal and the three other AAP leaders did not appear before the committee on two occasions last year while it was probing the allegations.

AAP had termed the summons "legally untenable" and stated that the committee "cannot act on matters related to the previous Assembly", citing a Supreme Court judgment.

2 held from U.P. for attacking Delhi police head constable, snatching gun

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

ly, the police said.

According to the police, the two accused - Avinash and Waseem - attacked head constable Rajkumar while he was on patrolling duty at Safdarjung Enclave police station under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Arms Act.

after snatching Mr. Rajkumar's gun, the police said.

An FIR was registered in connection with the incident at the Safdarjung Enclave police station under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Arms Act.

Prepare plans to protect patients, kin from harsh weather, HC tells DUSIB

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

pal District Judge.

During the hearing, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi submitted before the court that it has set up shelters at several spots on the campus and its surroundings.

All 750 beds at these sites are filled, showing high demand and effective use. This has ensured orderly relocation, enhanced safety, and prevented exposure to harsh weather.

Free-of-cost e-shuttle services have also been provided for the safe internal movement of patients and attendants," it stated.

The court said such coordinated efforts have begun to yield tangible results, but require continued supervision and structured planning to avoid future lapses.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

DEATH

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SANTHI JYOTHI MARTIN
DOB: 15.03.1964 DOD: 27.01.2020
Vizag Chennai
The warmth of her love surrounds us still. Her faith, her kindness, her gentle smile ever present in our hearts Deeply Remembered by J S Martin & Family, Near & Dear Ones

Expired on 21.01.26 at 7:16 am at her residence at Medavakkam, leaving behind her husband G. Ramasubramanian and rest of the family.

Uma lived a life of purpose - touching countless hearts as a selfless teacher and sharing her soul through Ragasabari, her gift to the Carnatic music world. The light that guided us on earth has now become a Pole Star in the skies. Though her absence leaves a deep void, her love and legacy will continue to guide us forever.

Ram & Family +91 89399 84380

SECOND ANNIVERSARY

DEATH

SRI.V.SIVARAMAKRISHNAN
09.02.1940 - 27.01.2024
Your warm smile and calm presence will never be forgotten Family & Friends

Death Anniversary Always loved, forever missed

IN MEMORIAM

DR. V. SANKAR (75 yrs)
Alumni of IIT, Kharagpur, Passed away on 9th December 2025. Cremated on 12-12-2025. He lived a life of selfless service, was a revered leader and a social worker. His legacy lives on through the lives he touched. He was an integral part of Bharat Vikas Parishad / BPVJST / All India Radio Electronics Association / Senior Citizens Forum. May the departed soul attain Sadgati. Phone: 98400 99170

DR. C.R.DAKSHINAMURTHI MS
Retired Dean Stanley Medical College A kind, gentle and caring soul. Reunited with his beloved wife Savoja. May they both Rest in Peace.

CINEMA AS A MEDIUM FOR CHANGE

Smile Foundation highlighted their commitment to nurturing empathy, awareness and responsibility among young people through the Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth (SIFFCY). Chairman of SIFFCY, Mr. Santanu Mishra, who is also Producer of 'I Am Kalam' and Co-founder of Smile Foundation, emphasised that meaningful change begins with shaping young minds with values such as respect, courage and compassion. While the organisation continues their work across education, healthcare, livelihoods and women's empowerment, it also recognises the need to develop imagination, sensitivity and global thinking in children. This belief led to the creation of SIFFCY as an annual platform dedicated to young audiences. SIFFCY aims to use cinema as a powerful tool to connect children with stories that matter. Films, with their ability to transcend language, geography and cultural barriers, help young viewers understand diverse lives and reflect on themes such as identity, fairness, kindness and emotional growth. Through carefully curated selections from India and abroad, the festival encourages children to think more deeply, feel more openly and engage more thoughtfully with the world around them.

Over the years, SIFFCY has grown into one of the country's largest children's film festivals. Each edition features more than 150 films from over 50 countries, including works by professional filmmakers and films created by children. Thousands of students participate through screenings, workshops and cultural experiences, while the SIFFCY@Schools year-round outreach programme reaches lakhs of learners across varied regions. Filmmakers, educators, artists and young jurors from around the world take part, making the festival a global and inclusive platform.

Mr. Mishra noted that SIFFCY's vision is rooted in the belief that children must grow with knowledge as well as empathy and imagination. The festival encourages discussions on inclusion, equality, environment, mental wellbeing and cultural understanding. As SIFFCY continues to evolve, their mission remains to use stories to inspire compassion, curiosity and consciousness among young people, reminding every child that their voice matters and their dreams are valid.

The court asked the board to prepare a summer plan for May-June and winter plan for Dec.-Jan.

weather conditions.

The board was directed to prepare a summer plan to deal with heatwave conditions, which will be implemented in May-June, with the option of extending it to July-August. The second plan to mitigate cold wave conditions will have to be prepared by July-August and implemented in December-January.

'Secure approval'

The Bench directed DUSIB to prepare two annual short-term contingency action plans to tackle harsh

National Zoological Park set for ₹400-cr. makeover

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Five-star hotel food leaves woman ill; FIR registered

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A 33-year-old woman allegedly fell ill after consuming food served at a five-star hotel in central Delhi, prompting the police to register an FIR and launch an investigation into the matter, officials said on Tuesday.

The woman, who checked into the hotel on January 20, called the police on January 24 and complained about repeatedly falling sick after consuming food served there.

Based on her complaint, the police registered the FIR under Section 286 (negligent conduct with respect to poisonous substances) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

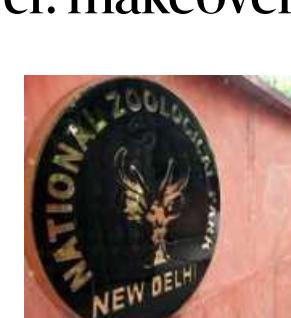
An investment board has approved the sanctioning of ₹400 crore to redevelop the National Zoological Park in Delhi, an official said on Tuesday.

The nod was given by the Delegated Investment Board, the Centre's inter-departmental body for funding public projects, the official added.

Redevelopment work is expected to begin by April next year, pending final approval from the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the official said.

"It is a four-year redevelopment plan. Infrastructural development will include enhancement of animal enclosures," said National Zoological Park Director Sanjeev Kumar.

To enhance visitor experience, several animal enclosures will be fitted with glass viewing panels while others will be equipped with new barriers, he said.



Redevelopment work is expected to begin by April next year. FILE PHOTO

M ND-NDE

Development over populism: T.N. BJP leader on manifesto

N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI

The BJP's Tamil Nadu unit is gearing up to reach out to voters to identify their needs and seek suggestions to frame the party's manifesto for the upcoming Assembly election.

'Focus beyond emotions'
"Greater importance will be given to development than to populism. The aim is to include the needs of the people, which have been neglected for long. The manifesto will focus more on everyday problems than on emotional subjects," senior BJP leader Tamilsai Soundararajan, who is heading the 13-member manifesto drafting panel, told *The Hindu*.

She said suggestion boxes would be placed at prominent spots in each seat. The party is also planning to deploy vehicles to seek opinions at voters' doorsteps, and launch a portal allowing online recording of views, Ms. Soundararajan said, adding that the manifesto will likely be finalised within the next 30 to 40 days.

DMK leaders to meet Rahul on seat sharing

Kanimozhi-led team to meet Congress leader in Delhi with her party's offer, which may be more than the 25 seats grand old party fought in 2021 in TN.

**B. Kolappan
Udhav Naig**
CHENNAI

The seat-sharing deadlock between the DMK and the Congress for the upcoming Assembly poll in Tamil Nadu is expected to be resolved soon, as a delegation from the ruling party is set to meet Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Wednesday, according to sources.

The delegation led by DMK Parliamentary Party leader Kanimozhi Karunamidhi will meet Mr. Gandhi and convey the party high command's offer of seats, confirmed sources in both parties. "In the 2021 election, the Congress was offered 25 seats and won 18. We may improve the offer by giving two more seats," a source in the DMK said.

Confirming the development, a source close to the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee leadership said the DMK delegation may meet



DMK leader Kanimozhi with party chief and Tamil Nadu CM Stalin and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at an event in Bihar. FILE PHOTO

other senior leaders of the Congress also and come up with a deal that is "agreedable to both parties".

The DMK source said All India Congress Committee general secretary K.C. Venugopal is in touch with Ms. Kanimozhi. "A final agreement may not happen on Wednesday," the source said. The source, however, added that the talks would move forward in the "right direction".

The DMK also took a step towards improving its relations with the Congress, with DMK organisation secretary R.S. Bha-

rathi on Tuesday appealing to party cadre to avoid expressing their views on the alliance, seats and allies in public. His statement came a day after a DMK MLA from Madurai made sharp comments against the grand old party.

The proposed meeting comes even as some Congress leaders insist that the DMK agree to a coalition government, citing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's example of accommodating allies in the National Democratic Alliance at the Centre despite winning a brute majority in the past.

Gujarat resident who escaped Nepal jail caught in Ahmedabad

Press Trust of India
AHMEDABAD

A man hailing from Gujarat's Ahmedabad district, who escaped from a jail in Nepal during last year's 'Gen Z' protests months after he was arrested there on drug charges, has been

caught in Ahmedabad, the Gujarat police said on Tuesday.

The accused, Dharmesh Chunara, a resident of Thakkarbapa Nagar Road, was caught by the Crime Branch's Special Operations Group, the police stated in a release.

Mr. Chunara had escaped from the Bhadra jail in Kathmandu in September last year, when Nepal was rocked by large-scale protests and youth-led uprisings, referred to as the 'Gen Z' protests.

The Ahmedabad resident, who landed in Nepal

from Bangkok on a flight in July 2025, was caught with 13 kilograms of hybrid ganja valued at approximately ₹13 crore, following which he was sent to the Bhadra jail after legal action by Nepal authorities, stated the release. It added that during the protests, some ac-

Civic polls in Jharkhand on Feb. 23 using ballot papers

Press Trust of India
RANCHI

The Jharkhand State Election Commission (SEC) on Tuesday announced that civic polls to 48 urban local bodies, including Ranchi, will be held on February 23. Votes will be counted on February 27.

Over 43.33 lakh voters, including 21.26 lakh women, are eligible to exercise their franchise in elections to 1,087 wards in nine municipal corporations, 20 nagar panchayats and 19 naga-

Punjab, Haryana CMs meet over SYL issue, agree on more inter-State talks

The Hindu Bureau

CHANDIGARH



Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini with his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday. ANI

Water-sharing dispute between the two States. While the meeting remained inconclusive, the CMs said it was conducted in a cordial atmosphere and that more discussions would be held on the issue.

Addressing the media with his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann, Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini said they had decided to hold meetings between the Irrigation Department offi-

cials of the two States to work out "practical and lasting solutions".

This is the first meeting between Mr. Mann and Mr. Saini on the issue since the July 2025 talks in Delhi, presided over by Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil.

Mr. Mann reiterated his position, saying his State

does not have any water to spare even as he wished for an early resolution of the issue. "Punjab is the elder brother, and both States are here to find an amicable solution to this long-pending issue," he said. However, Mr. Mann added, "Not a single drop of water from Punjab's rightful share will be allowed to be taken away. It is an emotive issue. The State will face serious law-and-order problems if it [the decision to build the canal] is imposed."

The SYL canal, the foundation for which was laid in 1982, was meant to link the Sutlej and Yamuna rivers in Punjab and Haryana, but the project is yet to see the light of day.

ICSI THE INSTITUTE OF Company Secretaries of India भारतीय कम्पनी सचिव संस्थान IN PURSUIT OF PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE Statutory body under an Act of Parliament (Under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Corporate Affairs)

ICSI House, 22, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi -110003 Phone : 011-45341036/92 email : hr.dept@icsi.edu Website : www.icsi.edu

ADVT. NO. 01/2026 CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) is a statutory body set up under an Act of Parliament, the Company Secretaries Act, 1980, to regulate and develop the profession of Company Secretaries in India. The ICSI invites applications for the following post at its Headquarters at New Delhi / Noida:-

S. No.	Name of the Post no & Location	Pay Level as per 7 th CPC Pay Matrix (Rs.)	Gross Salary per Annum (Rs. in Lakhs)	Max. Age (as on 01.01.2026)	No. of Posts
1.	Chauffeur (New Delhi / Noida)	Level2 (19900-63200)	4.75	35 years	01

For further details viz. qualification, experience, procedure for submission of application etc., please visit website <https://www.icsi.edu/careers/> and from 28.01.2026. Interested candidates may apply only through electronic mode (Online). Last date for submission of application (Online) is 18.02.2026. Reservation policy will be applicable as adopted by the "ICSI" in its Service Rules. The "ICSI" reserves the right to increase/decrease or even not to fill up any post as per its requirement.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2026
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the accuracy of an advertisement before making any purchase. The Publisher, Proprietor & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of the advertisement or adviser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

ENTERPRISE CONNECT

PNB celebrates 77th Republic Day



Punjab National Bank (PNB), nation's leading public sector bank, celebrated the 77th Republic Day with great fervour and patriotic spirit at its headquarters in New Delhi. The celebrations commenced with the unfurling of the National Flag by PNB MD&CEO Shri Ashok Chandra in the presence of Executive Directors, the

Chief Vigilance Officer, Chief General Managers, General Managers, and senior officials of the Bank. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Ashok Chandra, MD&CEO, PNB, said: "On this Republic Day, we remember the sacrifices of our freedom fighters, the vision of the architects of our Constitution, and the courage of our armed forces who safeguard the nation in the toughest conditions. Over the last 76 years, India's journey—from independence to becoming the world's fourth-largest economy—reflects remarkable economic and social progress, with financial inclusion playing a pivotal role. Transformative initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Mudra, PM SVANidhi and PM Vishwakarma have brought millions, especially women and first-time borrowers, into the formal banking system. As part of its Republic Day initiatives, PNB, in collaboration with PNB PRERNA, an association comprising senior women officials of the Bank and the wives of senior bank officials, undertook several community outreach programmes to support the underserved communities. The Bank extended financial assistance to the National Association for the Blind (Delhi) to support early intervention and inclusive education programmes such as CHIRAG and JYOTI. PNB also extended financial assistance towards basic infrastructure and essential facilities, including classrooms, water taps, and digital access, at MCD Primary School Nawada Main II (West Zone) and Chaukandi Old II, Tilak Nagar.

Karpoori Thakur birth anniversary observed in Lucknow



to his statue, Legislative Council member Ramchandra Pradhan, ward councillor Nurpur Sunil Shankhdhar, Samajwadi Party leader Sanjay Vidyaarthi, former Uttar Pradesh Congress vice-president Dinesh Singh, and BJP functionary Anil Verma were among those present. Speakers recalled Karpoori Thakur's commitment to social justice and the uplift of marginalised sections. Senior Vice-President Sabhapati Sharma announced the launch of the Jananayak Karpoori Thakur Sahayata Yojana to support community members. A health camp offering Ayushman card services and free medical check-ups was also organised.

Focus on Strengthening Infrastructure to Boost Investment: RIICO Chairman



The two-day residential capacity-building workshop organized by RIICO concluded on Jan 23, 2026. The workshop was conducted for heads of RIICO's unit offices and sub-unit offices, with participation from over 80 officers from across the state. During the workshop, officers were provided with key inputs on developing better infrastructure in their respective industrial areas, creating an entrepreneur-friendly environment, and promoting industrial investment in the state. Addressing officers during the inaugural session, RIICO Chairman Mr. Shikhar Agarwal said that continuous innovation in RIICO's functioning is essential. There should be no compromise on the quality of basic infrastructure in industrial areas. He emphasized that RIICO should be recognized for ensuring that entrepreneurs receive the benefits of policies promptly, officers maintain a cooperative approach, and infrastructure remains robust. RIICO Managing Director Ms. Shivangi Swarnkar, while addressing the officers, said that the primary objective of such workshops is knowledge sharing. Discussions on innovations, challenges, and their solutions implemented by officers in their respective areas provide valuable learning opportunities for all.

BIMTECH is hosting TEDXBIMTECH, themed "Decoding Tomorrow," on Saturday, February 7, 2026

The Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH) is hosting TEDXBIMTECH, themed "Decoding Tomorrow," on Saturday, February 7, 2026. The event will serve as a platform to explore the future of human well-being, technological growth, and innovation in life. Ten distinguished speakers representing journeys from the arenas to the boardrooms, and from culture to wellness, featuring eminent personalities

such as Sarika Malli (Professional Indian Wrestler), Buland Himalay (Voice of the Himalayas), and Vijay Ranjan Singh (Head of HR at LG Electronics India) will inspire the audience through stories of leadership, service, strength, and self-mastery. These diverse perspectives align with the event theme, "Decoding Tomorrow," which focuses on understanding the evolving relationship between humans and machines while finding clarity and balance in the digital era.

Amrita Online Expands Global Footprint to 50+ Countries, Hosts Future Skills Conclave to Address Employability Gap



Amrita Online, the Online learning division of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, has expanded its global footprint to learners across more than 50 countries while reaching students in all 28 states of India, reinforcing its role in making quality higher education accessible beyond geographical boundaries. Amrita Online organized the Amrita Online Future Skills Conclave, a thought leadership platform aimed at addressing one of the most pressing challenges in higher education today—the growing gap between academic learning and industry expectations. In a time when technology is transforming every industry, Chancellor AMMA's message becomes even more relevant: "Keep striving to grow in your work. Change, disruption, and obstacles will come, but we must move forward without giving up." Let this conclave carry her mantra into the future of work—'Onward! Onward! Onward!' Dr. Krishnashree Achuthan, Dean of PG Programs stated that "Amrita's comprehensive curricula, diverse specializations, innovative delivery, and strong mentorship make it one of the world's leading providers of online education. This conclave reaffirms our commitment to continuously aligning learning with the fast-evolving needs of a dynamic global industry."

Ayana Gupta's debut novel, "Breaking Point," was officially launched by BigFoot Publications and YOUNG MINDZ.



"Breaking Point" is described as a raw and powerful story of resilience, heartbreak, and finding the courage to rise again, exploring themes of emotional resilience and identity through a deeply personal yet widely relatable narrative. Ayana Gupta is a young author, and the book was written as a matured & veteran writer.

A Business Initiative

such as Sarika Malli (Professional Indian Wrestler), Buland Himalay (Voice of the Himalayas), and Vijay Ranjan Singh (Head of HR at LG Electronics India) will inspire the audience through stories of leadership, service, strength, and self-mastery. These diverse perspectives align with the event theme, "Decoding Tomorrow," which focuses on understanding the evolving relationship between humans and machines while finding clarity and balance in the digital era.

Amrita Online Expands Global Footprint to 50+ Countries, Hosts Future Skills Conclave to Address Employability Gap



Amrita Online, the Online learning division of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, has expanded its global footprint to learners across more than 50 countries while reaching students in all 28 states of India, reinforcing its role in making quality higher education accessible beyond geographical boundaries. Amrita Online organized the Amrita Online Future Skills Conclave, a thought leadership platform aimed at addressing one of the most pressing challenges in higher education today—the growing gap between academic learning and industry expectations. In a time when technology is transforming every industry, Chancellor AMMA's message becomes even more relevant: "Keep striving to grow in your work. Change, disruption, and obstacles will come, but we must move forward without giving up." Let this conclave carry her mantra into the future of work—'Onward! Onward! Onward!' Dr. Krishnashree Achuthan, Dean of PG Programs stated that "Amrita's comprehensive curricula, diverse specializations, innovative delivery, and strong mentorship make it one of the world's leading providers of online education. This conclave reaffirms our commitment to continuously aligning learning with the fast-evolving needs of a dynamic global industry."

Ayana Gupta's debut novel, "Breaking Point," was officially launched by BigFoot Publications and YOUNG MINDZ.



"Breaking Point" is described as a raw and powerful story of resilience, heartbreak, and finding the courage to rise again, exploring themes of emotional resilience and identity through a deeply personal yet widely relatable narrative. Ayana Gupta is a young author, and the book was written as a matured & veteran writer.

Has your bank account become inoperative?



Contact the bank

Update your KYC to activate the account.

- » Bank account becomes inoperative if there is no transaction for more than two years.
- » Get your KYC updated at any branch of your bank or through video KYC.

RBI Kehta Hai... Jaakaar Baniye, Satark Rahiye!



Issued in public interest by
भारतीय स्वर्ज बैंक
RESERVE BANK OF INDIA
www.rbi.org.in

IN BRIEF



Zoom past toll plazas on NH between Mysuru, Bengaluru

In a move towards congestion-free highways, the National Highways Authority of India is exploring implementation of a Multi-Lane Free Flow tolling pilot project on the 117-km-long Bengaluru-Mysuru Access-Controlled Highway (NH-275) soon. The MLFF system replaces traditional toll booths with overhead gantries equipped with satellite-based GPS technology, high-performance RFID FASTag readers and Automated Number Plate Recognition cameras.

Deepak death case: court denies bail to accused

The Kunnamangalam Judicial First Class Magistrate's Court in Kozhikode, Kerala on Tuesday dismissed the bail plea of Shimjitha Musthafa, who has been charged with abetment of the suicide of salesman U. Deepak, whom she had accused of sexual misconduct on a moving bus, earlier this month. Magistrate M. Athira agreed with the prosecution that releasing the accused could lead to evidence tampering and influence over witnesses. (*Suicide Prevention Helpline: Disha - 1056, 0471-2552056*)

Cong. leader Rajeev Gowda sent to judicial custody

A local court in Sidlaghatta, Karnataka, on Tuesday rejected the bail plea of Congress leader B.V. Rajeev Gowda and remanded him in judicial custody in connection with a case alleging threats to the Sidlaghatta Municipal Commissioner Amrutha Gowda. The police had sought five days of custodial interrogation, citing the need for further investigation. But, the court sent the accused to judicial custody.

Karnataka constitutes Gig Workers' Welfare Board

Both the workers and aggregator platforms must register with the Board; aggregators will have 45 days to complete registration, submit details of the workers engaged through their platforms

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The State government on Tuesday issued a notification constituting the Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers' Welfare Development Board under the 2025 Act to implement welfare measures for gig workers. The Labour Minister will be the ex-officio president, with senior officials from the Labour Department, the Department of Information Technology and the Commercial Taxes Department as ex-officio members and the Board's Chief Executive Officer as Member Secretary.

The Board includes four representatives each from



The constitution of the Board follows the government's decision to implement welfare measures for gig workers. K. MURALI KUMAR

gig worker unions and aggregator platforms, with companies such as Zomato, Uber, Amazon, and Porter represented. Labour unions such as the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and app-based transport and delivery worker unions are included. Both

gig workers and aggregator platforms will now be required to register with the Board. Aggregators will have 45 days to complete their registration and furnish details of all gig workers engaged through their platforms. Each registered

gig worker will be issued a unique identification number, which will be used by the Board to disburse social security benefits. The welfare fund will comprise the welfare fee collected from aggregators, contributions made by gig workers, and grants provided by the State and Union governments.

The State has decided to levy a welfare fee of 1% to 1.5%, with a cap, on aggregator platforms, with the rate varying across sectors and business models. Labour Minister Santosh Lad had said the levy was kept low initially to ensure a steady welfare fund for gig workers without placing an immediate financial burden on platforms.



Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma at a function to distribute financial aid to women in Charaideo on Tuesday. @HIMANTABISWA X

4-5 lakh 'Miya' votes will be deleted from poll rolls: Assam CM

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said that "four to five lakh 'Miya' voters" will be deleted when the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls takes place in the State, triggering sharp reactions from the Opposition leaders.

"This (SIR) is preliminary. When the SIR comes to Assam, four to five lakh 'Miya' votes will have to be deleted in Assam," Mr. Sarma said, indicating he did not care about what his opponents think of his intention.

"Let Congress abuse me as much as they want. My job is to make the 'Miya' people suffer," he said.

"Vote *chori* means we are trying to steal some 'Miya' votes. They should ideally not be allowed to vote in Assam, but in Bangladesh," he said.

"We are ensuring that they cannot vote in Assam," he said when his attention was drawn to notices served on thousands of Bengali-speaking Muslims during the claims and objections phase of the ongoing special revision (SR) of

poll rolls.

While the Election Commission is conducting the SIR in 12 States and Union Territories across the country, it marked Assam for the SR, an exercise similar to the usual updates to the electoral rolls.

"This (SIR) is preliminary. When the SIR comes to Assam, four to five lakh 'Miya' votes will have to be deleted in Assam," Mr. Sarma said, indicating he did not care about what his opponents think of his intention.

"Let Congress abuse me as much as they want. My job is to make the 'Miya' people suffer," he said.

Oppn. criticises CM

Reacting to Mr. Sarma's comments, Rajor Dal president and Sibsagar MLA Akhil Gogoi said the people did not make him the Chief Minister to keep the 'Miya' people under pressure.

"The Chief Minister has made the Constitution absolutely ineffective in Assam," Congress leader Aman Wadud said.

Telangana municipal elections on Feb. 11

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

day and filing of nominations will commence immediately. The last date for filing nominations is January 30 and their scrutiny will be taken up the next day (January 31).

A total of 2,582 wards spread over 116 municipalities and 414 wards of the seven municipal corporations spread over 32 districts will go to the polls in the State with 52.43 lakh voters.

According to the schedule issued by the SEC, notification for the polls will be issued on Wednesday.

Elections to seven Municipal Corporations and 116 Municipalities in Telangana will be held in a single phase on February 11, the State Election Commission (SEC) announced on Tuesday.

The Congress leadership believes the political ground has shifted in its favour, citing what it views as increased goodwill from the Catholic Church.

Cong. asks for larger seat share in UDF

The Hindu Bureau
KOTTAYAM

As seat-sharing talks gather momentum within the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Congress-led alliance appears headed for a tense phase of negotiations with the P.J. Joseph-led Kerala Congress, particularly over constituencies in Central Travancore – a region that has increasingly become the coalit-

tion's most delicate political balancing act.

Congress leaders from the region have already begun positioning themselves for tickets in Changanassery and Ettumanoor, both currently held by the Left Democratic Front.

The Congress leadership believes the political ground has shifted in its favour, citing what it views as increased goodwill from the Catholic Church.

named after him.

The new Act, which bears the name "Ram", has no regard for the ideals of "Dasharatha's son Rama" or "Sita's husband Rama", he argued.

All panchayat offices in Karnataka to be named after Mahatma Gandhi: govt.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Congress government has decided to name all 6,000 gram panchayat offices in Karnataka after Mahatma Gandhi. This was announced by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar during the party's protest against the introduction of the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar Ajeekika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G Ram G) Act by repealing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

Mr. Siddaramaiah, Mr. R. Siddaramaiah and Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala, along with party legislators and MPs, were later taken into preventive custody when they decided to march towards Lok Bhavan as part of a "Raj Bhavan Chalo" protest to submit a memorandum to the Governor demanding repeal of the new Act.

Speaking at the protest at Freedom Park, Mr. Siddaramaiah said the Centre's decision is testimony to the antipathy of the BJP and its affiliates to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and the spirit of decentralisation enshrined in the earlier Act

ramaiah said the Centre's decision is testimony to the antipathy of the BJP and its affiliates to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and the spirit of decentralisation enshrined in the earlier Act

VISAKHAPATNAM | GMR NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)
GMR Vishakhapatnam International Airport Ltd. (GVIAL) invites tender for Package 1. Hiring of Agency for Security Service at Bhogapuram International Airport for a period of 10 years and further extendable up to 5 years.
2. Deployment of Private Security Agency for providing security functions at Bhogapuram International Airport for 3 years' contract period.
For details, interested parties may download the Tender document free of charge from gmrvisakhapatnamairport.com/tender.aspx between 28.01.2026 to 03.02.2026.

M21/PREM ASSOCIATES

THE HINDU OPPORTUNITIES

GENERAL

TMB Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd.
Be a step ahead in life

Empower Your IT Career with TMB

Are you passionate about banking and technology? We are seeking skilled IT professionals to join our growing team and help drive digital innovation in the banking industry.

Current Openings - Specialist Officer (IT) @ Chennai

- Lead Systems/Servers
- Lead API Developer
- Data Scientist
- Statistician
- Data Analyst
- System/Server Administrator
- API Developers
- Software Programmers
- CBS Customisation/Admin
- Oracle HCM (Payroll & Integrations)
- Oracle HCM (Talent, Workflow & Experience)

Designation: Assistant Vice President (AVP), Senior Manager, Manager, Assistant Manager

HOW TO APPLY:

- Visit: www.ib.tmbonline.bank.in/tmb_careers
- Register & Fill the Form
- Upload Required Documents
- Submit the Application

Apply Online: 26th Jan 2026 – 9th Feb 2026

The Executive Vice President, HRD Department
TAMILNAD MERCANTILE BANK LTD.,
Head Office, 2nd Floor, 57, V.E. Road, Thoothukudi, Tamilnadu - 628 002.

GENERAL

HLL Lifecare Limited (A Government of India Enterprise)
CIN: U25193 KL 1966 GOI 002621
Corporate & Regd. Office: Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram-695 012, Kerala

HLL Lifecare Limited (HLL), a Mini Ratna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, is looking for dynamic and performance-driven candidates for the following positions.

Positions on Regular Basis

SI No	Position	Location	No. of Positions
1	VICE PRESIDENT (FINANCE)	Thiruvananthapuram	1
2	MANAGER / DEPUTY MANAGER (FINANCE)	Noida/Mumbai	1

Positions on Fixed Term Contract Basis

SI No	Position	Location	No. of Positions
1	DEPUTY MANAGER / ASSISTANT MANAGER - INTERNAL AUDIT (RETAIL PHARMACY DIVISION)	New Delhi, Lucknow, Guwahati, Mumbai, Thiruvananthapuram	5
2	ASSISTANT MANAGER (BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & OPERATIONS)	Hyderabad	1

For more details and to apply, please visit www.lifecarehll.com/careers. The last date for submitting the application is 11.02.2026. SC/ST/OBC/PwD candidates are eligible for relaxation as per Government of India guidelines.

SKILLSTORK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL International Baccalaureate CBSE Cambridge International Examinations

Apply Now
careers.skillstork.org
Or SCAN the QR Code

WE'RE HIRING
Experienced Teachers
Nursery to Grade XII
IB | Cambridge | CBSE

Warangal, Telangana +91 90635 74248

HLL Lifecare Limited (A Government of India Enterprise)
CIN: U25193 KL 1966 GOI 002621
Corporate & Regd. Office: Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram-695 012, Kerala

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (HITES)

HLL Lifecare Limited (HLL), a Schedule 'B', Mini Ratna Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, invites applications for the position of **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** for its wholly owned subsidiary, **HLL Infratech Services Limited (HITES)**, on a **Fixed Term Contract (FTC)** basis. Experienced professionals with proven leadership capabilities, strong technical expertise, strategic vision, and sound business acumen are invited to apply.

For more details, please visit www.lifecarehll.com/careers and apply ONLINE on or before 11.02.2026

स्वस्थ पीढ़ियों के लिए नवाचेतना | Innovating for Healthy Generations

VIGNAN'S FOUNDATION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & RESEARCH
(Deemed to be University) - Ext. use 3 of UGC Act 1956
Vadlamudi, Guntur-522 213, Andhra Pradesh | Tel: 0863-234700, www.vignan.ac.in

Applications are invited for the positions of
VICE-CHANCELLOR, PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR
For consideration by the Search-Cum-Selection Committee

- From candidates eligible as per UGC norms, who possess high academic credentials for significant contribution to research with good administrative experience at higher levels of university governance and capable of providing a dynamic and efficient leadership.
- Candidates with good perception of development of an institution in the age group of 50-60 years (Vice Chancellor), 40-60 years (Pro-Vice Chancellor) may be preferred.
- Candidates must possess a Doctorate Degree in Engineering discipline.
- Resume, with supportive documents and a brief note not exceeding 500 words on 'Why I consider myself suitable for the position and my Vision of a University' to be forwarded along with a scanned copy of recent passport size photograph.
- The University reserves the right to consider candidates other than those who respond to the notification.
- Salary, allowances and other facilities will be as per norms & negotiable.

Applications addressed to the Registrar to reach on or before 18-02-2026 by email : vfstr_recruitment@vignan.ac.in



Manufacturing woes

Capital support alone will not add to battery cell manufacturing capacity

India's quest to install 500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030 has found its primary industrial engine in the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes. Buoyed by the momentum the scheme generated in telecom manufacturing, where the government pays out a predetermined sum only if companies achieve agreed sales targets annually, ministries expect the initiative to transform India from a net importer of green technology into a global manufacturing hub. Unlike telecom, however, the PLI for high-efficiency solar photovoltaics and advanced chemistry cell battery storage face daunting implementation challenges. While downstream module assembly is robust (achieving 56% of its specific target by mid-2025), the critical upstream segments remain a bottleneck. Polysilicon and wafer manufacturing, the most technology-intensive parts of the value chain, have only reached 14% and 10% of their respective targets. This disparity highlights a persistent reliance on imported raw materials and specialised technical expertise, prompting the government to consider additional capital subsidies to de-risk these high-capex upstream projects.

Similar woes stalk the scheme for battery manufacturing. The progress towards establishing 50 GWh of domestic battery cell production to fuel the electric vehicle revolution, with an outlay of ₹18,000 crore, has been sluggish. By late 2025, only about 2.8% (1.4 GWh) of the targeted capacity had been commissioned. The gap between policy ambition and ground reality in battery manufacturing stems from stringent domestic value addition requirements – mandating 25% within two years and 60% within five – and the immense technical barriers of “gigafactory” construction. To add to these are challenges such as not issuing visas to Chinese technical experts, who will be setting up several manufacturing facilities. The Indian government's expectation that mere capital support will substantially improve high-technology manufacturing is misplaced. The complex infrastructure required to make it at scale requires decades of research investment and workforce training. While mega corporates expect international technology transfers to accelerate the process, they are capital intensive and do not always translate to near-term gain. Several companies face steep fines for not delivering on their deadlines. A rethink at provisions in the PLI scheme to prioritise expertise and technical know-how rather than the net worth of companies bidding for PLI contracts is necessary.

Pressure points

Trump's strategy to keep pushing Caracas can only lead to a breaking point

What is unfolding in Venezuela is naked imperialism. Having ordered the abduction of a sitting head of state and imposed a naval blockade on a sovereign nation, U.S. President Donald Trump declared that Washington would now “run” Venezuela. That he endorsed Acting President Delcy Rodriguez rather than the opposition does not diminish the criminality of these actions; it merely reveals their purpose, which was not about democracy or narcotics but about control of Venezuela's oil. The Trump administration's approach might appear contradictory: help retain the Bolivarian regime while strangling its economic sovereignty. But the logic is coherent. Washington wants Venezuela's oil without the costs of occupation or the chaos of regime change. It learned from Iraq that dismantling state structures creates insecurities. It believes that it is better to capture the existing apparatus and redirect its functions – a form of neocolonialism that maintains the forms of statehood while exercising actual control.

This arrangement places Ms. Rodriguez in a difficult position. The Bolivarian movement was built on resisting precisely this kind of American domination over Venezuela's resources. Yet her government, battered by a decade of sanctions, must now negotiate with the very power that kidnapped her predecessor. Her statement on Sunday, “Enough already of Washington's orders over politicalicians in Venezuela”, reveals the strain that she is under. She has complied with American demands on oil trade and released political prisoners as a “peace gesture”. But she cannot surrender Venezuelan sovereignty entirely without losing the Chavista base that sustains her government. The more pressure Washington applies on Caracas, the more it risks the very instability it claims to want to prevent. If the U.S. wanted a productive economic relationship with Venezuela, it should not have embarked on this marauding path. The sanctions that devastated Venezuela's economy were American policy. The migration crisis that Mr. Trump cited to justify intervention was a consequence of those sanctions. Now, Washington offers to ease the pressure it created, but only if Venezuela submits to exclusive American control over its resources. This is not diplomacy; it is extortion. The world cannot remain silent. When Russia violated Ukrainian sovereignty, the international community condemned it and imposed sanctions. Mr. Trump's ‘Donroe Doctrine’ threatens not just Venezuela, but the foundations of the international order. If it remains unchallenged internationally, no nation in the Global South can be safe.

The solution to the falling rupee lies in diplomacy

The sudden decline in the value of the rupee has somewhat shaken the people and the markets. They wonder why this is happening when the economy is doing well, characterised by a good growth rate, low inflation, and a modest current account deficit.

India's growth rate in the current year is estimated at 7.4%. Inflation has been subdued with CPI inflation ending the year 2025 at 1.33%, below the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s lower target band for the fourth consecutive month. The current account deficit as a percentage of GDP in the first half of 2025-26 is only 0.76 compared to 1.35 in the previous year. The fall in the value of rupee since April 2025 is about 6%.

The villain of the piece

Since the trade deficit (merchandise and services), which was \$96.58 billion in April-December 2025 compared to \$88.43 billion in the same period last year, is not that large, the main villain in the piece is capital outflows. There has been a steady outflow of capital since U.S. President Donald Trump took an adverse view on India and imposed 50% import duty on Indian exports. Initially, the U.S. imposed a 25% tariff on ‘reciprocal’ basis and then another 25% because India was importing crude oil from Russia. Now, it is threatening to impose an additional 25% tariff on countries that are doing business with Iran. This includes India, although trade with Iran is only 0.15% of the country's total trade.

Net capital inflows in April-December 2024 were \$10,615 million. In the same period in 2025, they turned negative, with a net outflow of \$3,900 million. Despite months of negotiations with the U.S., no agreement has been reached yet. There seem to have been issues that could not be resolved easily. If this stalemate continues, the rupee will continue to fall.

We have to note that in the changed context, capital outflows are caused not by strict



C. Rangarajan

Former Governor
Reserve Bank of India



N.R. Bhanumurthy

Director, Madras
School of Economics,
Chennai

Capital outflows are hitting the rupee. These outflows will continue to take place until India and the U.S. come to an understanding

economic factors but by fears generated by the ‘hostile’ attitude of the U.S. In 2022, the rupee depreciated by almost 10%. That had some economic explanation, such as the Federal Reserve's sharp hikes in interest rates. But this time, there is no clear economic explanation. Thus, the situation has shifted from the economic arena to the diplomatic platform. When tariffs are getting weaponised for geopolitical reasons, diplomacy is the major route for a solution.

RBI intervention

India's exchange rate regime underwent a change in 1993 when it moved to a market-determined exchange rate regime. But the new system did not rule out the RBI's intervention in the foreign exchange market. Since 1993, all RBI Governors have made it clear that the intention is not to use intervention to peg the value of the rupee, but to reduce its volatility.

However, the word ‘volatility’ was never defined. We can deduce from the actions of the RBI that reducing volatility means not only reducing fluctuations around a prevailing level, but also ‘moderating’ the fall in the value of the rupee when it happens. Shocks from rupee fluctuations have a cost. It is only to minimise the impact of such sudden shocks that there is intervention. Even then, it is not the intention of the RBI to prevent the fall, but to let it slide smoothly to whatever level it has to fall. It may be best for the RBI to clarify that reducing volatility also includes moderating the fall in the value of the rupee. After all, intervention, especially if it is asymmetric, does affect the level of exchange rate while minimising its volatility. The present situation adds another element – non-economic pressures acting on the value of the rupee. In fact, if India and the U.S. come to an understanding, the rupee will appreciate.

Why devaluation is not the remedy

Will a fall in the value of the rupee have any

beneficial effects? The import content of India's exports is rising. As a result, the stimulus to exports provided by devaluation will be moderated in the changed context. Further, given the high tariffs in the U.S. market, India's exporters are unlikely to gain significant access there. On the import side, most of India's imports are essential goods, with crude oil alone accounting for about 25% of total merchandise imports. A fall in the rupee would raise their prices, fuelling inflation.

India's inflation is not higher than the inflation in developed countries in the West. Devaluation is called for when there is wide disparity in inflation. That is when we need to focus on Real Effective Exchange Rate (weighted average of a country's currency relative to a basket of major trading partners, adjusted for inflation). It is true that some countries such as China have tried to keep the value of the currency undervalued. But this is currency manipulation, which is controversial.

The fall in the value of the rupee in the last one month has been caused by the fears engendered by the imposition of 50% tariff on Indian exports by the U.S. There is a possibility that the tariffs may even go up because of new legislation in the U.S. The full impact of the tariffs will be felt only in 2026-27.

What is hitting the rupee as of now are capital outflows. These outflows will continue to take place until India and the U.S. come to an understanding. We cannot ignore the fall in the value of the rupee. Capital outflows will get accelerated with every fall in the value of the rupee. The required earning in rupee terms will rise to attract investors in such a situation. When capital outflows happen because of the sale of stocks, they have a direct impact on the stock market. Our trade negotiators must reach an early understanding with the U.S. Meanwhile, the RBI can only smoothen the fall in the value of the rupee.

A spark to drive India's e-LCV transition

Whenever your online orders are delivered, there is a good chance that they travelled in a light commercial vehicle (LCV) – those small (sub-3.5 tonne) trucks that are the backbone of India's booming e-commerce economy. Here is a fact: while India has spent years regulating passenger car energy consumption, LCVs have operated in a regulatory blind spot. India has made significant strides in regulating fuel efficiency for passenger cars through corporate average fuel efficiency (CAFE) norms for fleet-wide CO2 emission targets. However, LCVs operate without such mandates, despite their high utilisation and substantial market presence.

Policymakers are finally addressing this regulatory gap: in late July, 2025, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) unveiled a fuel consumption standard proposal for LCVs, which will run from 2027 through 2032.

Ahead of the release of the draft, automakers lobbied for full exemption of LCVs from CAFE regulations, citing the price sensitivity of the market and claiming that the standard would necessitate expensive technologies in internal combustion engines (ICE). Eventually, the request was set aside, signalling the government's commitment to decarbonisation.

LCVs in India accounted for 48% of commercial goods vehicles in 2024, yet electrification remained low at 2%. Bringing this sector under regulatory oversight is pivotal for India's clean transport agenda.

Where things stand

India's LCV fleet averaged 147.5 g CO2/km in 2024. Without the minimal 2% share of battery electric LCVs (e-LCVs), this figure would be 150 g CO2/km, which shows how even marginal electrification impacts emissions.

Automakers have entered the Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) market with few models, offering sub-35 kWh battery packs with maximum ranges of 150 km. Why so cautious? Market realities are



Moorthy Nair

Researcher at the
International Council
on Clean
Transportation

The proposed fuel efficiency norms for light commercial vehicles could become a turning point – with smart policy design, stringent standards, and strategic use of incentives

tough: high upfront costs and limited model availability constrain demand. Although battery LCVs offer lower total ownership costs than conventional LCVs, inconsistent purchase incentive policies among jurisdictions are not helping.

For example, the PM E-DRIVE incentive scheme excludes LCVs, though some State policies, such as those in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, provide support to overcome the initial acquisition barrier.

Fuel efficiency standards

The potential of fuel efficiency standards to drive electrification is often misunderstood. While these regulations won't guarantee widespread electrification, stringency does. When standards are lax, manufacturers find it cheaper to optimise existing ICE vehicles through modest upgrades than invest in electric vehicles. Here is proof of what happens when standards are too relaxed: BEVs make up just 3% of the passenger car fleet even after 8 years of CAFE norms.

Here is where the math gets interesting. ICCT research shows 116.5 g CO2/km is the crucial threshold at which introducing e-LCVs becomes more cost-effective for compliance than ICE-only advancements. Put simply, beyond this point, CO2 reductions cost manufacturers less if achieved through electrification than ICE upgrades. The Bureau of Energy Efficiency's proposed 115 g CO2/km standard just surpasses this benchmark, meaning entry of e-LCVs into the market is feasible but not strong enough to drive significant electrification.

There is a chicken-and-egg problem here: most conventional LCVs cost below ₹1 million, while BEV equivalents typically exceed this, making manufacturers reluctant to transition.

Electrification momentum spurs innovation, scales production, and, together with falling battery prices, reduces BEV upfront cost.

To catalyse BEV penetration, regions such as China, the European Union, and the United States

use a super credit multiplier, which counts each BEV multiple times when calculating compliance. Think of it as regulatory accounting that makes going electric look more attractive on paper: super credits make electrification a more cost-effective pathway to compliance.

The draft proposal introduces super credits for e-LCVs and assigns them a CO2 value of zero for compliance, further reinforcing BEV support (unlike the passenger car standards, which include upstream emissions).

However, the proposal also extends these credits to intermediate technologies like hybrid BEVs and applies CO2 offset factors to select ICE technologies. This approach risks fragmenting the market, essentially postponing BEV adoption. If manufacturers can comply by tweaking conventional vehicles or adding hybrids, why invest in electrification? Credits and offset factors – designed as an interim measure to be phased out as the market matures – can ease early compliance by artificially amplifying the emission reductions but dilute the regulation's effectiveness.

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency's proposal considers phasing out super credits for e-LCVs but continuing incentives for hybrids and select ICE technologies. This could prolong the dominance of ICEs.

The way forward

So, what is the bottom line? India has got the pieces; now it needs to put them together. The key to electrification lies in smart policy design. A stringent standard that makes electrification economically compelling, and a strategic use of incentives, can drive genuine transformation. These elements, together with a timely rollout of regulations, will determine whether LCVs drive the transition to clean transport.

The alternative is to repeat the challenges seen in the passenger car segment, where relaxed standards and ongoing incentives have kept electrification at just 3%.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Republic Day

Republic Day presents an excellent opportunity to showcase the nation's achievements and progress (“Editorial: March of the Republic,” Jan. 27). But in the midst of these celebrations, we should not divert our focus from critical issues. India cannot be peaceful if its neighbours are not peaceful. With the world going through turbulent times, and with Manipur still on the boil, India's challenges are both internal and external and need urgent redressal.

Balasubramanian Pavani
Secunderabad

Entry for all

The report, “Uttarakhand's Char Dham temples want ban on entry of non-Hindus” (Jan. 28), is shocking. When I, a practising Hindu, went to

the Golden Temple in Amritsar, I was not barred from entry, nor was I asked to show my religious identity. As long as people are dressed in accordance with the temple's code, follow all the rules, and do not in any way disrespect the religion or the god, they should be allowed to enter the premises of a place of worship.

Baru Rajendra Prasad
Hyderabad

Granting protection

The uproar over the UGC's rules brings back memories of the anti-reservation stir of 1990 (“Uproar intensifies against new UGC equity regulations,” Jan. 27). Caste-based discrimination is still a lived experience for students from many communities and its persistence stresses the need for protections against

it. The bogey of ‘false complaints’ cannot be cited to plead the case against the new rules. The government cannot afford to cave in to the pressure tactics by certain student bodies and social elites; it should side with the marginalised.

G. David Milton
Maruthancode, Kanniyakumari

Operating with impunity

The killing of Alex Patti, a 37-year-old nurse in Minneapolis, barely weeks after the fatal shooting of Renee Good in the same city, has once again raised troubling questions about the conduct of U.S. federal immigration agencies (“Minneapolis locals protest inhumane U.S. agents after second killing by ICE,” Jan. 26). Even before an impartial investigation could begin, Patti was

labelled a “domestic terrorist,” reflecting a disturbing rush to judgment. Since Donald Trump's return to power on a hard line anti-immigrant platform, agencies such as ICE and Border Patrol appear to have been granted expansive powers with little accountability. While these bodies are mandated to protect national security, the prevailing climate of impunity has resulted in a sharp rise in deaths and detentions in custody in 2025. It looks like U.S. citizens with no criminal history are increasingly becoming victims of federal overreach.

M. Jayaram
Sholavandan, Madurai

President Trump argues

that the protests in Iran to overthrow the regime is

legitimate and has warned of dire consequences in case the protesters are killed. However, when the U.S. uses violence to impose order within its own territory, it is presented as proportionate, legitimate, and necessary. It is high time the world raises its voice against this hypocrisy.

Gregory Fernandes
Mumbai

Conferring Padma awards

Padma Awards and the Bharat Ratna are often awarded posthumously, with only a few exceptions, such as Sachin Tendulkar, Lata Mangeshkar, and Dr. C.N.R. Rao (“Full list of Padma awards, 2025”). Playback singer S. Janaki famously refused to accept the Padma Bhushan in January 2013, saying it came too late in her career. Bharat Ratna award

recommendations are made directly by the Prime Minister to the President. In 2024, the Modi government declared five Bharat Ratnas, highlighting the timing's political overtones. It is time to delink these awards from election cycles and establish an independent, permanent commission tasked with recommending living legends and achievers based solely on merit.

A.V. Narayanan
Chennai



To read more letters online, scan the QR code. Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

BCCL listing redefines PSE IPO narrative

In January 19 this year, Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL), India's largest producer of coking coal and a subsidiary of Coal India Limited, listed on the stock market through an Initial Public Offering (IPO). Despite challenging global market conditions, the BCCL's IPO created capital market history as the highest ever recorded in India's mainboard IPO market. The 46 crore shares that were on offer to raise an additional ₹1,070 crore received over 90 lakh applications and were oversubscribed 147 times. This successful IPO listing of an Indian Public Sector Enterprise (PSE) is not a one-off but a trend that has been consistent over the past several years. Over the past 7-8 years, close to 15 Public Sector Undertakings have been listed in the Indian stock exchanges and have not only been able to raise the required money but also create a tremendous amount of shareholder value and retailer wealth.

Shareholder value creation
Prior to BCCL, since 2017, India has seen more than 10 large core engineering, construction, railways, defence, and energy-related PSEs get listed in the stock markets. They have consistently created value for both retail shareholders and the largest owner of PSE stocks – the Government of India. Among the companies analysed, the cumulative market capitalisation rose from ₹1.4 lakh crore at listing to ₹8.53 lakh crore as on December 31, 2025 – a whopping 513% increase.

The companies analysed were Cochin Shipyard, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders, RITES Ltd., IRCON International, Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd., Indian Railway Finance Corporation, Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation, RailTel Corporation, Housing and Urban Development Corporation, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), and Indian



S. Mahendra Dev
Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)

Renewable Energy Development Agency.

While the study excluded services sector IPOs, such as banking and insurance, whose performances are driven by additional extraneous factors, the Government has also benefited tremendously from the listing of services-related PSEs.

In summary, the IPO route has not only provided Indian PSEs robust mechanisms to raise capital for productive use without depending on the Government's budget process but also provide phenomenal returns to the Government and to its retail shareholders.

PSUs funding initiatives

Earlier, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) had to rely on budgetary provisions from their administrative ministries for capital investments and other expansions. This required extensive discussions with a large group of stakeholders and a longer cycle for realising the money. In today's age when the modern enterprise is recognised for its agility in decision-making and execution, the budget route can no longer be looked at as the only medium for raising or receiving investments.

Not surprisingly, a reverse trend has quietly begun to take shape where PSUs have started to fund critical missions. For example, in January 2025, the Ministry of Mines launched the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) to secure a long-term sustainable supply of critical minerals and strengthen India's critical mineral value chain. The Cabinet approved an expenditure of ₹34,300 crore for NCMM of which only ₹1,500 crore is being sourced from the Government's budget. In truly 'Whole of Government Approach', more than 50% of the Mission's expenditure, an amount of ₹18,000 crore, is being funded by PSUs across various administrative ministries. Quite aptly, the investments being raised by these PSEs are being plowed into

technologies and know-how that are being used to reduce coal-based carbon emissions.

The above example may now become the norm in the Government's funding of critical and strategic missions in which the PSEs are tapped in as strategic investors as seen in the NCMM.

Administrative quality

Markets are known to be remarkably brutal and unforgiving as they only reward consistent performance and shareholder value creation. One of the most striking elements of the BCCL narrative is its journey from being perceived as a loss-impacted PSU to a value-driven, strategically critical enterprise. Today, BCCL accounts for nearly 58.5% of India's domestic coking coal production, placing it at the heart of the steel and infrastructure value chain. This strategic relevance was not lost on investors. In an economy focused on infrastructure expansion, manufacturing growth, and self-reliance, BCCL represents more than a coal producer; it represents energy security and industrial continuity.

The performance of other PSEs is evidence of a broader shift in how PSE assets are being positioned and perceived. Investors today are increasingly discerning and are willing to back PSEs when they see clarity of purpose, operational strength, and credible execution. PSEs have also used the recent autonomy granted from their administrative ministries and the transparency expected from the reporting framework of market exchanges as an opportunity to bring in administrative quality, strategic planning and speed in execution. This renewed confidence is already shaping the next phase of PSE market participation as more IPOs are being planned. The old narrative that PSE IPOs are uninspiring has been put to rest, and in its place stands a powerful new reality – when the story is real, the markets listen.

Investors today are increasingly discerning and are willing to back PSEs when they see clarity of purpose, operational strength, and credible execution

A political dust storm over Singareni

Congress and BRS play mudslinging over 'irregularities' in coal mining tenders

STATE OF PLAY

B. Chandrashekhar
chandrashekhar.bhalki@thehindu.co.in



erates. Rather, it is Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. The party says the Chief Minister got the 'site visit certification' system introduced in the tenders with a view to favour his brother-in-law S. Srujan Reddy's companies, with bids quoted at a value much higher than the estimates prepared by the company.

The ruling party has been pushed onto the back foot by the BRS and has struggled to mount an effective rebuttal. The BRS has alleged that the tender norms were tailored to benefit senior Congress leaders and their relatives.

Buoyed by the encouraging results in the Gram Panchayat (GP) elections held in December last year, the BRS has stepped up its attack on the ruling party. The Congress claimed that candidates backed by it won about 60% of the 12,733 Sarpanch posts, which is seen by the Opposition as an underperformance by a ruling party. The BRS claimed over 40% success rate in the GP polls held on non-party basis. Ahead of the upcoming election to urban local bodies, which is fought on party symbols, the party has upped its game.

The row over the Singareni tenders erupted when senior BRS leader and former Minister T. Harish Rao alleged irregularities on January 19. The BRS's main target in the matter is not Deputy Chief Minister M. Bhatti Vikramarka, who handles the portfolio of Energy under which the SCCL op-

"Mr. Vikramarka read out only the portions that were convenient for him to do some mudslinging on the Opposition and did not tell people the fact that the site visit condition introduced by SCCL when the BRS was in power was only for establishing coal handling plants (CHPs) and not for the overburden removal contracts," Mr. Rao said.

The BRS claims the site visit condition for overburden removal contracts was introduced as recently as May 2025 and some of the tenders finalised till that time from December 2023, when the Congress assumed office, were as per the old procedures without the site visit condition. Those tenders were locked for values/rates lower than the SCCL's estimates, saving money for the company, it says.

The BRS is of the view that all the overburden removal contracts given after May 2025 merit cancellation on the same grounds on which the Naini mine development and operation (MDO) contract, which too had the condition of site visit, was cancelled. The party has demanded a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or any other Central agency or a sitting judge into the Singareni contracts, saying that a probe by a State agency would be unfair since the Chief Minister's kin are the main beneficiaries.

It remains to be seen whether the government will order a probe into all overburden removal contracts since June 2014, when Telangana was formed. This would be in line with probes ordered in cases such as the sinking of a portion of the Medigadda Barrage under the Kaleshwaram project, to clear itself of the charges and instead fix the BRS by exposing any misdeeds.

Future of work: India's youth under the new Codes

The four Labour Codes aim to promote formalisation of employment and improve ease of doing business; gap in coverage of benefits is a major challenge

DATA POINT

Devika Vinod
Meenakshi Shekhar

India's Labour Codes came into force in November 2025, marking the most significant labour law reform since Independence. By consolidating 29 central laws into four Codes, the reform aims to simplify compliance, universalise minimum wages, expand social protection, and modernise workplace regulation. Policy debates often portray the Codes as a balancing act between labour flexibility and worker protection.

Prior to the consolidation, India's labour regime was fragmented across multiple Central and State laws governing wages, industrial relations, social security, and working conditions. With labour on the Concurrent List, this resulted in uneven enforcement and wide inter-State variation. Crucially, most protections applied only to the formal sector, leaving informal, contract, and casual workers, who form the bulk of the workforce, outside the scope of regulation. Against this backdrop, the government introduced four Labour Codes between 2019 and 2020.

In 2024, India's median age was under 30, compared to around 40 in China and 50 in Japan. With nearly half the population still young, understanding how these changes affect youth employment is critical.

Despite its demographic advantage, India faces a pronounced youth employment crisis. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023-24, labour force participation among those aged 15-29 stood at 46.5%, far below the 76.4% observed among those aged 30-59. Youth unemployment is 10.2%, compared to less than 1% for older adults.

Gender disparities further widen these gaps. Only 28.8% of young women participate in the la-

bour force, compared to 63.5% of young men. In urban areas, unemployment among young women reached 20.1%.

Across all PLFS rounds, young workers are more likely than adults to be unpaid family workers within self-employment. They are disproportionately concentrated in informal employment. In 2023-24, nearly 90% of young workers were informally employed. Even within regular salaried jobs, 60.5% of young regular workers lacked social security, compared to 50.5% among workers above 30.

Contractual insecurity is also higher among youth. In 2023-24, 66.1% of young regular workers had no written contract, versus 53.6% for older ones. Only 16.5% of young workers had long-term contracts exceeding three years, compared to 35.4% among adults.

Young workers are also overrepresented in platform-based gig work. A NITI Aayog estimate suggests that 77 lakh workers were engaged in the gig economy in 2020-21, a figure projected to rise to 2.35 crore by 2029-30.

Against this backdrop, the new Labour Codes aim to promote formalisation while improving the ease of doing business. The introduction of a statutory national floor wage could raise earnings for young workers clustered in low-paid, entry-level jobs. If firms increasingly rely on fixed-term contracts, the Codes mandate parity in wages and benefits with permanent workers.

The requirement of appointment letters for all workers and guaranteed wage payments, even during leave, strengthens baseline employment security. The Code on Social Security extends welfare schemes covering health, maternity, disability, education, and skill development to unorganised workers. Gig and platform workers are explicitly recognised in national law, with provisions for registration from age 16 and the creation of National and State Social Security Boards. Unlike the earlier Unor-

ganised Workers' Social Security Act (2008), which had limited impact, the new Code offers clearer institutional mechanisms.

Labour market transparency is also enhanced through mandatory vacancy reporting to career centres. The Industrial Relations Code further affects youth employment by reducing hiring frictions through a higher retrenchment threshold. It provides legal clarity for contract labour and fixed-term employment categories dominated by young workers while extending benefits such as leave, health cover, social security, and gratuity to fixed-term employees after just one year of service.

However, several challenges remain. Many provisions for unorganised and gig workers mirror those under the 2008 Act, including a size-based definition of enterprises with fewer than 10 workers. PLFS 2023-24 shows that 42.7% of young workers lack written contracts, and nearly one-fifth of them work in enterprises with more than 10 workers, leaving significant gaps in coverage. Discretionary language in provisions for gig workers and weak statistical definitions of digital platform employment complicate coverage, especially given widespread multiple job-holding. Despite the Second National Commission on Labour having urged the government as early as 2002 to modernise labour protections in response to technological change and evolving work arrangements, two decades later, policy follow-through and statistical innovation have been slow.

These gaps point to an urgent need for stronger labour data systems and proactive worker registration. Identifying gig and platform workers in national surveys, instead of subsuming them under broad self-employment categories, would strengthen policy design and protection.

Devika Vinod is a Research Associate at CAFRAL. Meenakshi Shekhar, Ph.D is a Research Director at CAFRAL.

Labour shift

Statistics used in this article are from Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)



Chart 1: Composition of employment among 15-29 year olds and 30-59 year olds across PLFS rounds between 2017 and 2024

■ Casual (%) ■ Salaried (%) ■ Unpaid family labour (%) ■ Self-employed (%)

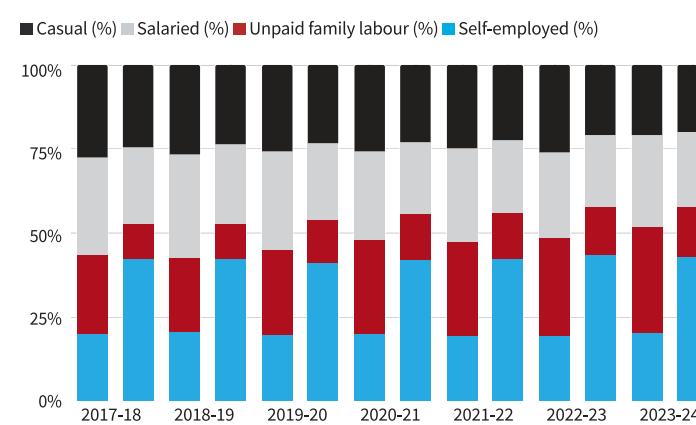


Chart 2: Types of informality of jobs among regular salaried workers in 15-29 and 30-59 age groups

■ Share (%) among 15-29 year olds
■ Share (%) among 30-59 year olds

Contractual insecurity is higher among youth. Only 16.5% of young workers had long-term contracts exceeding three years

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 28, 1976

Kalinadi Vital for South, Says Pant

Ambika Nagar (North Kanara), Jan. 27: The giant Kalinadi power project would open up possibilities for the southern States to take advantage of one another's thermal and hydel capacities for the common good of the entire region, the Union Minister of State for Energy, Mr. K. C. Pant, said here today.

It was one of the most important power projects of the country, he said while unveiling a plaque at a function at the Nagihari power house site to mark the signing of the loan agreement for the hydel project in Kuwait today.

Mr. Pant said the loan of Rs. 45 crores being provided by Kuwait represented an important step in the direction of strengthening of relations between the two countries. It was only proper, he said, that developing countries helped each other and enlarged their area of co-operation.

Mr. Pant spoke of the special interest shown by the Centre in the Kalinadi project right from the beginning and referred to the Central assistance of Rs. 25 crores given during 1972-74 and the Rs. 5 crores provided by the Life Insurance Corporation. During 1975-76, an additional Rs. 10 crores had been allocated on the understanding that the State would find Rs. 5 crores.

Mr. Devaraj Urs, Karnataka Chief Minister, said the Kalinadi project would open the door for further economic development of the State.

Describing the Kalinadi project as a complex one consisting of 10 dams, Mr. Urs said the first stage would help produce 910 mw, the second 210 mw, and the third 100 mw, making a total of 1,231 mw.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 28, 1926

Looking in' in London

London, Jan. 27: "Looking in," the new verbal coinage, denotes the receiving of tele-vision programme, which will begin to be broadcast from a small London station next week under the licence granted by the Postmaster-General to a new company to exploit the patent of the Glasgow inventor named John Baird for special receiving apparatus adaptable to any valve set. Demonstrations have been successfully conducted, though experiments will be necessary to give sharper definition to figures.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The decrease in India's power emissions in 11 months

38 in million tonnes. Discharges by Indian utilities declined 38 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, or 4.1%, in the 11 months to the end of November, according to estimates based on monthly government statistics compiled by energy think-tank Ember. REUTERS

The area of Ukrainian land captured by Russia in January

500 in square kilometre. Russian forces captured 17 settlements and took control of more than 500 square kilometres of territory in Ukraine so far in January, Russia's top general, Valery Gerasimov, said on Tuesday. REUTERS

Number of Syrians displaced in the SDF civil war

1.73 in lakh. The International Organisation for Migration has registered more than 1,73,000 people displaced in the civil war between the Syrian Democratic Forces and the Syrian government. The government forces captured most of the SDF-held territory in Syria's northeast. PTI

The duty on EU wines in India under the new FTA agreement

20 In per cent. European wines are set to enter the Indian market at lower prices under the bilateral free trade agreement as India will provide import duty concessions under the pact, an official said. Under the pact, the duty on EU wines would fall from 150% to 20% (for expensive ones). PTI

Days for which Israeli Hostages Square clock was operational

844 A clock in a Tel Aviv square that became a rallying point for Israelis demanding the release of hostages taken during the October 2023 Hamas attack will be turned off on Tuesday, 844 days after it began counting their captivity. REUTERS

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Follow us  facebook.com/thehindu  [X.com/the_hindu](https://x.com/the_hindu)  instagram.com/the_hindu

What's happening in Syria's Kurdish regions?

How was the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria or Rojava established? Why did the Shaara-Abdi agreement fall through? Why does Turkiye support the Syrian government forces? What has been the U.S.'s position? What does the ceasefire agreement demand?

EXPLAINER

Stanly Johny

The story so far:

When Bashar al-Assad's regime collapsed in December 2024, many hoped it would mark the end of Syria's years-long civil strife. Ahmed al-Sharaa (formerly Abu Muhammad al-Golani), who emerged as the country's interim leader, pledged to form an inclusive administration. But the past year has been marked by a resurgence of sectarian violence against the Alawites in the west and the Druze community in the south. In the latest flare-up, fighting broke out in the country's northeast, between government forces and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The SDF has been pushed out of parts of eastern Syria it once controlled, and, despite a ceasefire, a tense standoff persists between Kurdish militias and government forces in the country's Kurdish areas. The renewed violence now threatens to unravel the autonomy Syria's Kurds have exercised since the 2011 civil war.

Who are the main Kurdish actors? Syria's Kurds, who make up roughly 10% of the country's population, have long demanded autonomy for the Kurdish-populated regions in the north and east. When the Assad regime was forced to withdraw troops from the northeast in 2012, amid the civil war, Kurdish parties, councils and militias moved swiftly to fill the vacuum by establishing their own administrative structures. Several Kurdish regions (called 'cantons') came together to declare autonomy from the Syrian state, and establish the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES), also known as Rojava.

The main party in Rojava is the left-leaning Democratic Union Party (PYD), whose ideology is rooted in the 'democratic confederalism' championed by Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Another major political actor is the Kurdistan National Council (KNC), which is aligned with the Iraqi Kurdish Democratic Party. The main armed militia in Rojava is the People's Protection Units (YPG), which is aligned with the PYD, the ruling party. The YPG and its women's brigade YPJ gained prominence in 2014-15 as they defeated Islamic State (IS) jihadists in Syria's Kobane, a predominantly Kurdish region. After their victories against the IS in Syria's north and east, the U.S. started offering them air cover in the battles against jihadists. In 2015, with the blessings of the U.S., the Kurdish leaders formed the SDF with Arab and other minority militias, with the YPG being its core component.

Why did fighting break out? The question of Kurdish autonomy emerged immediately after the Assad government fell. Mr. Sharaa, formerly the chief of al-Qaeda's Syria branch, wanted to establish a centralised regime in Damascus – an idea pushed back by the country's ethnic and religious minority communities. In March 2025, Mr. Sharaa and SDF commander Mazloum Abdi signed an integration agreement, laying out principles for integrating the SDF and other administrative units into the Syrian state. But the Kurds were clear on one point – they did not want to forfeit the autonomy they had built over more than a decade. In an interview with *The Hindu* in



Taut relation: Members of the Syrian Democratic Forces queue to settle their status with the Syrian government in Raqqa, Syria on January 27. REUTERS

May, Salih Muslim Muhammad, co-chairman of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) said that "nobody wants another centralised regime in Syria".

The Shaara-Abdi agreement promised to flesh out the details of integration by the end of the year, but that deadline passed without progress. Tensions mounted as Damascus proposed deploying its troops in Kurdish regions. While the Syrian government wanted to extend its control across the country which it thinks is essential for reasserting its sovereignty, Kurdish leaders argued that losing military control of the north and east would imperil their autonomy. As talks stalled in early January, Mr. Sharaa's forces moved into the Arab neighbourhoods of Aleppo, which were controlled by Kurdish forces. Fighting soon followed and government forces asserted control within days, forcing the SDF to withdraw to the northeast.

What does Damascus want? While the Syrian state forces withdrew in 2012 and other rebel and jihadist groups were preoccupied with their battles against Damascus during the civil war, the IS exploited the vacuum to establish a solid presence in Syria's east. But the YPG, the Kurdish militia, emerged as critical foot soldiers in the war against the IS. The first major defeat the IS faced was at the hands of the YPG. In the following years, the YPG (or the SDF, the expanded version) became the key anti-IS force on the ground in Syria while the U.S. provided them air cover. They controlled the regions they liberated from the IS and established Rojava. The Assad regime tolerated Kurdish autonomy because it was preoccupied with other problems.

Now, Mr. Sharaa, who has been emboldened by the international recognition he has achieved, wants to end Kurdish autonomy. He has taken a two-pronged approach. On January 16, amid ongoing fighting between government forces and the SDF, Mr.

Sharaa issued a decree formally recognising Kurdish as a "national language" and offering citizenship to all Syrian Kurds. He also declared Newroz, the new year festival celebrated by Kurds, as a national holiday. But he said nothing about Kurdish autonomy. His plan is to give cultural concessions while taking control of the Kurdish militias militarily.

Where do Turkiye and the U.S. stand? Turkiye sees the PYD (the political party) and the YPG (the militia) as extended arms of the PKK (the Turkiye-based Kurdish group which has been designated as a terrorist entity by Ankara and its Western allies). Mr. Sharaa and his group, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) are close allies of Turkiye. Ankara backed Mr. Sharaa's plan to integrate the Kurdish administrative and military structures into the Syrian state. When Kurds resisted the move, in December 2025, Turkiye warned against them. In the past, Turkiye had carried out military operations to push Kurdish forces away from the Syria-Turkish border and create a buffer. Now that a peace process is under way in Turkiye between the government and the PKK, Ankara believes weakening of the SDF across the border would strengthen its hand and weaken the overall Kurdish push for confederal autonomy.

The U.S. on the other side backed the SDF in the fight against the IS. The U.S. still has some 900 troops in Syria, mostly in the Kurdish northeast. But Washington has warmed up to Damascus after Mr. Sharaa, a former designated terrorist who carried a \$10 million State Department bounty on his head, captured power. Mr. Sharaa visited Washington in November 2025 and met Mr. Trump after which Syria announced that it would join the U.S.-led coalition to fight the IS. Now that the U.S. has Damascus, it doesn't need the Kurds to maintain its presence in Syria. The U.S. and Turkiye also find common ground in establishing a centralised Syria, by strengthening the hands of Sharaa, so

that the influence of Iran and Russia could be gradually neutralised.

What lies ahead?

After seizing the SDF-held regions of Aleppo, Mr. Sharaa's forces turned to areas between Aleppo and the Euphrates River. These predominantly Arab-populated regions were captured by the SDF between 2015 and 2019 after it drove out the IS. SDF positions subsequently collapsed across Raqqa and Deir al-Zour, both former IS strongholds. Reports also emerged of internal cracks within the SDF, with some Arab militias breaking ranks with YPG commanders. Dozens of IS members escaped from a prison in Hassaka which was caught in the crossfire. On January 18, Mr. Abdi, the SDF commander, agreed to a ceasefire and integration deal. Mr. Sharaa insists that the military integration of the SDF be undertaken on an "individual basis" – not as units. The ceasefire agreement also asks the SDF to hand over Raqqa and Deir al-Zour provinces "administratively and militarily" to the government; to integrate all administrative institutions in al-Hassaka into government structures; to hand over all border crossings and oil and gas fields; and to expel all non-Syrian members of the PKK from Syria.

But there seems to be serious disagreements on the degree of autonomy Kurds would retain. The agreement affirms the need "to protect the special character of the Kurdish areas". The SDF seems ready to give up Raqqa and Deir al-Zour, but they don't want to give up their positions in Kobane, al-Hassaka and Qamishli. While the Sharaa regime wants to end the SDF's local monopoly on the use of force, the SDF doesn't want government troops to be deployed in Kurdish areas. A Kurdish representative based in Europe told *The Hindu* that the autonomous administration has called for a general mobilisation. "Kobane is now under siege. But Kurdish fighters are defending their positions," he said.

THE GIST

Syria's Kurds, who make up roughly 10% of the country's population, have long demanded autonomy for the Kurdish-populated regions in the north and east. In the latest flare-up, fighting broke out in the country's northeast, between government forces and the Kurdish-led Syria Democratic Forces (SDF).

While the Syrian state forces withdrew in 2012 and other rebel and jihadist groups were preoccupied with their battles against Damascus during the civil war, the IS exploited the vacuum to establish a presence in Syria's east. But the YPG, the Kurdish militia, emerged as critical foot soldiers in the war against the IS.

On January 18, Mr. Abdi, the SDF commander, agreed to a ceasefire and integration deal. The ceasefire agreement also asks the SDF to hand over Raqqa and Deir al-Zour provinces "administratively and militarily" to the government; to integrate all administrative institutions in al-Hassaka into government structures; to hand over all border crossings and oil and gas fields.

CACHE

The impact of India-EU FTA for AI and semiconductor tech

The India-EU Free Trade Agreement moves beyond supply chains to operationalise joint R&D in advanced semiconductor integration. It also formally links the European AI Office with India's National AI Mission

Vasudevan Mukunth

In a milestone, India and the European Union (EU) have hailed the conclusion of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) while launching a 'Comprehensive Strategic Agenda' for 2030. Among other measures, the pact moves beyond supply chains to operationalise joint R&D in advanced semiconductor "heterogeneous integration" and chip design. It also formally links the European AI Office with India's National AI Mission to jointly develop safe, human-centric AI and take advantage of what the agreement called India's vast "multilingual datasets" and Europe's research infrastructure to secure strategic autonomy in critical technologies.

The three diplomatic phases

The AI and semiconductor aspects represent the maturation of three diplomatic phases. The first phase began with the 'India-EU Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025'. At this stage, discussions on "technology" were largely confined to general matters of cybersecurity, 5G networks, and data protection and there was no specific mechanism for a more concrete collaboration between the bloc and India on hardware such as semiconductors, or specific AI model development.

In the second phase, around 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and EU President Ursula von der Leyen launched the India-EU Trade and Technology Council. This body in turn created the Working Group I on Strategic Technologies, which moved the relationship from diplomacy to involving technical experts. In fact the new deal has credited this group with managing its "technology and innovation" aspect.

In the third and final phase, in 2023, India and EU signed the Semiconductor Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This MoU was primarily defensive in the sense that it focused on improving the resilience of supply chains and on providing early warnings of shortages. Between 2023 and the present deal, the MoU evolved into a more 'offensive' partnership, so to speak, with a focus on creating new technologies, including through designing and prototyping, in addition to monitoring existing supply chains.

On 'heterogenous integration'

Perhaps the most significant technical detail in the document is "heterogeneous integration" because it recognises that India is years away from building cutting-edge logic fabrication facilities, for example, those that manufacture chips with nodes of 2-3 nm, and thus pivots to "advanced packaging". Heterogenous integration involves stacking different types of chips, such as logic, memory, and sensors, into a single package. Such combinations are critical for AI. Contemporary AI accelerators like Nvidia's Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) bank more on how memory is packaged next to the processor instead of only the raw transistor size. By targeting this, the EU and India are trying to capture the value-added segment of the supply chain that is also less capital-intensive than a



Huge boost: Semiconductors being inspected at the Tessolve Semiconductor Private Limited, at Electronic City-Phase II, in Bengaluru on September 19, 2025. MURALI KUMAR. K

fabrication facility but which is just as critical for performance.

The agenda also explicitly connects semiconductor manufacturing to AI utility as the text says the deal will focus "on design and prototyping for AI applications", thus creating a vertical market. While in 2023 the focus was on "making chips for cars", following a crisis in their availability, the new goal is to make chips that AI models require.

India possesses roughly 20% of the world's chip design talent (on the flip side most of them work for U.S.-based firms like Intel and Qualcomm). The EU has the research infrastructure, such as IMEC in Belgium and Fraunhofer-Gessellschaft in Germany, but lacks the design scale. And the deal effectively creates a mechanism to unify India's designer capital with the EU's physical capital, to create indigenous AI hardware and reduce their reliance on US intellectual property.

Finally, the operational vehicles for the deal's semiconductor strategy are the so-called Blue Valleys – a regulatory

exclave that aligns Indian with European standards, allowing component manufacturers in India to flow directly into European supply chains without new certification requirements. In other words, the Blue Valleys will effectively extend the EU Single Market technical standards to Indian soil.

A common market for AI

Likewise, the AI section of the new deal also sets up a "common market" for AI where Indian data can flow into European models while having European regulations govern Indian AI companies (this is an example of the Brussels effect, whereby the EU exports its laws outside its borders through market mechanisms instead of direct force).

Previously, if the EU had a technical question about Indian AI policy, it would go through diplomatic channels (specifically, the External Action Service to the Ministry of External Affairs). The deal now indicates a direct line: the European AI Office, which is the EU's

regulator, can interact directly with the IndiaAI Safety Institute, India's technical auditor. As a result, the technical staff at these agencies could have a formal mandate to coordinate without requiring political permissions for every interaction.

Further, perhaps the most concrete part of the AI section of the deal is the point about "testing and evaluation". Currently, the world doesn't have a common definition of what constitutes safe AI. The EU's priority might be gender bias while India's might be political neutrality – which means a developer will have to make their model pass two tests ahead of clearance. But now, by collaborating on testing, the two agencies will likely co-author and rationalise the checklists for the models. So if the European AI Office develops a specific mathematical test to measure the rate or scope of hallucinations in a large language model, it can share that test with the IndiaAI Safety Institute for India to adopt. In fact, the point of linking these agencies is to eventually reach a point where one accepts a safety certificate issued by the other. Going ahead this will require the agencies to align their audit procedures and staff training.

For Indians this could be a civil liberties backdoor of sorts. That is, because European audit manuals are strongly rooted in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights, Indian users might unknowingly gain digital protections that the domestic political climate currently sidelines. EU safety benchmarks aggressively penalise algorithmic bias against minorities and restrict invasive biometric surveillance. If Indian developers must clear these hurdles to ensure their models can be exported to Europe, the AI products deployed domestically will be embedded with European regulatory attitudes. Thus Indian users could interact with AI agents that are technically constrained from reinforcing majoritarian narratives or profiling of vulnerable communities.

However, there is also the possibility of this opportunity devolving into a stratified ecosystem akin to India's pharmaceutical sector, where some manufacturers rigorously adhere to safety protocols for exports to U.S. and European markets while cutting corners for domestic supply. That is, Indian firms might engineer 'clean' and more bias-free algorithms specifically for the EU market to secure lucrative contracts while deploying invasive or unrestricted versions at home, where enforcement remains lax.

Financial instruments

In order to fuel all these ambitions, the agenda musters two financial instruments. First, the text requires both sides "explore options for association of India to Horizon Europe". If this happens, it would elevate India to the highest tier of partnership available to non-EU nations and allow Indian entities to lead consortia and compete directly for grants from the EU's €95.5-billion research budget (₹10.4 lakh crore). This could be a bonus for the semiconductor sector as it will allow Indian chip startups to bypass the often risk-averse domestic capital markets.

Second, and on a related note, the deal also places the European Innovation Council at the helm of a new startup partnership. The Council specialises in what it calls "patient capital" for high-risk technologies such as quantum computing and novel chip architectures that traditional venture capitalists often avoid. By linking the Council with the Start-up India platform, the agreement creates a dedicated cross-border funding corridor for 'hard' technologies and fills a gap left by private investors, and could help ensure the deal's design ambitions are backed by the necessary funds.

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

THE DAILY QUIZ

Marking the anniversary of Jane Austen's seminal novel, this quiz probes *Pride and Prejudice* from its thematic artistry to its publication quirks

Prathmesh Kher

QUESTION 1

What was the working title Austen gave to *Pride and Prejudice*?

QUESTION 2

Which 19th-century novelist's work influenced Austen's ironic treatment of social manners?

QUESTION 3

Who bore the financial risk for the publication of the first edition of *Pride and Prejudice*?

QUESTION 4

Pride and Prejudice was originally published with a credit attributed to "the Author of *Sense and Sensibility*". What was the credit on *Sense and Sensibility*?

QUESTION 5

What is the now-acclaimed opening line of the book?



Visual Question: Identify this 1985 television adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* that aired on Doordarshan. PRASAR BHARATI

Questions and Answers to previous day's daily quiz:

- Name the four countries across which the Kurds are found. **Ans: Syria, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran**
- This religious minority among the Kurds was targeted by the Islamic State. **Ans: Yazidis**
- This post-World War I treaty promised Kurdish autonomy but was never ratified. **Ans: The Treaty of Sevres**
- Abdullah Ocalan abandoned Marxist-Leninism for this model. **Ans: Democratic Confederalism**
- This large-scale chemical attack was carried out by the Baathist regime against Iraqi Kurds in the 1980s. **Ans: Halabja massacre**
- This Kurdish group was suspected of assassinating Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme. **Ans: Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)**
- The decree granting Kurds national language status was issued in this year. **Ans: 2026**
- This all-female Kurdish militia gained global attention during the fight against IS. **Ans: The YPJ**
- Visual: This medieval Kurdish commander became a central figure in Islamic resistance to the Crusades. **Ans: Saladin**
- Early Birds:** Tamal Biswas| Suchit Narottam| Tito Shiladitya| Arun Kumar Singh| G. P. Ramachandran



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

"I am starving. Are you ready to leave?"
"No, I have a couple of things to do."
"...make it snappy, will you? We're late as it is."

"Make it snappy? What does it mean?"
"It's an informal expression meaning 'hurry up'. For example, the manager needs 20 copies of this article. Make it snappy, will you?"

"I don't want to sit here all day. Make it snappy."

"I'd like you to go through this document. Make it snappy."

"Drive me to the airport. And make it snappy. Does that sound OK?"

"Yes. But remember, it's an informal expression. Now get dressed, will you? You don't have to wear anything snappy."

"...snappy again?"
"When you say that somebody is a snappy dresser, it means...."

"...let me guess. It probably means someone who wears very fashionable clothes. Someone who dresses very well."

"Exactly! Some of our cricket players are snappy dressers."

"With the kind of money they make, people expect them to be snappy dressers. My Principal is no snappy dresser."

"He may not be a snappy dresser, but he is snappy most of the time!"

"Not snappy again!"

"When you accuse someone of being snappy, it means he/she speaks to people in an unfriendly manner."

"Like your friend Bala? He tends to be snappy most of the time."

"Yes, he tends to be snappy when his blood pressure goes up."

"The snappy old clerk who used to sit in the Principal's office has retired."

"I am sure the students were happy to see him go."

"By the way, does 'snap at' mean the same thing as snappy?"

"I guess you could say that. When you snap at someone, you speak to them in a sharp, unfriendly manner."

"The new bank manager tends to snap at people."

"When I asked my boss for a raise, he snapped at me."

"When I asked the theatre manager if there were any tickets available, instead of snapping at me, he gave me two tickets."

"That was nice. How was the movie?"

"It was quite good. Have you seen it?"

"I plan to see it next week. I've heard the songs. They are quite snappy."

"Snappy again! What does it mean in this context?"

"Why don't you guess?"

"OK. You said that the songs were snappy. Well, the songs in the movie that I saw were quite catchy. They were lively and made you feel like dancing."

"Good job! Anything that is snappy is performed in a lively manner."

"I see. When the singer began to sing a sad song, everyone booed him. The audience wanted something snappy."

"That's a very good example. For the annual day function, my boss wants us to put up a snappy production."

"Do you think you can do it?"

"No problem. It should be a snap. When you say that something is a snap, it means it can be done easily. For example, answering Sujatha's question was a snap."

Published in The Hindu on June 8, 1999.

Word of the day

Clament:

conspicuously and offensively loud; given to vehement outcry; demanding attention

Synonyms:

crying, exigent, insistent, blatant, clamorous, strident, vociferous

Usage:

There is a clamant public demand for a new law to protect stray dogs.

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/clamentpro

International Phonetic Alphabet:

/klə'mənt/, /'klə'mənt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to letters@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Text & Context'.

From Page One**'Mother of all deals': India-EU finalise FTA**

This would include certain marine products, processed food items, and arms and ammunition. Over and above this, 6% of India's exports will see tariff reductions including certain poultry products, preserved vegetables, bakery products, amongst others.

"Key labour-intensive sectors comprising more than ₹2.87 lakh crore [\$33 billion] of exports that are currently subjected to import duty between 4% to 26% in the EU and are crucial for employment generation, will enter zero duty from entry into force of the FTA and thus gain enhanced competitiveness in the EU market," the Ministry said in a release.

In particular, of the sectors that India primarily exports to the EU, the following will see duties eliminated entirely: marine products (current duties of up to 26%), chemicals (12.8% currently), plastic and rubber items (6.5%), leather footwear (17%), textiles and apparel (12% each), base metals (10%), gems and jewellery (4%), furniture and allied consumer goods (10.5%), and toys and sports goods (4.7%).

On services, the EU has agreed to commitments across 144 services sub sectors, including IT/ITES, professional services, education, and other business services.

What India has conceded

Overall, India is offering duty elimination and reductions on 92.1% of the tariff lines, which comprises 97.5% of the EU exports to India. Within this, 49.6% of the tariff lines will see an immediate duty elimination once the agreement comes into effect.

Another 39.5% of the tariff lines will be subject to a phased elimination of tariffs over five, seven, and 10 years. An additional 3% of products will see phased tariff reductions.

"Imports of EU's high technology goods are expected to diversify India's import sources, thereby reducing input costs for businesses, benefit consumers and will create opportunities for Indian businesses to integrate into global supply chains," the statement added.

Notably for the EU, the following European sectors will see duty-free access to the Indian markets: machinery and electrical equipment, aircraft and spacecraft, optical, medical and surgical equipment, plastics, precious stones and metals, chemicals, motor vehicles, iron and steel, pharmaceuticals, and various agricultural products.

On services, India has agreed to open up 102 sub sectors covering EU priorities such as professional, business, telecommunications, maritime, financial, and environmental services.

It has been learnt that negotiations over a few sectors such as automobiles and wine had caused some problems, but the two sides agreed to quota based systems that were satisfactory to both sides.

'No discrimination under new UGC rules'

"I assure you that whatever system or arrangement is made in India will be within the framework of the Constitution. No injustice, oppression, or discrimination will be committed against anyone," he said.

On Tuesday, students protested against the regulations outside Lucknow University and in parts of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, in Indore in Madhya Pradesh, and outside the UGC office in New Delhi. Students from Delhi University have also called for a protest on Wednesday.

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the student wing of RSS, on Tuesday also issued a statement, saying that while the new regulations were "well-intentioned", they required "clarity and balance". This statement quoted ABVP national general secretary Virendra Singh Solanki as saying that "there must be social equality for all sections of society".

Meanwhile, the National Students' Union of India, the Congress' student wing, backed the regulations as a "necessary step towards addressing discrimination on campuses across the country". NSUI national president Varun Choudhary expressed support for the framework in post on X.

On Tuesday, Rajya Sabha Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi doubled down on her argument that the new regulations were discriminatory against certain sections.

Students stage stir against rules in U.P.

Mrigendra Upadhyay, a BJP leader from Balrampur, said such rules would adversely impact upper caste students and portray them as culprits in case of complaints filed under the new framework.

"We need strong upper caste leaders to fight for our rights and raise our voice against discrimination in any form," he said. A few BJP leaders holding posts in district organisational units of Lucknow also resigned in protest. Earlier, Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council member and BJP leader Devendra Pratap Singh also questioned the regulations and called for a broader discussion.

In a related development, the State Government on January 26 suspended Bareilly City Magistrate and Provincial Civil Service (PCS) officer Alankar Agnihotri after he submitted his resignation from service, questioning government policies, including the UGC guidelines.

In a first, private technical staff set to assist officials in digital Census

Registrar-General and Census Commissioner of India Mritunjay Kumar Narayan tells States and Union Territories that the target is to 'get the digitised data from the field itself'; manpower will be hired on contract through outsourcing agencies

Vijaita Singh

NEW DELHI

In a first, private technical staff will be engaged to assist government officials during the Census enabling the "release of Census data in the shortest possible time", sources said.

The Population Census 2027, the first phase of which will begin on April 1 and conclude on September 30, will be the first-ever digital census in the country where the enumerators, mostly government school teachers, will capture details through mobile applications on their personal phones.

Registrar-General and Census Commissioner of India (RG&CCI) Mritunjay Kumar Narayan has written to the State governments that with the introduction of initiatives such as data collection through mobile applications and the use of the Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS), the Houselisting Block Creator (HLBC) Web application, self-enumeration portal and so on, the Census of India 2027 will



Census officials conducting a pre-test exercise in Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh in November last year. R.V. MOORTHY

be technologically intensive with a "target to get the digitised data from the field itself".

The letter added that assistance in terms of hired technical manpower would be provided to assist Census officials.

In addition to this, multi-tasking staff (MTS) for office assistance would be provided at the State and district levels. "The manpower will be hired for a maximum period of 18 months starting from January 2026," the RG&CCI said.

The State governments

have been asked to ensure that the hired personnel are suitably qualified to handle the digital applications and other related work.

Terms of remuneration

"The maximum monthly remuneration for Technical Assistant will be ₹25,000 per month and for MTS ₹18,000 per month. Apart from this amount, no other financial assistance with respect to the manpower will be provided by the Government of India. Further, this assistance, being provided to States/Un-

sists and two MTS at the State level; two Technical Assistants and one MTS at the district level; two Technical Assistants and one MTS at Municipal Corporations (where a Principal Census Officer is appointed); and one Technical Assistant at the Charge (tehsil) level. There are more than 700 districts in the country.

The RG&CCI said that the engagement of manpower will be "purely on short-term contractual basis" and the staff will not be entitled to any claims, rights, interests or further benefits in terms of regularisation or consideration of further appointment to any post, including any claims for any casual, ad hoc, temporary or regular service in the government.

Hiring would be done through an outsourcing agency only and not by direct appointment. "All payments will be made through outsourcing agency to the hired manpower. Retired government officials may also be considered subject to meeting the suitability for the work," the letter added.

The RG&CCI has ap-

proved four Technical As-sists and two MTS at the State level; two Technical Assistants and one MTS at the district level; two Technical Assistants and one MTS at Municipal Corporations (where a Principal Census Officer is appointed); and one Technical Assistant at the Charge (tehsil) level. There are more than 700 districts in the country.

However, no such attack was reported on Tuesday.

Earlier, on Saturday, Mr. Ahmad had called party leader Rahul Gandhi a "coward and insecure" politician who, he alleged, promotes young leaders who sing paeans within the party.

The former Congress leader had resigned from the party in November 2025.

"Just now, some Con-

gress colleagues secretly informed me that the Congress leadership has directed the Bihar Congress/Youth Congress wing to carry out attack on my residences in Patna and Madhubani on Tuesday under the pretext of burning an effigy. This is against the principles of democracy," Mr. Ahmad said in a post on social media late at night on Monday.

Plea in SC contests UGC regulations limiting reservation to SC/ST/OBC

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI



The plea says the new rules deny equal protection of law to a substantial section of citizens.

The 2026 Regulations have superseded the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2012 with the stated objective of fostering equity, inclusion and a discrimination-free academic environment across higher education in-

stitutions in line with the National Education Policy, 2020.

"Regulation 3(c) defined 'caste-based discrimination' in a narrowly confined manner as discrimination 'only on the basis of caste or tribe against the members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes'.

"By design and operation, this definition accords legal recognition of victimhood exclusively to certain reserved categories and categorically excludes persons belonging to general or upper castes from its protective ambit, regardless of the nature, gravity, or context of discrimination suffered by them... Such a definition institutionalises exclusion at the threshold, creates a

hierarchy of victimhood, and introduces a Constitutionally impermissible bias into a regulatory framework that purports to be neutral and inclusive," the petition submitted.

The petition argued that the new Regulations proceed on an untenable presumption that caste-based discrimination could operate only in one direction, foreclosing, as a matter of law, the possibility that persons belonging to general or upper castes may also be subjected to caste-based hostility, abuse, intimidation, or institutional prejudice.

"This presumption ignores the evolving social realities... The definition is manifestly arbitrary and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution..." the petition said.

Not normal to tolerate Pakistan's use of terror: India

Press Trust of India

UNITED NATIONS

In a strongly worded retort in the UNSC, India said it is

not normal to tolerate Pakistan's continued use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy, as New Delhi hit back at Islamabad's envoy for advancing a "false and self-serving" account of Operation Sindo.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, delivered a sharp response to comments made by Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad.

Mr. Ahmad spoke about Operation Sindo, Jammu and Kashmir and the Indus Waters Treaty in his re-

marks at the UN Security Council open debate on Monday on "Reaffirming international rule of law: pathways to reinvigorating peace, justice, and multilateralism".

With Mr. Ahmad telling the Council that Pakistan's response to Operation Sindo "established that there can be no 'new normal' based on coercion or impunity", Delhi slammed Islamabad, with Mr. Harish asserting that terrorism can never be normalised as Pakistan wishes to do.

CPI(M) slams India-EU FTA as 'surrender of economic interests'

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Tuesday strongly opposed the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed earlier in the day, calling it a "wholesale surrender" of India's economic interests.

In a statement, the Polit Bureau said the agreement would damage key domestic industries and undermine the livelihoods of workers, farmers, and small producers.

According to the CPI(M), India has agreed to eliminate or sharply reduce tariffs on more than 90% of goods imported from the EU, including major cuts on automobiles (from 110% to 40%), iron and steel (22% to 0%), pharmaceuticals (11% to 0%), wines and spirits (150% to 40%), processed foods (50% to 0%), and sheep meat (33% to

0%). Such tariff reductions, the party argued, would adversely affect the automobile, pharmaceutical, machinery, and electrical sectors, with the EU projecting its exports to India to rise by over 107% in the coming years.

The party said the benefits such as cheaper cars and wines would accrue only to affluent consumers while the broader impact of increased imports would threaten employment and destabilise domestic manufacturing.

The CPI(M) also criticised the FTA's alignment with the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), which designates Israel's Haifa port as a key transit point. At a time when global calls are growing to sanction Israel over its actions in Gaza, the party said, the Indian government was "deepening ties" instead.

Cerebration Corporate Quiz 2026 invites participants for 22nd edition

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI



are required to answer 25 questions to qualify for the regional rounds. The regional finals will take place between January 31 and Fe-

bruary 21 in Chennai, Hyderabad, Kochi, Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai, with the top six finalists from each city competing in the national finale.

Participants stand a chance to win a grand prize of up to ₹1.5 lakh, with the winners from each regional round advancing to the national final to compete for the Cerebration title.

The quiz is presented by Title Partner JK Tyre, powered by IndianOil, in as-



Children among six missing after boat capsizes in Brahmaputra

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

Six people, including children, have been reported missing after a motorised country boat capsized in the Brahmaputra river in western Assam

Barpeta district on Tuesday. The district police said that the boat, sailing from Rohampur, had 36 people aboard when tragedy struck.

This is the second motorised boat mishap in Assam in less than a year.



No incident after ex-MP flags threat to Bihar homes

Amaranth Tewary
PATNA

Amid fissures among party leaders in the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee, former three-term MLA, two-time MP, and Union Minister Shakeel Ahmad on Monday apprehended that there could be an attack on him and his residences in Patna and Madhubani the next day.

However, no such attack was reported on Tuesday.

Earlier, on Saturday, Mr. Ahmad had called party leader Rahul Gandhi a "coward and insecure" politician who, he alleged, promotes young leaders who sing paeans within the party.

The former Congress leader had resigned from the party in November 2025.

"Just now, some Con-

gress colleagues secretly informed me that the Congress leadership has directed the Bihar Congress/Youth Congress wing to carry out attack on my residences in Patna and Madhubani on Tuesday under the pretext of burning an effigy. This is against the principles of democracy," Mr. Ahmad said in a post on social media late at night on Monday.

At summit, EU asked India to put 'pressure' on Russia to end war, says Kaja Kallas

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Europe and India can build a partnership that is "predictable", Kaja Kallas, the foreign policy chief of the European Union, said on Tuesday, taking aim at the U.S., Russia, and China for increasing uncertainty in the world.

Ms. Kallas said that during the EU-India Summit on Tuesday between Prime Minister Narendra Modi, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and European Council President Antonio Costa, the EU had asked India to "put pressure" on Moscow to end the war in Ukraine.

Speaking at a think-tank event here, shortly after the India-EU free trade agreement (FTA) and Strategic and Defence Partnership were announced, Ms. Kallas said the U.S. "tariff threats", China's "economic coercion", and the "existential threat" to Europe from Russia were all common challenges.

In September 2025, Ms. Kallas had said that India's participation in the Zapad military exercises and its imports of Russian oil "stand in the way of closer ties" between New Delhi and Brussels.

Accusing Russia of refus-



Kaja Kallas

"weaponisation of trade" and highlighted the need for open sea lanes.

"[EU and India] both face economic coercive practices coming from China and to address this alone, we are both weak. But together we are much stronger [and can] stand up to this," Ms. Kallas said, adding that if companies were "hit" by Chinese practices, prosperity would also suffer, and the EU-India FTA would help the two countries cooperate against this, and shore up the multilateral world order.

Referring to President Donald Trump's imposition of new duties, without naming the U.S., she said the "constant threat of tariffs" and the reversal of signed agreements "by an executive order" had created pressure on companies around the world.

She stressed that India and the EU must "build confidence" and work on trade, security, defence and foreign policy together.

"[EU members] take a long time to negotiate an agreement, but when we do, we stick to them and actually implement them," she said, speaking at the Ananta Centre.

On Sunday, the Kremlin spokesperson had said that ceasefire talks in Abu Dhabi between Russia and Ukraine were under way, but European leaders, particularly Ms. Kallas, would not be included in the talks.

Calling for India and the EU to cooperate on the Indo-Pacific, the EU top diplomat criticised China's

hardware as well.

Prime Minister lauds 'ambitious' trade deal with European Union

Historic FTA a boost to investment between India and the European Union, says Modi; pact brings together Indian services and skills with European capital and innovations, says EU chief; deal 'opens a whole new world', says Union Home Minister

Kallop Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India "concluded" a "historic" Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the European Union, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, announcing the end of negotiations that began nearly two decades ago and were revived in 2022.

Speaking at the end of delegation-level talks with the visiting European leaders – European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa – Mr. Modi said that alongside the "ambitious FTA", India was also entering into a new Security and Defence Partnership and a system of mobility that would allow secure and legal movement of Indians to the EU region.

"Today, India has concluded the largest Free Trade Agreement in its history," said Mr. Modi. The two sides began discussions on the trade deal in 2007 but suspended the negotiation in 2013, and the talks were relaunched in 2022 as India and the EU began reorienting policies in the post-COVID-19 scenario. The Prime Minister presented the deal as a



Coming together: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen, and European Council President Antonio Costa witness the exchange of an MoU in New Delhi on Tuesday.

boost to investment between the EU and India that would support "innovation partnerships and strengthen supply chains at the global level".

The deal would "cut up to €4 billion in annual tariffs for exporters", Ms. von der Leyen said. "It brings together Indian skills, services and scale with Europe's technology, capital and innovation," she added.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah welcomed the FTA and said the deal "safeguards the related sectors" while "opening a whole new world of oppor-

tunities for textiles, apparel, leather footwear, marine products, gems, jewellery, handicrafts, engineering goods, medical instruments and appliances, plastics and automobile sectors."

Global uncertainties

Referring to global uncertainties, Mr. Modi said the two sides discussed the conflict in Ukraine, West Asia, and the Indo-Pacific theatre, saying: "In this context, the partnership between India and the European Union will strengthen stability within the international system."

17, 2025, that welcomes the "Board of Peace" for Gaza. The document reiterated the call for "implementation of the two-state solution, through dialogue and diplomacy" for the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Elaborating on the India-EU Security and Defence Partnership, Mr. Modi said: "This will help us work more closely on counter-terrorism, maritime security, and cybersecurity."

The two sides welcomed the launch of talks on a "Security of Information Agreement" to facilitate the exchange of classified information. Briefing the media about the discussion, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said India has defence and security partnerships with "several individual EU member states" already, but this framework agreement on security and defence would "allow Indian defence companies to benefit from opportunities arising from the EU's own very significant defence initiatives that are underway". The European Commission President described the defence and security framework as "a landmark departure and a trust-based platform".

Cong. to raise MGNREGA, SIR in Budget Session

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The replacement of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the special intensive revision of electoral rolls, additional tariffs over the purchase of Russian crude, and other key economic and foreign policy issues will be taken up by the Congress in the first part of the Budget Session of Parliament, which begins on Wednesday.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the party's parliamentary strategy group, held at the residence of Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and other leaders were present. Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor could not attend as he was returning from Dubai, and a source said he had informed the party of his absence in advance.

Briefing presspersons, Congress leader Naseer Hussain said leaders of Opposition parties would meet at 10 a.m. in Mr. Kharge's chamber in Parliament House on Wednesday to work out a joint strategy for the session.

"The biggest issue that has emerged is that of MGNREGA. We held a detailed discussion and will raise it during the first part of the session. Alongside, the issue of SIR would also be raised," he added.

Opposition, TDP seeks briefing on FTAs; parties for debate on job Act

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Congress leader Jairam Ramesh after the meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Several floor leaders from the Opposition and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which is a key Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ally, on Tuesday urged the Centre to keep Parliament informed about the recently concluded Foreign Trade Agreements (FTAs), and ongoing negotiations with the United States. They made the demand at an all-party meeting chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh ahead of the Budget Session.

India concluded negotiations with the European Union on Tuesday, and signed FTAs with the U.K., Singapore, and the UAE recently.

The TDP's Lok Sabha floor leader, Lalu Sri Krishna Devarayalu, told the meeting that given the shifting global economic landscape, particularly under the new tariff regime imposed by the U.S., it was essential for Parliament to be updated on the FTAs the government had negotiated. Mr. Devarayalu

urged the government to bring legislation giving statutory backing to Amravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh. Such a Bill was likely to be brought during the Budget Session, sources indicated.

Multiple topics
Opposition leaders demanded a debate on India's foreign policy, flagging what they described as "repeated humiliation" in response to statements by U.S. President Donald Trump. They sought a "structured" debate on the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, and

the rural employment legislation – the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act.

Several Opposition leaders, including John Brittas of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Kodikkunnil Suresh of the Congress, P. Sandosh Kumar of the Communist Party of India, Ram Gopal Yadav of the Samajwadi Party, and Sanjay Singh of the Aam Aadmi Party, asked the government to explain its response to comments made by Mr. Trump.

They questioned India's "silence" regarding global

conflicts, including issues related to Venezuela, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the U.S.'s purported claim over Greenland.

Orderly conduct

However, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju ruled out debates on the SIR and the VB-G RAM G Act. "Once a law is before the nation, we have to follow it. We cannot reverse the gear," he said. The issues could be raised during debates on the President's Address and the Budget, he said.

The Congress's Chief Whip in the Rajya Sabha, Jairam Ramesh, and Mr. Brittas objected to the non-circulation of government business for the session. Mr. Rijiju said the list would be shared in due course. Running the House smoothly, he said, remained the government's priority.

Mr. Rijiju appealed for orderly conduct. "My sincere appeal is that while exercising our right to speak, we must also have the duty to listen to other honourable members," the Minister said.

EU, India to collaborate on 'peaceful uses' of nuclear energy under Euratom deal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Union Minister Piyush Goyal and NSA Ajit Doval with delegates from the European Union in New Delhi on Tuesday. AP

The European Union (EU) and India have committed to promoting collaboration on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the India-Euratom agreement, according to a statement from the Joint India-European Union Comprehensive Strategic Agenda on Tuesday. India and the EU had signed a research and development agreement on peaceful uses of nuclear energy with Euratom, Europe's atomic energy body, in July 2020.

The statement on Tuesday highlighted collaboration on research and development activities in nuclear science and technology, advanced materials for detectors, radiation safety, nuclear security, non-power applications of atomic energy, including cooperation on radio-pharmaceuticals, and strengthening cooperation in the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). It also spoke of "deepening cooperation" under the EU research and innovation programme, Horizon Europe, including in the fields of energy, water, agri-food, health, semiconductors, biotech, advanced materials, particularly through mechanisms such as co-funding and coordinated calls. Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research.

While specifics are unclear, one of the major sticking points involving

the EU and India was the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which imposed additional tariffs on iron and steel producers, outside the EU, who emit more carbon emissions in the production of iron and steel than European producers.

"Through CBAM provisions, commitments have been secured, including a forward-looking, most-favoured nation assurance, extending flexibilities, if any, granted to third countries under the regulation," India's Press Information Bureau said in a statement.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
TELANGANA GOVT. TEXT BOOK PRESS**
Mint Compound, Kharibabad, Hyderabad - 500 063. Tel : 040-23234839
e-PROCUREMENT FOR TENDER NOTICE
Rc. No.3141/P2/2025 Date: 24-01-2026
Online tenders in two bid system are invited for the academic year 2026-27 on "on All India Basis" for Supply of Art Card 200 GSM (White) 'Virgin pulp' and Virgin Coated White Bleached Board with White back of 200 GSM. The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from www.tender.telangana.gov.in from 28-01-2026 from 11.00 A.M onwards and last date & time for download is 03-02-2026 at 2.00 PM
Sd/- CH RAMANA KUMAR, Director
Telangana Govt. Text Book Press, Hyderabad
DIPR R.O.No.14539-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2025-26 Dt. 27.01.2026

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in Mobile No. 96461-55525
E-Tender Enq. No. 707/P-3/EMPW-13233 Dated: 22/01/2026
Dy. Chief Engineer/Headquarter (Procurement Cell-3) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No 2026_POWER_158515_1 for Breakdown/Preventive Mtc. & Overhauling of DM Plants, D.G. Sets, Compressors, Hydrogen gas handling, Fire protection system, AC system and other allied Mechanical Auxiliaries of stage-II and III for 4 units BHEL make 210 MW each and work of Central Mechanical Workshop at GGSSTP, Rupnagar. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from dated 27.01.2026 / 12:00 Noon onwards.
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
1079/12/2025-26/7576 RTP 13/26

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA-DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP, SDSC -SHAR
SRIHARIKOTA-524124**
Brief E-TENDER NOTICE
e-Tender Notice No. SHAR/CMDA/02587215/2025-26 Date: 23/01/2026
On behalf of President of India, Item tenders are invited through e-tendering for the following works:

Sl. No.	Brief Name of work	Est.Value (Rs)
1	Replacement of Airconditioning plant serving for L110 facility at FLP area, SDSCSHAR (Airconditioning Works).	252.11 Lakhs

Last date for sale (Tender documents can be downloaded) up to 10/02/2026, 14:30 hrs. For eligibility criteria and other details, interested tenderers may please refer to the detailed bilingual (Hindi-English) Notice Inviting Tenders (NIT) on the website <https://www.isro.gov.in/Tenders.html> and tender free view at <https://www.tenderwizard.com/isro>.

Sd/- GROUP HEAD, CMG/ SDSC SHAR

Now reading:
Journalists with breaking news, not broken news.

THE HINDU
Since 1878
Written by
JOURNALISTS
Print | Web | App

IN BRIEF



60 stranded people, including troops, rescued in Jammu

Heavy and continuing snowfall left the Kashmir Valley cut off, with most roads and all air traffic closed on Tuesday. The snow and transport chaos had left at least 60 people, including 40 security personnel, stranded in Doda, Jammu. They were rescued by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). "The rescue began on January 24, a day after heavy snowfall, which continued for nearly 40 hours, left approximately 38 km of road under five to six feet of snow. The route was opened by January 25 evening, enabling safe evacuation of 20 stranded civilians and 40 personnel of the 4 Rashtriya Rifles (RR)," the spokesman said.

196 contacts linked to Nipah cases found negative in W.B.

As per reports received from the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), only two confirmed cases of Nipah virus disease have been reported from West Bengal from December 2025 till date, said a release issued by the Health Ministry on Tuesday. Following confirmation of these two cases, the Central government, in coordination with the government of West Bengal, initiated comprehensive public health measures in accordance with established protocols. A total of 196 contacts linked to the confirmed cases have been identified, traced, monitored, and tested. All traced contacts have tested negative and are asymptomatic for the Nipah virus disease.

NEET PG vacancies highest in Maharashtra, Karnataka, T.N.

Based on data from the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) for the 2025-26 academic session, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu have the highest number of vacant seats under the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Postgraduate) or NEET PG 2025-26 across the country. All three States have more than 2,000 vacant seats each under the private, management and NRI quotas. Subjects with the maximum number of vacant seats include microbiology, pathology, biochemistry, and pharmacology. Specialties such as general medicine, radio diagnosis, general surgery, and dermatology continue to be the most sought after.

U.P. man held by Gujarat ATS in terror conspiracy case

The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) has arrested a man in connection with a terror conspiracy case, officials said on Tuesday. The accused, Faizan Shaikh, a native of Dundwala in Uttar Pradesh's Rampur district and currently residing at Charpol in Gujarat's Navsari district, was arrested on Sunday. Officials said he had allegedly been radicalised by the ideologies of terror groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed and Al-Qaeda. According to the ATS, Shaikh had illegally procured a weapon and ammunition with the intention of targeting a specific group of individuals in order to spread fear and terror. Further details were not disclosed.

Acquire, auction assets of acid attackers to pay victims, says SC

The CJI says that acid attacks should result in extraordinary punitive measures beyond the letters of the law; the court assures the petitioner best legal representation for her case; it asks the Centre to consider 'legislative interventions'

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday recommended that the assets of people found guilty of carrying out acid attacks should be seized and auctioned to compensate their victims, both as a punishment and a measure of deterrence.

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, heading a Bench, said the crime of acid attacks should result in "extraordinary punitive measures which are beyond the letters of the law".

The top court said adopting a "reformative approach has no place for acid attack survivor and activist Shabeen Malik, who said the pain caused when acid consumed one's life and identity was "unbelievably traumatic".

"The pain is so bad, so bad, that even I cannot express it. I had 25 surgeries. The mental and physical pain is extreme. One loses a sense of identity. I have sight in at least one eye. There are many women out there who are completely blind and who have not got any help from the State," Ms. Malik said.

She informed the court that her alleged attackers had recently been acquitted by the trial court.

Deterrent needed

"If a person is found guilty of acid attack, why should all his assets not be acquired and auctioned in a transparent manner to compensate the victim."

The police should probe his assets, to whom they belong, etc, and submit the details along with the chargesheet in court, which should order an embargo on creating third party rights on these assets," Chief Justice Kant observed.

Chief Justice Kant said the state action should be extremely painful for the those convicted of the crime. Otherwise, punishment would not act as a deterrent against future attacks, especially on young women and children.

SURYA KANT
Chief Justice of India

QQ The state action should be extremely painful for the accused; otherwise, punishment would not act as a deterrent against future attacks, especially on young women and children



pletely blind and who have not got any help from the State," Ms. Malik said.

Chief Justice Kant asked her to give a list of four or five lawyers she considered good, so that the top court could appoint them as her legal aid counsel in the High Court.

"We will see that you get the best legal representation," Chief Justice Kant assured Ms. Malik.

The court asked the Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor-General Archana Pathak Dave, to consider "legislative interventions" on behalf of acid attack survivors.

"This crime should not be seen as any less than dowry death. There should be a shifting of onus onto the accused. Again, why should this crime be part of the general sentencing

policy? Why don't you consider carving out an exception?" Chief Justice Kant asked the Centre's law officer. The Bench directed States to furnish a list of the incidents of acid attacks reported yearly, the number of chargesheets filed, cases decided, pending appeals, brief particulars of each victim, their academic qualifications, current employment and marital status, medical treatment, and details of expenses incurred or committed by the State rehabilitation scheme for victims of acid attack, if any. It also sought details separately of victims who were forcibly made to ingest acid.

The court asked the States to provide details of any special scheme run by them for survivors.

Reports from 15 High Courts submitted in the top court showed that the highest number of pending cases of acid attacks were in Uttar Pradesh at 198, followed by 160 in West Bengal, 114 in Gujarat, 68 in Bihar, and 58 in Maharashtra.

SC declines plea against 'VIP darshan' in temple

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to hear a petition challenging the practice of 'VIP darshan' at the famed Shri Mahakaleshwar temple in Ujjain, observing that the court is not meant to play the role of a gatekeeper on who enters a temple and when.

"In the presence of Ma-hakal (the deity), nobody is a VIP," Chief Justice of India Surya Kant addressed advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, counsel for the petitioner, Darpan Awasthi.

Mr. Jain argued that there ought to be a uniform policy, especially about entering the *garbh graha* (*sanctum sanctorum*). "The court is not the one to decide on this. Courts cannot start to decide who should be allowed or not and when they should be allowed," Chief Justice Kant responded.

Mr. Awasthi had challenged a Madhya Pradesh High Court order dismissing his petition against the preferential treatment given to VIPs to enter the *sanctum* to offer water to the deity, while denying access to the general public.

BJP violated Constitutional protocol by insulting LoPs'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of violating Constitutional protocol in regard to the treatment of the Leaders of the Opposition (LoPs) during Republic Day and called it a warning sign for democracy.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said on Republic Day itself, the BJP "chose to destroy the ethos of a Republic and acted on the whim of their Supreme Leader".

"...Hon'ble Mallikarjun @kharge ji and Sh. @RahulGandhi ji enjoy Cabinet rank by virtue of their posts, yet were relegated to the back rows during the Republic Day event. This has shown the PM's political immaturity to the entire world – how he chose to violate Constitutional norms because of his petty political outlook," he said.

Ahead of Union Budget, Congress questions credibility of official data

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

On the eve of the Budget session of Parliament, the Congress on Tuesday questioned the credibility of official economic data, alleging that inequality was widening even as welfare measures were being rolled back.

The party released its annual report "Inequality on the rise, welfare in retreat – real state of the economy, 2026", days before the tabling of the Economic Survey and the presentation of the Union Budget.

The Congress said the exercise was aimed at placing "facts" before the public ahead of what it described as a government-driven "propaganda" push through the President's Address, the Economic Survey and the Budget.

"It [the report] correctly identifies the key challenges to the Indian economy stemming from 'K-shaped'



tion rate is not the reality of people's lives. Former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian calculates that GDP figures are at least 2.5% higher than actual reality," Mr. Gowda said.

He pointed out that in 2024, the government's production-side GDP estimate showed growth of 9.2%, which was 47% higher than the 4.9% growth indicated by the expenditure-side GDP metric. "In the first half of 2025-26, manufacturing reportedly grew at 8.4%. But the Index of Eight Core Industries showed only 2.9% growth," he said.

On rupee depreciation

Mr. Gowda criticised the government over the depreciation of the rupee, stating that it had emerged as Asia's worst-performing currency in 2025. "In four of 10 months of 2025, net FDI was negative. More investors withdrew money and more Indian money

was invested abroad compared to foreign investments into India," he said.

Highlighting employment trends, he said the share of workers in manufacturing declined from 12.1% in 2017-18 to 11.4% in 2023-24. "What happened to Make in India? Agriculture's share rose from 44.1% to 46.1%... Job growth is concentrated in low value, informal, and gig economy," Mr. Gowda said.

Flagging what he described as "rising inequality", the Congress leader said the top 10% accounted for 58% of national income, while the bottom half received only 15%. He claimed that four of five Indians subsisted on less than ₹200 per day, while one-third lived on less than ₹100 a day.

"Net household financial savings are at a five-decade low of 5.2%, household debt is sharply up to 41% from 35% in 2019," he said.

Death toll in Kolkata fire rises to eight; 18 still missing

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

The death toll in the Anandapur warehouse fire in Kolkata rose to eight on Tuesday. Senior officials of the West Bengal Department of Fire and Emergency Services said a fire clearance certificate had not been obtained by the warehouse. About 18 people are still missing.

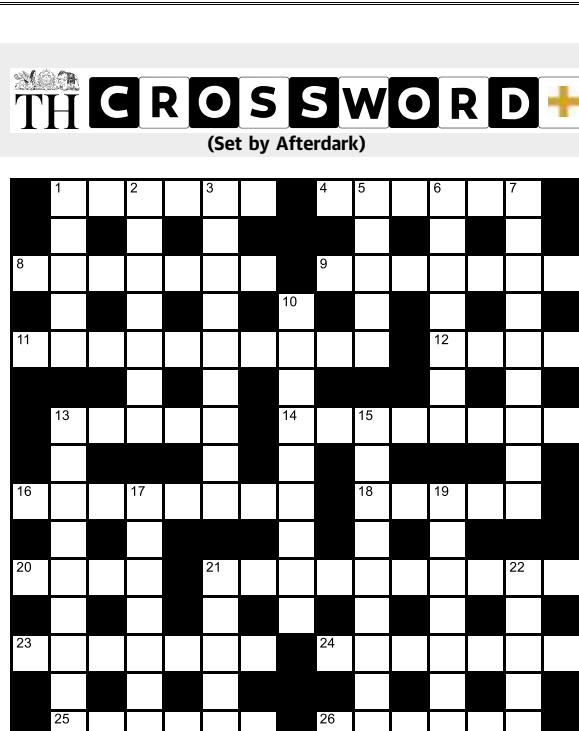
"There was no fire clearance, [of] that we are certain. Rest will be found in further investigation. We will definitely file FIRs (first information reports) because there were violations," Ranvir Kumar, Director-General, West Bengal Department of Fire and Emergency Services, told mediapersons on Tuesday at the site of the tragedy.

The charred bodies are yet to be identified. Family members of the deceased and missing people gathered at the site.

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at <https://thehindu.com/crosswords>



- 13 Situation worries public, people beaten, rise in the end (5)
14 Without monitors, last period was arranged on celestial object (8)
16 Fancy composition by fine worker at East perhaps (8)
18 Topless model is substantial (5)
20 Grow back (4)
21 Trouble on joint for dressmaker (10)
23 Arranged medical units of ten (7)
24 Native extremist (7)
25 View map (6)
26 Tease in X backed by timeline with energy (6)
- Down
1 Disgrace for impostor having ecstasy (5)
2 Rope used in ship's latrine is frayed (7)
3 Intrusion of spies from the east, seen as trouble on understanding (9)
5 Monkey goes over current fast (5)
6 Art director leaves Cred, ill-treated as deserter (7)
7 Soldiers' old lover's a source to question again (2-7)
10 Indian king to open meat counter across a highway corner (9)
13 Irregular sleep has troubled son (9)
15 Sexually ambiguous person deceased in shift (9)
17 After leaving electric vehicle, retriever ran to another dog (7)
19 Last exercise with policeman's on street (7)
21 Order cold beer after some starter (5)
22 Carve up small rabbit (5)



- Across
1 Thirssur taxicab carrying extra liability (6)
4 Second coffee's early essentially (6)
8 Two characters swap places in military wedding (7)
9 Show bearcat's movement (7)
11 From Paris; free to consult (10)
12 Tree's leaves given to Kelvin (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

S	E	A	L	I	S	T	I	N	F	A	C	I	D	G
I	P	J	N	O	E	A								
T	H	R	O	U	D	S	N	I	V	E	L			
U	L	I	O	V	A	G	I	D						
B	O	D	E	C	E	T	J	F						
S	O	G	V	R	N	M	U							
P	Q	X	W	Z	Y	S	T							
Q	W	U	V	Z	Y	X	T							
Q	Y	U	V	Z	W	X	T							
Q	Z	Y	U	W	V	X	T							
Q	W	Z	Y	U	V	X	T							
Q	V	W	Z	Y	U	X	T							
Q	X	V	W	Z	Y	U	T							
Q	U	X	V	W	Z	Y	T							
Q	T	U	X	V	W	Z	Y							
Q	Y	T	U	X	V	W	Z							

BRUSSELS

'Keep dreaming': Rutte says Europe can't defend itself without the U.S.



NATO chief Mark Rutte warned on Monday Europe cannot defend itself without the United States, in the face of calls for the continent to stand on its own feet after tensions over Greenland. "If anyone thinks here again, that the Europe can defend itself without the US – keep on dreaming. You can't," Mr. Rutte told lawmakers. AFP

CAIRO

Hamas seeks role for its police in Gaza ahead of disarmament talks'



Hamas is seeking to incorporate its 10,000 police officers into a new U.S.-backed Palestinian administration for Gaza, sources said. The 20-point plan to end the war, now in its second phase, calls for the governance of Gaza to be handed to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, a Palestinian technocratic body. REUTERS

MOSCOW

Russia's military chief visits troops in east Ukraine: Defence Ministry



The Russian army's chief of staff, Valery Gerasimov, has visited troops fighting in eastern Ukraine, Russia's Defence Ministry said on Tuesday. Gen. Gerasimov "inspected the progress of combat missions conducted by formations and units of the Zapad (West) force group," the Ministry wrote on Telegram. AFP

LOS ANGELES

TikTok settles lawsuit on social media addiction hours before trial



Video sharing app TikTok has made an eleventh-hour deal to avoid a landmark U.S. trial accusing it, along with Meta and YouTube, of addicting young people to social media, lawyers said on Tuesday. The deal was made as jury selection was to begin in a Los Angeles court that could establish a legal precedent. AFP

Trump says Iran wants talks as U.S. strike group arrives in West Asia

President states the U.S. has a 'big armada' near Iran, larger than the one used against Venezuela; U.S. intelligence reports say Iran govt's position is weakening; Senator Lindsey Graham urges Republican President to end Iranian regime after talks

Agence France-Presse

PARIS

A U.S. naval strike force led by an aircraft carrier was in West Asian waters on Tuesday as Iran vowed to hit back against any strike and President Donald Trump said he believed the Islamic republic still wanted talks.

Washington has not ruled out new military intervention against Tehran over its crackdown on protests, which according to rights groups saw thousands of people killed within days.

A strike group led by the USS Abraham Lincoln has now arrived in West Asian



Locked and loaded: A strike group led by the USS Abraham Lincoln has arrived in West Asian waters, says U.S. Central Command. AFP

waters, U.S. Central Command said, without revealing its precise location.

Since Iran earlier this month launched the crackdown on protests accompanied by a blanket Inter-

net blackout, Mr. Trump has given mixed signals on intervention which some opponents of the clerical leadership see as the only way to bring about change. "We have a big armada

next to Iran. Bigger than Venezuela," Mr. Trump told the Axios news site, weeks after U.S. military action resulted in the capture of the Latin American nation's President Nicolas Maduro.

But he added: "They want to make a deal. I know so. They called on numerous occasions. They want to talk."

Axios said Mr. Trump declined to discuss the options presented to him by his national security team, or which one he prefers.

Analysts say options include strikes on military facilities or targeted hits against the leadership under Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a full-scale bid to bring

down the system that has ruled Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution that ousted the shah.

The New York Times, meanwhile, reported that Mr. Trump has received multiple U.S. intelligence reports "indicating that the Iranian government's position is weakening" and signalling its hold on power "is at its weakest point" since the shah's fall.

U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham told the paper he had spoken with Mr. Trump in recent days about Iran and that "the goal is to end the regime." "They may stop killing them today, but if they're in charge next month, they'll kill them then."

Trump to hike tariffs on South Korea goods to 25%

Agence France-Presse

SEOUL

South Korea's government on Tuesday held emergency talks after U.S. President Donald Trump said he will raise tariffs on South Korean goods, including autos, lumber and pharmaceuticals.

Mr. Trump said on Monday that he would raise tariffs on the goods, accusing South Korea of not living up to an earlier trade pact struck with Washington.

South Korea's presidential office said it had not been officially informed about the tariff hike plans in advance.

The increase would bring tariff levels from 15% to 25%.

"South Korea's Legislature is not living up to its Deal with the United States," Mr. Trump wrote



Donald Trump

on his Truth Social platform.

He added that he was increasing tariff rates "because the Korean Legislature hasn't enacted our Historic Trade Agreement, which is their prerogative."

On Tuesday, Seoul convened an emergency meeting to hash out a response, with Trade and Industry Minister Kim Jung-kwan, currently in Canada, joining remotely.

"Our government in-

tends to convey its commitment to implementing the tariff agreement to the U.S. side, while responding in a calm and measured manner," Seoul said in a statement.

The country added it believed Washington's "tariff hikes only take effect after administrative steps such as publication in the Federal Register".

South Korea has said Trade Minister Kim will travel to Washington for talks on the issue with U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

Mr. Trump's apparent about-face comes months after Washington and Seoul struck a trade and security deal, capping a period of tense negotiations. The agreement was finalized after Trump met his South Korean counterpart Lee Jae Myung in October.

U.S. sued over deadly missile strikes on alleged drug boats

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON

Relatives of two Trinidadian men killed last year in a U.S. military strike on a boat allegedly carrying drugs filed a wrongful death lawsuit on Tuesday against the U.S. government.

It is the first such case to be brought against the Trump administration over the three dozen missile strikes in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific, which have left at least 125 people

dead since September.

The suit, filed in a federal court in Massachusetts, is being brought by the families of Chad Joseph, 26, and Rishi Samaroo, 41, who were among six people killed in an October 14 strike in the Caribbean.

President Donald Trump alleged at the time that "six male narcoterrorists" were killed in a boat allegedly ferrying drugs from Venezuela to the U.S. Washington has yet to release any evidence supporting its claims.

Doomsday Clock: 85 seconds to midnight

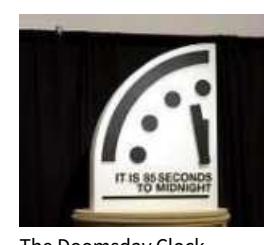
Vasudevan Mukunth

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has moved the hands of the Doomsday Clock to 85 seconds to midnight, the closest the world has ever been to global catastrophe in its estimation. The announcement, on January 27 in Washington DC, reflects a darkening security landscape marked by eroding nuclear norms, escalating conflicts in Europe and Asia, climate and biological risks, and a fracturing international order.

The new setting moves the clock forward from its previous position of 89 seconds to midnight from a year ago.

"Last year, we warned that the world was perilously close to catastrophe and that countries needed to change course towards international cooperation and actions on the most critical existential risks," SSB Chair and University of Chicago professor Daniel Holz said. "Unfortunately, the opposite has happened."

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists was founded in 1945 by University of Chicago scientists who had helped develop the first atomic weapons in the Manhattan Project. The Doomsday Clock was created two years later, in 1947, as a metaphor for the



The Doomsday Clock

xiety among both allies and adversaries.

"The last remaining treaty governing nuclear weapon stockpiles between the U.S. and Russia expires next week. For the first time in over half a century, there will be nothing preventing a runaway nuclear arms race," Mr. Holz said.

He also cited the worsening consequences of climate change, AI's effects on mis- and dis-information, and what he called the "rise of nationalistic autocracies" – referring to the recent events in Minnesota – to support the Clock being less than a minute and half from midnight.

Japan-U.S. ties would crumble if Tokyo ignored Taiwan crisis'

Reuters

TOKYO

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said Japan's strategic alliance with the U.S. would collapse if Tokyo were to turn away from a conflict in Taiwan, but distanced herself from previous comments that suggested a possible military response in such an event.

Ms. Takaichi expressed her latest views on a nationally broadcast TV programme late on Monday, where an Opposition party

leader criticised her for igniting tensions with China with the earlier remarks.

"I want to make it absolutely clear that this is not about Japan going out and taking military action if China and the United States come into conflict (over Taiwan)," Ms. Takaichi said. "If something serious happens there, we would have to go to rescue the Japanese and American citizens in Taiwan. In that situation, there may be cases where we take joint action."

Sport

Alcaraz, Sabalenka, Zverev ease into the last four; Svitolina ousts Gauff

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Reuters

MELBOURNE

Carlos Alcaraz sizzled under the bright lights at the Australian Open and blazed into the semifinals on Tuesday after fellow top seed Aryna Sabalenka remained cool in the unforgiving Melbourne heat to stay on course for another title.

Alexander Zverev was briefly made to sweat under the roof of Rod Laver Arena against Learner Tien, but a frustrated Coco Gauff unravelled in a racket-smashing meltdown following a stunning defeat by Elina Svitolina.

That preceded Alcaraz's dominant 7-5, 6-2, 6-1 victory over Alex de Minaur on the main showcourt, as the Spaniard dashed his sixth-

seeded opponent's hopes of ending a five-decade Australian wait for a home-grown men's champion.

The 22-year-old – a six-times major winner – is seeking his own piece of history at Melbourne Park, where he can eclipse Don Budge and become the youngest man to lift all four Grand Slam trophies.

Sabalenka, chasing her third title in four years, also got into a high gear for a dominant 6-3, 6-0 win over 18-year-old Iva Jovic on a sweltering Centre Court, where the roof was open with the "Heat Stress Scale" not at its highest threshold.

Up next for Sabalenka is Ukrainian 12th seed Svitolina, who took full advantage of Gauff's woes on serve and reached her first Australian Open semifinal with a 6-1, 6-2 victory in un-

der an hour. Gauff later looked for a place without cameras to channel her frustration and was unhappy to find out that a video of her obliterating her racket on a concrete floor inside Melbourne Park was broadcast to viewers worldwide.

The decision to close the roof made conditions easier for the players, but Zverev was unable to get into his comfort zone against Tien, before prevailing 6-3, 6-7(5), 6-1, 7-6(3) and stay on course for a first Grand Slam trophy.

QUARTERFINAL RESULTS

Men: 3-Zverev (Ger) bt 25-Tien (USA) 6-3, 6-7(5), 6-1, 7-6(3); 1-Alcaraz (Esp) bt 6-Minaur (Aus) 7-5, 6-2, 6-1.

Women: 1-Sabalenka (Blr) bt 29-Jovic (USA) 6-3, 6-0; 12-Svitolina (Ukr) bt 3-Gauff (USA) 6-1, 6-2.

Day 10 in numbers

1 The 31-year-old Svitolina is the second-oldest woman (after Lucic in 2017) to reach her maiden semifinals in Melbourne

2 Svitolina is the second Ukrainian, after Yastremska, to enter the last four of the Melbourne Major

2 The 22-year-old Alcaraz is the second-youngest man (after Nadal, Australian Open 2009) to reach a 10th semifinal at Grand Slams

3 Sabalenka is the third top-seeded woman (Serena, 2016; Barty, 2022) in the last decade to advance to the semifinals without dropping a set Down Under

8 The Belarusian is the third woman (after Davenport and Hingis) since 1988 to reach eight or more consecutive semifinals at the hard-court Slams

10 Zverev becomes the first player born since 1990 to enter 10 Grand Slam semifinals

13 Among women, Svitolina has needed the most main draw appearances (13) before reaching her first semifinal at Melbourne Park

17 Alcaraz has won 17 of his 25 matches against top-10 players at Slams. Since the ATP rankings were introduced in 1973, only Borg (19) and Sampras (18) have a better record

Wednesday's picks

WOMEN

2-Swiatek vs 5-Rybakina

4-Anisimova vs 6-Pegula

MEN

4-Djokovic vs 5-Musetti

2-Sinner vs 8-Shelton



Compiled by ANIRUDH VELAMURI

Godinez does it for Punjab Royals against Maharashtra Kesari

PWL

Sports Bureau

Ana Godinez proved to be the gamechanger for Punjab Royals with a dominating 11-2 win over Dudova Bilyana Zhivkova in 62kg,

sealing the match and full points for her team in the Pro Wrestling League (PWL) in Greater Noida.

End of campaign

The victory helped Punjab Royals post a 5-4 win over Maharashtra Kesari, which ended its campaign with six points in five matches with 23 bout wins.

Royals raced to a 4-1 lead before Kesari fought

back to make it 3-4 as Godinez sealed the deal.

The results:

Punjab Royals bt Maharashtra Kesari 5-4: Men: 57kg: Atish Todkar (Kesari) bt Chirag Chhikara (Royals) 13-10.

65kg: Tevanyan Vazgen (Kesari) bt Anuj Kumar (Royals) 12-0.

74kg: Chander Mohan (Royals) bt Yash (Kesari) 18-0.

86kg: Sandeep Maan (Royals) bt Amit (Kesari) 8-7.

125kg: Robert Baran (Kesari) bt Dinesh Dhankhar (Royals) 10-1;

Women: 53kg: Meenakshi (Royals) bt Guzman Lopez Yusneilys (Kesari) 6-0.

57kg: Manisha Bhanwala (Kesari) bt Rajnita Jangra (Royals) 2-1.

WALK IN THE PARK

India crushes Zimbabwe in its u-19 WC Super Six opener



Vihann Malhotra smashed a ton as India beat Zimbabwe by 204 runs in their Super Six Group 2 match at the u-19 WC in Bulawayo on Tuesday. **The scores:** India 352/8 in 50 overs (Suryavanshi 52, Vihann 109 n.o., Abhigyan 61, Chimugoro 3/49) bt Zimbabwe 148 in 37.4 overs (Chiwaula 62, Udhav 3/20, Mhatre 3/14). **PoM:** Vihann.

WORLD CUP CHANCES

India will be the favourite, but it will need destiny and luck: Dravid



Rahul Dravid rated India's chances highly at the upcoming T20 World Cup but felt luck would matter too. "T20 is the easiest format for upsets, but we have 80% success rate. India will make the semifinals, but after that, it is a question of having two good days. India will be the favourite, but it will need both destiny and luck."

NEED OF THE HOUR

Dravid bats for more red-ball practice ahead of Test matches



When I was playing, we used to get a whole month's training before a Test. How do you find the time to develop skills that are hard? Shubman Gill recently alluded to it, and he is someone who was playing all three formats until recently — Rahul Dravid on Indian batters' struggles against spin.

Dominant show

Root, Brook slam tons as England seals series victory over Lanka



Joe Root and Harry Brook's centuries helped England beat Sri Lanka by 53 runs in the third ODI in Colombo on Tuesday and win the series 2-1. **The scores:** England 357/3 in 50 overs (Root 111 n.o., Bethell 65, Brook 136 n.o.) bt Sri Lanka 304 in 46.4 overs (Nissanka 50, Rathnayake 121). **Toss:** England. **PoM:** Brook; **PsO:** Root.



Fine margins: Devine took two wickets in the 20th over after Sneh survived a run-out scare. PTI

Devine holds nerve, Giants pip Capitals

With DC needing nine runs in the final over, the Kiwi concedes just five; Niki and Sneh's knocks go in vain; the victory takes Gujarat to second

WPL-4**Vivek Krishnan**

VADODARA

The exuberance of Niki Prasad and the experience of Sneh Rana combined to nearly snatch victory from the jaws of defeat for Delhi Capitals in the Women's Premier League on Tuesday. However, Sophie Devine maintained her poise in the final over and helped Gujarat Giants eke out a three-run win at the Kottamti Stadium.

With Capitals needing nine runs off the last over to chase down 175, Devine conceded just five. The seamer managed to dismiss Sneh off the fourth ball, and had Niki hole out at long-on off the final ball.

That DC came so close was purely down to a rear-guard stand of 70 between Niki and Sneh for the seventh wicket. When they came together, the visitors were 100 for six, requiring another 75 runs from 33 deliveries. The duo injected belief into the camp by taking 23 runs off Devine in

Points table

	M	W	L	Pts	NRR
Royal Challengers (Q)	7	5	2	10	0.947
Gujarat Giants	7	4	3	8	-0.271
Mumbai Indians	7	3	4	6	0.146
Delhi Capitals	7	3	4	6	-0.164
UP Warriorz	6	2	4	4	-0.769

Q: Qualified

the 17th over.

DC's response with the bat ebbed and flowed from the outset. In the first six overs, a mix of daring strokeplay and wayward bowling yielded a quick flow of runs, but DC also lost the wickets of openers Shafali Verma and Lizelle Lee.

Three quick wickets
Laura Wolvaardt and Jemimah Rodrigues seemed to bring a semblance of calm with a 31-run stand for the third wicket. But, in the space of 10 balls, Jemimah, Marizanne Kapp and Wolvaardt were all dismissed.

Rajeshwari Gayakwad removed Shafali, Wolvaardt and Chinelle Henry to finish with three for 20. Earlier, Giants rode on Beth Mooney's 46-ball 58 to reach a competitive 174

for nine. Anushka Sharma, who made 39 at No. 3, provided able support to Mooney.

Having strode in at the fall of Devine's wicket, Anushka drove and flicked with authority for a spree of early boundaries. For DC, left-arm spinner Shree Charani starred with figures of four for 31.

Mooney brought up her half-century in the 15th over by charging at Shree Charani for a boundary towards long-on. She then pre-empted the bowler pulling back the length, and duly rocked back for a cut through point.

While the wicketkeeper-batter couldn't stay through to the end, the runs she compiled proved decisive to the final verdict.

Devine 47 (24b, 9x4), Sneh Rana c Wareham, 14.4), 5-131 (Bharti, 15.4), 6-135 (Mooney, 16.3), 7-139 (Kashvee, 17.1), 8-151 (Kanika, 17.6), 9-174 (Tanuja).

CAPITALS BOWLING
Kapp 4-0-34-1, Henry 4-0-38-2, Nandani 4-0-26-1, Shree Charani 4-0-31-4, Sneh 1-0-11-0, Minnu 3-0-23-1.

DELHI CAPITALS
Shafali Verma c Gardner b Rajeshwari 14 (10b, 3x4), Lizelle Lee c Gardner b Devine 11 (20, 2x4), Laura Wolvaardt b Rajeshwari 24 (23b, 2x4), Jemimah Rodrigues b Devine 16 (16b, 1x4), Marizanne Kapp b Gardner 0 (1b), Chinelle Henry c Gardner b Rajeshwari 9 (11b, 1x4), Niki Prasad c Gardner b

FALL OF WICKETS
1-26 (Shafali, 2.2), 2-51 (Lee, 5.6), 3-82 (Jemimah, 10.6), 4-83 (Kapp, 11.2), 5-85 (Wolvaardt, 12.3), 6-100 (Henry, 14.3), 7-170 (Sneh, 19.4), 8-171 (Niki, 19.6).

GIANTS BOWLING

Renuka 1-0-16-0, Kashvee 2-0-18-0, Rajeshwari 4-0-20-3,

Devine 4-0-37-4, Tanuja 4-0-26-0,

Gardner 4-0-37-1, Wareham 1-0-12-0.

Toss: Capitals.

PoM: Devine.

Giants won by three runs.

Samson's form in focus at the City of Destiny

NZ IN INDIA**Anirudh Velamuri**

VISAKHAPATNAM

India, having sealed the five-match series in Guwahati earlier this week, will turn its attention to a few lingering concerns when it faces New Zealand in the fourth T20I at the ACA-VDCA Stadium on Wednesday.

Chief among them is Sanju Samson's form. Despite possessing undeniable talent and sound technique, the wicketkeeper-batter has failed to make his opportunities count, even on surfaces tailor-made for stroke-play.

Scores of 10 and six in the first two matches were followed by a golden duck at the Gateway of the North East, leaving him vulnerable to serious scrutiny.

What compounds Samson's predicament is Ishan Kishan's scorching form, his direct competitor for the opener-keeper role. The weight of expectation — which has only increased since being preferred over Shubman Gill — appears to have taken its toll, and time is fast running out for the 31-year-old to cement his position in India's T20 setup.

India may also tweak its



Time running out? Samson has failed to make his opportunities count in the series so far. K.R. DEEPAK

spin combination. Axar Patel and Ravi Bishnoi present strong alternatives to the likes of Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakaravarthy, who have struggled to find consistency in this series, especially on a surface that can slow down as the

match progresses.

Beyond that, it has been smooth sailing for the Men in Blue ahead of their World Cup title defence. The focus could now shift towards giving players on the fringes — Shreyas Iyer among them — valuable



We have the ability to stay calm amidst the storm that we are currently facing. We don't get too high or low



We've got to keep our eye on the long term. That's also why we peak at ICC events

JACOB ORAM

NZ bowling coach

who has the knack of providing early breakthroughs with his pace and precision, offers some hope.

The surface here typically offers good bounce and carry early on before slowing down under lights, bringing spinners into play. Dew, as ever, is likely to be a significant factor.

In conditions where small margins can be decisive, even a dead rubber could offer telling clues.

The teams (from): India:

Suryakumar Yadav (Capt.), Axar Patel (Vice-capt.), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Shreyas Iyer, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Rinku Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakaravarthy, Ishan Kishan (wk) and Ravi Bishnoi.

New Zealand: Mitchell Santner (Capt.), Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway (wk), Jacob Duffy, Zak Foulkes, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Bevan Jacobs, Daryl Mitchell, James Neesham, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Ish Sodhi and Lockie Ferguson.

Match starts at 7 p.m.

Bowling variety gives us the edge: Morkel

Anirudh Velamuri

VISAKHAPATNAM

Bowling coach Morne Morkel said he was encouraged by the depth and versatility within the Indian squad, stressing that clear communication around roles remains a key focus for the coaching group.

"With the 11 that we can pick on match-day, we've got 11 match winners. Everybody has got a certain 'X' factor about them. They know that there's no guarantee of being the 11. It's about who's suited best for the conditions and how we can help the team win at the end of the day," he said.

Morkel heaped praise on Jasprit Bumrah, highlighting the importance of support and communication beyond technical input for the 32-year-old pace spearhead.

"Jasprit is the best bowler in the world. But at the end of the day, everybody needs somebody to talk to.

There's always a lot of expectation on him to go and bowl that magical spell and win the game for us. Sometimes, that burden can take its toll," he explained.

"Having played the game and knowing a lot of the greats in the past that I played with, we all just need somebody to communicate with. I always check in with Bumrah to make sure he's comfortable and if he agrees with the plans we've made. He's like a Ferrari car. If you can get the engine, the oil and all of that running well, the car will perform."

He added that the Men in Blue's variety in bowling resources also gives them a tactical edge.

"It's a luxury that we have a handful of bowlers that can bowl in every situation. Part of the thinking for us leading into the World Cup was to look at different sorts of combinations. We don't want teams to have set plans against us."

SPORTS

All smiles: Dharmraj Pillay, R. Kaushik, Chenraj Jain, G.R. Viswanath, Rahul Dravid and P.R. Sreejesh, at the launch of the book *The Rise of the Hitman: The Rohit Sharma Story*. K. MURALI KUMAR

Rohit showed great tactical nous in T20 WC final: Dravid

N. Sudarshan

BENGALURU

Between Ahmedabad 2023 and Bridgetown 2024, India's fortunes in limited-overs cricket went through a roller-coaster.

If an inspired Australian team ensured that India's mesmerising run at home in the ODI World Cup did not have a sweet ending, the nation experienced ecstasy when it snatched victory from the jaws of defeat against South Africa in the T20 World Cup final.

Two men were central to this — the legendary Rahul Dravid as coach and Rohit Sharma as captain. A third, senior journalist R. Kaushik, chronicled both, with his book *The Hitman: The Rohit Sharma Story* containing vivid accounts of both campaigns.

And Tuesday at the M.

Chinnaswamy Stadium was about celebrating Rohit, with Dravid in conversation with Kaushik, and former India pacer and Karnataka State Cricket Association president Venkatesh Prasad joining in via video-conference.

"Those five overs in the [T20 World Cup] final encapsulated Rohit," Dravid said. "He showed great tactical nous in realising that the game was slipping away — South Africa was 151 for four chasing 177 — and he had to bring the likes of [Jasprit] Bumrah back."

"There was great camaraderie on display with players ready to fight until the end. It was a tribute to all the work we had put in and it was really a culmination of everything."

Crediting Rohit for catalysing India's dynamic approach in white-ball cricket, Dravid doffed his hat to

his man-management skills.

"Rohit loved being one of the guys. But he also balanced being the leader well. That is some real skill."

Dravid also revealed, in rich detail, how Rohit had lifted everybody's mood — including the usually sage-like Dravid's — in the aftermath of the stinging defeat in the opening Test versus England in Hyderabad in January 2024.

Kaushik, with decades-long experience of covering the sport, sought to highlight the facet that made the Dravid-Rohit combination effective.

"Rohit and Dravid were opposites in a lot of ways," he said. "But they were of similar thinking. We have this whole concept of aggression now. Rohit was aggressive but that didn't manifest in his behaviour".



Talking tactics: Morkel says he has a handful of bowlers who can deliver in any situation. K.R. DEEPAK

IN BRIEF



Honours even between Everton and Leeds

French striker Thierno Barry scored his fourth goal in five games in the Premier League to give Everton a 1-1 draw at home to Leeds.

The results: Premier League: Everton 1 (Barry 76) drew with Leeds 1 (Justin 28). LaLiga: Girona 1 (Reis 90+5) drew with Getafe 1 (Vazquez 59). Serie A: Verona 1 (Orban 26) lost to Udinese 3 (Atta 23, Zanoli 58, Davis 67).

Uncapped Ihsan picked in Scotland T20 WC squad

Last-minute T20 World Cup entrant Scotland has included uncapped pacer Zainullah Ihsan in its 15-member squad for the marquee event.

The squad: Richie Berrington (Capt.), Tom Bruce, Matthew Cross, Bradley Currie, Oliver Davidson, Chris Greaves, Zainullah Ihsan, Michael Jones, Michael Leask, Finlay McCreath, Brandon McMullen, George Munsey, Safyaan Sharif, Mark Watt and Bradley Wheal.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SCHEDULE

Ajax vs. Olympiacos; Arsenal vs. Kairat Almaty; Monaco vs. Juventus; Athletic Club vs. Sporting; Atletico Madrid vs. Bodo/Glimt; Barcelona vs. Kobenhavn; Leverkusen vs. Villarreal; Benfica vs. Real Madrid; Dortmund vs. Inter; Club Brugge vs. Marseille; Frankfurt vs. Tottenham Hotspur; Liverpool vs. Qarabag; Manchester City vs. Galatasaray; Napoli vs. Chelsea; Pafos vs. Slavia Prague; PSG vs. Newcastle; Eindhoven vs. Bayern; Union St.-Gilloise vs. Atalanta (1:30 a.m., Thursday).

LIVE TELECAST

Australian Open: Sony Sports Ten 2, 3, 5 & LIV, 1.30 p.m. & 5.30 a.m. (Thursday)

India vs New Zealand: 4th T20I, Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.

PWL: Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 8 p.m.

Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3, 5 & LIV, 1.30 a.m. (Thursday)

Intense rivalry among 100m male sprinters

Manikanta, Kujur, Gurindervir, Borgohain, Gurav aim to improve their timings in the quest for glory at the Asiad and Commonwealth Games

ATHLETICS

V.B. Sarangi
BHUBANESWAR

With the 2026 calendar featuring important assignments such as the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games, an intense competition can be expected among the Indian 100m male sprinters.

In 2025, we saw some sub-10.30 and sub-10.20 timings as the National record changed hands from Gurindervir Singh (10.20s) to Animesh Kujur (10.18). The quartet of Kujur, Manikanta Hoblidhar, Gurindervir and Amlan Borgohain broke a 15-year-old National relay record by clocking 38.69.

Following a dull second half of 2025, the new year has raised hopes. Former National record holder Manikanta feels the intense rivalry is good for everyone.

"The Indian 100m rivalry has become better, that's why our races have become consistently good, everyone is aiming for National records and personal bests," Manikanta told *The Hindu*, following a training session at the Kalinga Stadium here.

"The healthy competition has pushed us. This way we can take the Indian sprinting revolution forward."

The Asian Games qualification mark of 10.16 has already set the bar high. Getting a medal in the con-



In the fast lane: Borgohain, left, Manikanta and others are giving it their all at the training session in Bhubaneswar. BISWARANJAN ROUT

tinental event may be tough as Thailand's Puripol Boonson has pushed the limit up by clocking 9.94 last year.

Manikanta is geared up to lower his personal best from 10.19 to sub-10.10.

But winning an Asian Games medal remains a priority for him. "Whatever be the time, I just want a medal," said Manikanta.

Asian championships 200m bronze medallist Kujur is keen to get a medal in 100m and 200m in the Asian Games.

"I'm working on my start to achieve 10.10 or 10.05. Hope to medal in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games. I want to be consistent in training and competition. With practice, we can develop mutual understanding for

the relay," said Kujur.

Pranav Gurav (10.27), Harsh Raut (10.38) and S. Tamilarasu (10.22) also clocked impressive marks in 2025.

"The competition helped me get my personal best last year. My focus will be on individual events and qualifying for the Asian Games," said Gurav.

Amlan Borgohain (10.43 in National Open) aspires to be back in 100m relay and is keen to overcome the nerves that held him back in the last Asian Games.

Borgohain said the camaraderie and trust among the sprinters held the key to success. "Team sport is different. How you're outside the track will reflect on the track," said Borgohain.

tournament, without the Government support, it cannot be a grand success. We are also taking help from the corporate sector," Tirkey told reporters here.

Tirkey said easing the financial burden on franchises would be a priority. "We will not make it (franchise fees) zero. We will reduce it, and reset it. The financial burden will be less," he said, adding there had been interest from Gujarat and Odisha for ownership of HIL

franchises. "The quality of the league is getting better. A lot of young Indian players are coming up.

"They will get a chance in the FIH Pro League (in the run-up to the World Cup and Asian Games).

"We will make it the best league in the world," said Tirkey.

HIL to reduce franchise fees

HOCKEY

Y.B. Sarangi
BHUBANESWAR

Hockey India (HIL) will reduce franchise fees next season in order to ease the financial burden on team owners of the Hockey India League (HIL).

Following the conclusion of the second edition of the revived HIL here on Monday, HIL president Dilip Tirkey acknowledged that making the league, from which some teams pulled out prior to the 2025-26 season, financially viable would be the primary task.

"We need to pay more attention to the central sponsorship. We need the help of the Government. Whether it is a league or a

HIL might be moved to north India next season. "Because of fog, flights can be delayed. That is why we did not choose North India.

"We will take it to North India next year – Delhi or Chandigarh. But we will keep it restricted to two or three venues."

Amid all the issues, Tirkey was delighted that HIL staged high quality matches and highlighted promising Indian youngsters.

"The quality of the league is getting better. A lot of young Indian players are coming up.

"They will get a chance in the FIH Pro League (in the run-up to the World Cup and Asian Games).

"We will make it the best league in the world," said Tirkey.

Sreeja to miss WTT Star Contender Chennai

TABLE TENNIS

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI



Recuperating: Sreeja is skipping the tournament as she is experiencing pain in the right shoulder. FILE PHOTO: VIJAY SONEJI

"I didn't want to be too harsh on my shoulder. I want it to heal gradually," she said.

Sreeja last featured in the China Smash in Beijing during September-October 2025, where she lost in the second round to China's Wang Yidi, after which she started to experience pain.

"I just started practising a few days back. I am not using my forearm for training. I plan to get back to action with the Singapore Smash from February 19 to March 1," she said.

DESIGNING A KERALA THAT EVERYONE CAN EXPERIENCE

Kerala is redefining tourism through inclusive design and accessible infrastructure. Rooted in global best practices and lived experiences, the state is shaping dignified, comfortable, and independent travel for everyone, without barriers. This conclave brings together ideas, policies, and diverse voices to shape the next phase of Kerala Tourism.

A Knowledge Conclave by Kerala Tourism & The Hindu Group

January 31 - February 1, 2026, 10:30 AM onwards

Location: Kochi

Inaugural address by
Shri Pinarayi Vijayan

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala

Keynote address by
Shri P A Mohamed Riyas

Hon'ble Minister for Public Works and Tourism, Govt. of Kerala

Scan here or visit
<https://newsth.live/KLFA>
to register and secure your invite.
Registration subject to confirmation.



Knowledge Partner: **Svayam**
Celebrating Accessibility



Happy that I still have the hunger to perform

The 36-year-old Belgian superstar, despite being at the fag end of his illustrious career, is keeping pace with up-and-coming talent; he says the Los Angeles Olympics is likely to be his final bow

BISWARANJAN ROUT

INTERVIEW

Tom Boon

V.B. Sarangi
BHUBANESWAR

In Ranchi Royals colours, Belgian superstar Tom Boon emerged as the top-scorer of the Hockey India League (HIL). Even in the final phase of his illustrious career, the World and Olympic champion is leading by example.

Donning multiple roles as a forward, drag-flicker and mentor, Boon, who celebrated his 36th birthday on January 25, has set a great example for up-and-coming players across the globe. Boon, an inspirational figure in the hockey world, spoke to *The Hindu* about his magnificent career and future goals. Excerpts:

How do you see your emergence as the top-scorer of HIL and did you expect to lead the chart?

No (I did not expect it), I'm really happy about it. It's part of my job; I'm a striker, I'm taking the penalty corners, the penalty strokes. Somehow it's normal that I stand there. I'm happy that the team has grown as well, that we have taken some great steps forward. When we look back at where we came from, from the first match and the visage we have now, it's an improved team. I'm just proud and happy to be part of it.

Given the short time period for preparation before HIL, how challenging was it to gel with players of different nationalities and adapt to styles of play?

It was challenging. Everyone has their own way of playing and we had to try to make something work. I was working hand-in-hand with Harendra Singh to make something work, to try to help with my experience there. What we saw from Ranchi was that we grew and this was the most important thing. I'm happy about it, we started

on a not-so-good note but we kept believing. We worked hard to make it work and the most important of all is we were a really solid group. Manpreet Singh did a really nice job to try and connect the Indians with foreigners. The Indians looked really, really happy to be together, they're good friends with the foreigners as well. The whole mix is important. Everyone is equal, everyone wants the best for the team.

Young Indian players benefitting from HIL is well known but do you see any gains for overseas players, other than the money?

It's challenging to get out of your comfort zone. I'm going to give an easy example about me. I had never been a captain before, I was a captain this season. I got out of my comfort zone. I tried to do it as well as I could and everyone seemed to be happy, so it was a great experience. I will take the learnings from it, try to dare to speak more in a changing room when I'm back with Belgium.

Are you looking forward to the FIH Pro League in Rourkela and will the HIL exposure help everyone who participate there?

Yeah, I hope so. I hope the crowd will be there in Rourkela, it's been really nice playing in that stadium. It's one of the most beautiful stadiums that I have played in, so yeah I am happy to play India again, it has been a while.



The Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar holds a special place for you as you won the World Cup here eight years ago. How do you feel returning to the venue?

It was amazing being here. It was the first title for Belgium, it was the first time Belgium won anything in any sport and it was here. Of course, I do remember a lot being here, it has been eight years already, time flies. But I was really happy to be back in this stadium, it's going to always have a special place in my heart.

How do you keep yourself competitive despite growing challenges from younger players? Is there anything extra you do for fitness and recovery these days?

I have to, I'm 36 now. I have to take care of my body as much as I can. I try to go to the gym almost every day for recovery sessions, to keep my body in shape. I'm really happy that I can still perform at my age and the hunger I still have is something I cherish because I also know it's going to be finished soon. So I try to enjoy every moment as much as I can.

Do you do anything specific to stay in good shape?

Yeah, every morning when I wake up, I go to the gym and do some exercises for core stabilisation, when I feel I have some pain in my calf or hammy (hamstring). I'm happy with the work I've done so far.

You're part of the golden generation of Belgian players and you are seeing a transition now. How do you mentor and compete with

younger guys who may have a different mindset?

It's nice, my position has changed a little bit. I try to share my experience as much as I can. I'm never going to say that I'm right or wrong, I'm just trying to give my opinion; it's something I didn't do much in my early days. I'm trying to give some tips to certain players at certain moments. Afterwards, they do whatever they want with it. If they think it's a good tip, I'm happy. If they think they should do something else, I'm happy as well. I'm happy to give back a little bit of what I received.

What kind of target do you have for the upcoming home World Cup and Los Angeles Olympics?

I think we can dream big, that's why I love sports. Everything is possible, it would be so nice to lift the cup in front of our own crowds. Of course, it's going to be a really, really difficult journey.

There are four, five or six teams who can win it, so it's going to be difficult, but we're going to train hard, play hard and do whatever we can to try to be as good as we can.

It's (LA28) a little bit more personal (call for me), it's going to be my last tournament, that's for sure. Maybe I'm going to stop before that. At the moment, I just keep dreaming of playing other tournaments, we will see after the World Cup how it goes (for me) and see if I still have the faith to go forward till LA28.

You're a third-generation hockey player. Would you like your children to carry forward the family tradition?

Yeah. My little boy is already playing. He's four, he started playing in September. I think he loves it. At the moment, he dreams to be a goalie, so we'll see what he's going to become. But I'm the kind of father who is pretty relaxed. He's going to choose whatever he wants to do.

I'm going to try to be there for him if he needs me, but he's going to choose what he's going to do.

SCIENCE

To make sense of cosmic rays, CERN team tracks a fragile nucleus

Why is finding out how deuterons survive particle collisions in the Large Hadron Collider important? If scientists have to predict how light nuclei form in high-energy collisions in space, like when cosmic rays strike interstellar gas, they need to know which formation mechanisms are possible and which ones nature forbids

Vasudevan Mukunth

CHENNAI

The hydrogen atom is the lightest in the universe and it consists of the simplest nucleus: a single proton. But while helium is the second-lightest element, its nucleus isn't the second simplest. That distinction belongs to the deuteron, the nucleus of the deuterium atom, which contains one proton and one neutron. (Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen.)

However, the two particles are bound with a very low binding energy, making deuterons seem fragile relative to the energetic, messy environment created when particles collide at nearly the speed of light at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). Yet experiments have repeatedly observed deuterons (and anti-deuterons) emerging from these collisions. How do they survive this environment?

Coalescence scenario

Physicists have come up with two broad explanations. One, called direct emission, assumes the deuterons are produced directly from a hot source, meaning their formation doesn't involve a different particle (or particles) condensing from a soup of energy, then decaying to form deuterons. The other idea, called coalescence, holds that the proton and neutron are produced first, then they stick together later if they get close enough.

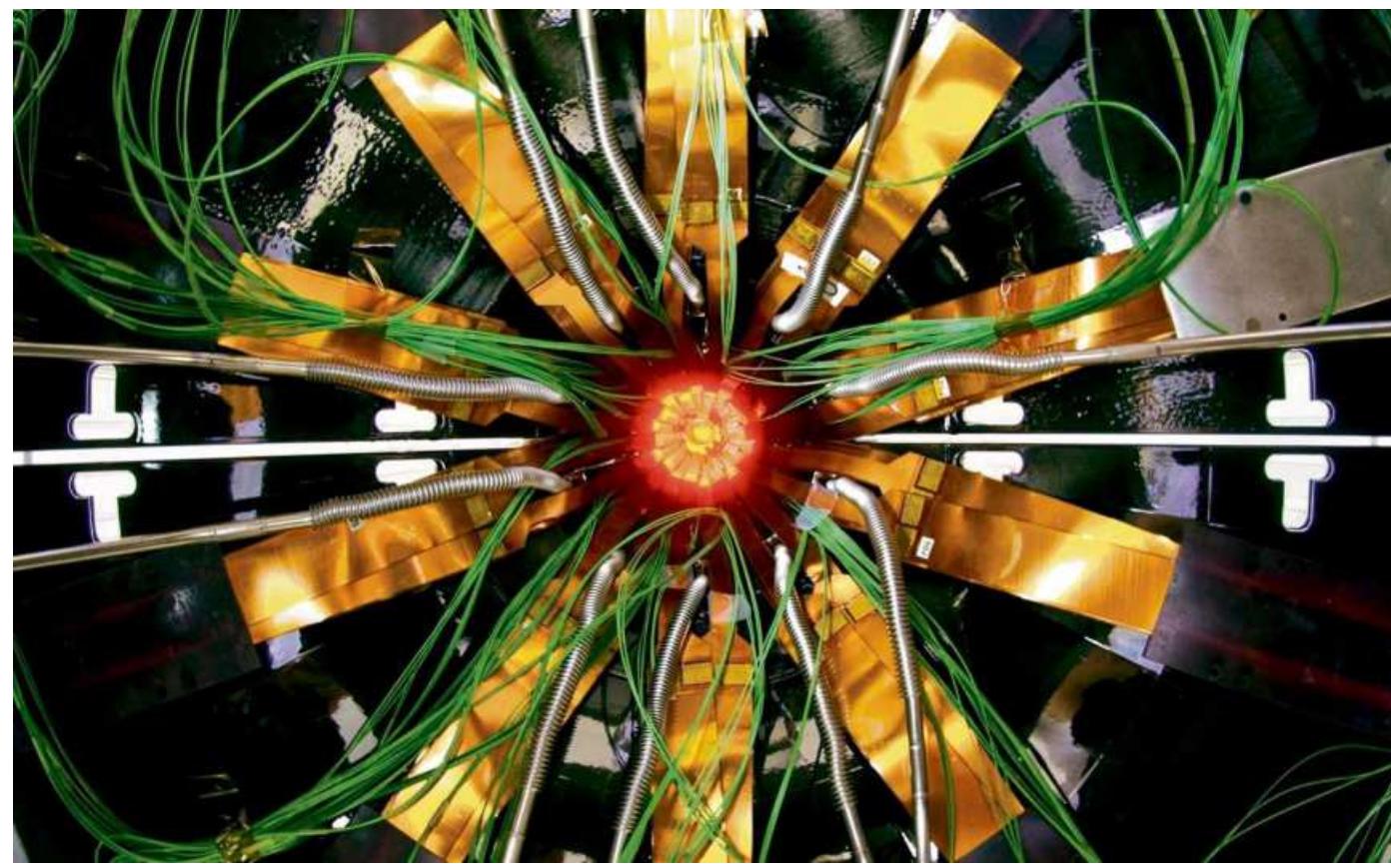
The problem is a proton and a neutron can't fuse if they have too much energy, so there has to be a third particle to carry away the excess energy. That third participant can be a type of particle called pion that acts like a catalyst, i.e. it will enable the reaction without becoming part of the final deuteron.

Finding out whether this is possible matters beyond collider physics. If scientists have to predict how light nuclei and antinuclei form in high-energy collisions in space – such as when cosmic rays strike interstellar gas – they need to know which formation mechanisms are possible and which ones nature doesn't 'allow'.

Delta resonance

A new study out of the ALICE collaboration at the LHC has provided the answer. The collaboration works with the ALICE detector, one of nine detectors on the LHC. At four points on its ring, the LHC smashes together opposing beams of protons at high energy. The collisions produce a morass of particles and reactions between them. The detectors have computers and sensors that are triggered when they identify reactions of interest and which they record and analyse.

For the new study, the ALICE



Close watch: A view of the ALICE detector, one of nine detectors on the Large Hadron Collider in 2007. CERN

collaboration used a technique called femtoscopy to infer how and when particles were produced by checking whether two particles come out with very similar velocities more often than chance would predict. Its basic object was a ratio called the correlation function. The numerator was how often a given pair (a pion and a deuteron) is seen with a small relative momentum. The denominator was how often such pairs would form assuming they had no affinity for each other.

The team was looking specifically for a particle called $\Delta(232)$ resonance. (' Δ ' is pronounced 'delta'.) The resonance is a very short-lived excited version of a proton or a neutron that quickly decays. $\Delta(232)$ in particular decays into a pion and a proton or neutron. If a deuteron is later formed using that same proton (or neutron), then the pion and the deuteron would appear to be 'linked' in the data by having a correlated momentum.

ALICE reported just this signal in the pion-deuteron data, meaning many of the deuterons are formed after the Δ decays, rather than directly at the start.

Where a nucleus is born

If the pions were only bumping into deuterons that already existed, some of those collisions should have broken the deuteron apart (which is fragile, remember). In that case, the data should've shown a dip around the Δ region. ALICE, however, found a positive signal, meaning deuterons were forming

The study noted that scientists can use the insight on deuterons to build more realistic models of reactions induced by cosmic rays, which are energetic protons and atomic nuclei which often collide with other nuclei in outer space

shortly afterwards from existing protons and neutrons, with help from pions nearby. This should change how theorists model the way nuclei (and anti-nuclei) are produced in high-energy particulate reactions.

In fact the ALICE team's paper, published on December 10, noted that scientists can use this insight to build more realistic models of reactions induced by cosmic rays.

Cosmic rays are very energetic protons and atomic nuclei hurtling through space and which often collide with other nuclei in outer space. When scientists are studying telescope data of these collisions or are modelling them in the lab, e.g. for astronomy research or because they're sending a probe to that part of space, they'll need to know which signals are coming from which sources.

"These findings not only explain a long-standing puzzle in nuclear physics but could have far-reaching implications for astrophysics and cosmology," the ALICE team said in a statement.

"Light nuclei and antinuclei are also produced in interactions between cosmic rays and the interstellar medium, and they may be created in processes involving the dark matter that pervades the universe. By building reliable models for the production of light nuclei and anti-nuclei, physicists can better interpret cosmic-ray data and look for possible dark-matter signals."

mukunth.v@thehindu.co.in

THE GIST

The neutron and proton in the deuterium nucleus are bound with a very low binding energy, making deuterons seem fragile relative to the energetic, messy environment created when particles collide at nearly the speed of light at the LHC

Yet experiments have repeatedly observed deuterons (and anti-deuterons) emerging from these collisions

Most deuterons are not born as ready-made nuclei at the instant of collision but are instead assembled shortly afterwards from existing protons and neutrons

BIG SHOT



First stroke: Conservationists release a juvenile Indo-Pacific leopard shark off Maiton Island, in Phuket, Thailand on December 8, 2025. The Thai government, aquariums, and NGOs came together in a project last year to release seven leopard shark pups in a bid revive their population in the wild. REUTERS

QUESTION CORNER

Leaps and bounds

Q

Q: How did kangaroos evolve to hop?

A: For a long time, biomechanics experts believed that giant, extinct kangaroos were simply too heavy to hop. While the largest modern kangaroos weigh around 90 kg, their prehistoric relatives were much larger and weighed more than 250 kg. And scientists previously calculated that if you took the anatomy of a modern kangaroo and scaled it up to that weight, the forces generated by hopping would snap their ankle tendons and fracture their bones.

However, a January 22 study has challenged this limit: by looking at the fossils rather than relying only on mathematical scaling from modern kangaroos, researchers have found that kangaroo ancestors didn't just grow larger: they also evolved a different skeletal structure to handle the immense weight.

The study identified two major adaptations that made hopping mechanically possible for these giants. First, their weight-bearing foot bones, the fourth metatarsals, were significantly shorter and thicker than those of modern kangaroos. This compact shape made the bones more resistant to bending forces, preventing fractures upon landing. Second, their heel bones, called calcanea, were much



A kangaroo near White Cliffs, an Outback area in the state of New South Wales, Australia. AFP

wider, providing a large area for the gastrocnemius tendon to attach. This suggested the animals possessed thick tendons capable of withstanding the tensions required to lift their bodies.

There was one trade-off, however. While the adaptations allowed them to hop without injury, the giants likely sacrificed speed and energy efficiency. Unlike modern kangaroos that bounce efficiently over long distances, the extinct giants probably hopped only for short, high-power bursts, perhaps to escape predators.

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'