




**CHINESE INVESTMENT**  
**Govt. mulling revision of regulations: Thakur**  
BUSINESS » PAGE 13

**ATTACK AFTERMATH**  
**Pakistani forces kill 177 militants in Balochistan**  
WORLD » PAGE 14



**LOK SABHA PROCEEDINGS**  
**Ruckus over Rahul's attempt to quote book**  
NEWS » PAGE 11

**SAFEGUARDING AN ECOSYSTEM**  
**Wetlands as a national public good**  
*India needs consistent implementation of laws*  
EDITORIAL » PAGE 8



**A SHOOTOUT**  
**Giants face Capitals in the Eliminator**  
SPORT » PAGE 15

**NEARBY**



**'BRS view reflects feudal mindset'**

**HYDERABAD**  
Telangana Jagruti founder K. Kavitha argued in favour of leaders appearing before SIT in the phone tapping case, and said it occurred during K. Chandrasekhar Rao's tenure and that anyone summoned for inquiry must cooperate. » Page 6

**Health dept. set for a major reset**

**HYDERABAD**  
The State Health department is moving towards a major revamp of the Integrated Hospital Facility Management Services (IHfMS) to address persistent gaps in sanitation, security and patient support services across government hospitals. » Page 2

**U.S. tariff on India reduced to 18%, say Modi and Trump**

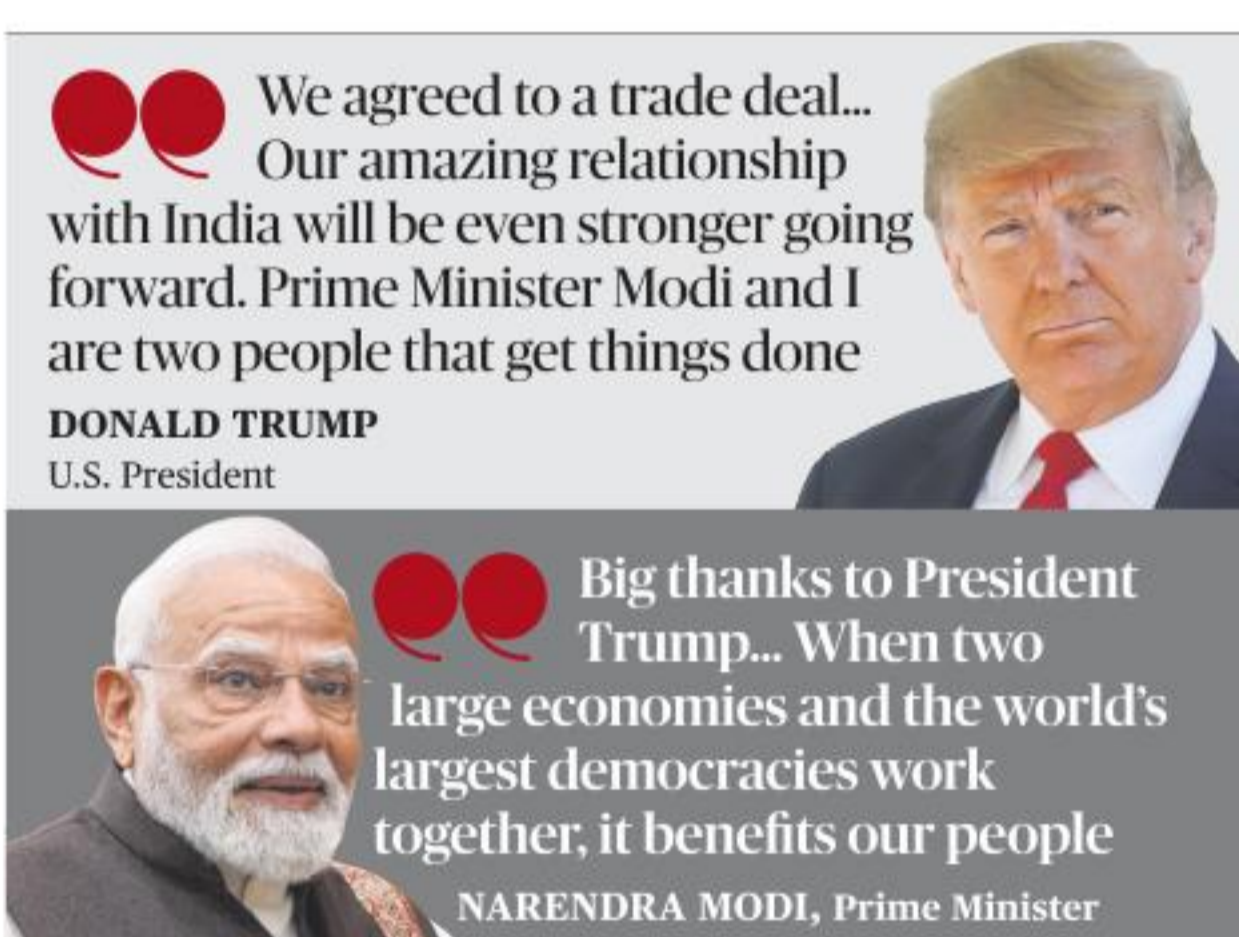
After a phone call with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, United States President Donald Trump says the countries have agreed to a trade deal, and India will stop buying oil from Russia

**Kallol Bhattacharjee**  
NEW DELHI

Indicating a positive turn in a bilateral relationship that had been under strain because of multiple issues, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that "Made in India" products would "now" attract a "reduced tariff of 18%" in the U.S., after a telephonic conversation with President Donald Trump on Monday.

The move is expected to significantly reduce the impact of the 50% penalty tariffs that Mr. Trump had imposed on India in August 2025.

Minutes earlier, Mr. Trump had announced on the social media platform Truth Social that India and the U.S. had "agreed to a trade deal". He said India had agreed to "stop buying



Russian oil" and would reduce "Tariffs and Non-Tariff Barriers against the U.S. to zero".

The External Affairs Ministry is yet to respond to some of the questions related to the declaration and the details shared by Mr. Trump.

"Delighted that Made in

India products will now have a reduced tariff of 18%," said Mr. Modi thanking Mr. Trump.

"When two large economies and the world's largest democracies work together, it benefits our people and unlocks immense opportunities for mutually beneficial coop-

eration," he said in his post on X. A little before Mr. Modi's message, Mr. Trump said on Truth Social, "...we agreed to a Trade Deal between the United States and India, whereby the United States will charge a reduced Reciprocal Tariff, lowering it from 25% to 18%." He further claimed, "...they will likewise move forward to reduce their Tariffs and Non-Tariff Barriers against the United States, to ZERO".

The U.S. President had said in the Truth Social post that during his discussion, India agreed "to stop buying Russian oil."

He also claimed that India will "buy much more from the United States and potentially, Venezuela".

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 10

**Those indulging in wrongdoing are bound to face inquiries, says CM**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

In a strong counter to those raising objections against notices served on former Chief Minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president K. Chandrasekhar Rao, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy asserted that those indulging in wrongdoings are bound to face inquiries in line with the law.

The Chief Minister took a dig at the BRS leaders for calling Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao as "Telangana's fatherly figure" and questioning the rationale behind serving notices on him. "Father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi sacrificed his life for the country. What is the contribution of this self-acclaimed 'fatherly figure'?" he asked. The Chief Minister was speaking after presenting the veteran Communist leader Raavi Narayana Reddy national award to Justice (ret'd) B. Sudharshan Reddy here on Monday. He recalled how Telangana ideologue and professor M. Kodandaram was arrested after police gatecrashed into his house during the BRS regime.

In sharp contrast, the special investigation team served notices on him (KCR) to attend questioning and did not barge into



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy presenting the Raavi Narayana Reddy National Award 2025 to former Supreme Court Judge Justice B. Sudharshan Reddy in Hyderabad on Monday. SIDDHANT THAKUR

his house. "Leaders like Raavi Narayana Reddy sacrificed everything for the sake of Telangana. How can people who enjoyed posts and amassed huge wealth call themselves as agitators for Telangana's cause?"

Mr. Revanth Reddy said the BRS leaders ought to have accepted the people's verdict when they were defeated at the hustings. "But they are faulting the people for the results. What kind of democracy is this?" he said. Senior leaders like Shibu Soren too faced inquiries and probe into wrongdoings was inevitable in a democracy.

Justice Sudarshan Reddy described Raavi Narayana Reddy as a 'yugapuruusha', a man of his times

and beyond, whose life continues to inspire Telangana's social and political consciousness.

He said the legendary leader sacrificed both life and property for the principles he believed in, placing public cause above personal interest. His seminal documentary work, 'Telangana Nagnasatyam', is regarded as a profound and courageous exposition of the region's historical and social realities.

Despite donating nearly 500 acres of his land, Narayan Reddy was accused by the then leadership of Andhra Pradesh of carrying a zamindar mindset for airing his views.

**RELATED REPORT**  
» PAGE 6

**Nip in the air**



Delhi woke up to dense fog on Monday morning. The national capital saw a colder start to February, compared to last year, with the maximum temperature settling at 24.6 degrees Celsius on Sunday, according to the Indian Meteorological Department. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

**Bulk applications for deleting voter names in Rajasthan's Barmer**

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
BARMER

Subhan Khan, a BJP worker at Janpaliya village in Barmer district of Rajasthan, was stunned when his booth-level officer informed him that an application had been filed seeking the deletion of his name from the State's electoral rolls through Form 7.

Hundreds of such forms have surfaced in this and certain other villages of this district. While booth-level agents of the BJP in whose names these forms had been filed denied signing them, many said the forms had created a furore in the villages, and worried voters had sought answers from them.



Subhan Khan says he has not filed any forms which feature his name. R. V. MOORTHY

"How can I file an application for deletion of my own name when I am very much alive and residing in this place," Mr. Khan asked this reporter.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 10

**OUTRAGE IN GUJARAT**  
» PAGE 12

**Telugu States get highest ever Railway allocations**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Telangana received a record budget allocation of ₹5,454 crore for railway projects to be taken up during the financial year 2026-27, with works worth ₹47,984 crore currently in progress for expansion of the rail network, Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said on Monday.

Addressing the media virtually from New Delhi, the Minister said the allocation marked a nearly six-fold increase compared to the average annual outlay made during 2009-14 for the undivided State. Mr. Vaishnav said the proposed high-speed rail corridors - Hyderabad-Pune, Hyderabad-Chennai and Hyderabad-Bengaluru - would form a "diamond



SCR GM Sanjay Kumar Srivastava along with senior SCR officials watch Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnav's virtual press conference in Secunderabad on Monday. RAMAKRISHNA G

network" of fast-travel routes that will not only reduce journey times drastically but also accelerate economic growth.

While stating that further details on the elevated alignments, detailed project reports and other components would be shared in due course, he said the expected travel times on the corridors were: Hyderabad-Bengaluru: 2 hours; Hyderabad-Chennai: 2 hours 55 minutes and Hyderabad-Pune: 1 hour 55 minutes.

Andhra Pradesh received double the allocation at ₹10,134 crore for works totalling ₹92,649 crore - an eleven-fold increase compared to the 2009-14 average for the combined State. The two high-speed corridors - Hyderabad-Bengaluru and

Hyderabad-Bengaluru and

**Telangana received a record budget allocation of ₹5,454 crore for railway projects and A.P. double the allocation at ₹10,134 crore**

Hyderabad-Chennai - will also pass significantly through Andhra Pradesh, he said.

Mr. Vaishnav also stated that the Centre has been expeditiously taking up the formation of South Coast Railway (SCoR) and construction of the zonal offices would begin soon. Normally it takes three to four years to make a new zone operational because of the logistics involved including staff transfers, setting up of jurisdictional divisions and likes. But the work is being

fast tracked with the cooperation of the AP government, he explained.

Later, South Central Railway (SCR) General Manager Sanjay Kumar Srivastava said Hyderabad would host the maintenance depot for the high-speed trains, as three of the services will originate from the city. A major portion of the revamped Secunderabad station is expected to be ready by March, particularly the platform 10 side, he said.

On improving MMTS suburban services, Mr. Srivastava cited operational constraints arising from shared tracks with long-distance express and freight trains. However, he said the MMTS Phase-II Yadadri railway link would be taken up soon with 100% railway funding.



**infinium** BLU  
**Trusted by Experts Worldwide**

When experts demand reliable and efficient cooling solutions, they choose Paharpur, a global leader with over 75 years of pioneering experience.

Introducing Infinium<sup>BLU</sup> Closed-Circuit Coolers.

Experience the pinnacle of cooling technology with Infinium<sup>BLU</sup>. Defined by unmatched reliability, cutting-edge efficiency, and future-ready performance, Paharpur's Infinium products set the standard in closed-circuit cooling solutions. For processes where maintaining the purity of your cooling water isn't just important - it's essential - experts choose Infinium<sup>BLU</sup>.

Elevate your cooling system. Choose Paharpur Infinium<sup>BLU</sup> today.

**Corporate Head Office:**  
Paharpur House, 8/1/B, Diamond Harbour Road  
Kolkata 700 027, India  
+91 33 4013 3000  
infinium@paharpur.com  
www.paharpur.com

**Domestic Sales Offices:**  
Bengaluru | Chennai | Hyderabad  
Kolkata | Mumbai | New Delhi | Vadodara

**International Offices:**  
Beijing | Bridgewater | Brussels | Budapest | Izmir | Madrid  
Mexico City | Overland Park | Seoul | Stabio | Varese

## IN BRIEF



## Free cancer screening camp at NIMS Hyderabad tomorrow

On the occasion of World Cancer Day, the Department of Medical Oncology at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) Hyderabad, will organise a free cancer screening camp on Wednesday. The camp will offer cervical cancer screening, breast cancer screening for women aged 30 to 60 years, and oral cancer screening. Special tests will be conducted for individuals who chew gutka or paan, as well as for smokers, who are at higher risk of developing oral cancer. The screening services will be available from 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m.



## Smooth-coated otters spotted in Adilabad district

Smooth-coated otters, the semi-aquatic mammals, were sighted in an irrigation tank at Gollapur village in Adilabad on Sunday. According to Forest Department sources, six smooth-coated otters were spotted moving around the tank bed during a field inspection near the village under Boath forest range. Listed as vulnerable in the Red List of Threatened Species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, these otters are protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

## Major reset on cards to improve sanitation, patient care in hospitals

Govt. set to revamp Integrated Hospital Facility Management Services across the State; overhaul also proposes higher manpower strength, revised qualification norms, higher per-bed tariff

Siddharth Kumar Singh  
HYDERABAD

The State Health department is moving towards a major revamp of the Integrated Hospital Facility Management Services (IHfMS) to address persistent gaps in sanitation, security and patient support services across government hospitals, with a significant increase in per-bed tariff and manpower strength on the anvil, according to Director of Medical Education (DME) A. Narendra Kumar.

IHFMS is a government-run outsourcing system that manages non-clinical services in government hospitals, including sanitation, housekeeping, biomedical and general waste disposal, security, patient care assistants, pest control and related facility services. Under the model, hospitals pay a fixed per-bed tariff to a single agency, which in turn deploys a prescribed number of workers per 100 beds to ensure cleanliness, safety and basic patient support.

Under the existing IHfMS framework, hospitals have 45 outsourced workers per 100 beds, comprising 19 sanitation workers, 13 security personnel and 13 patient care



IHFMS is a government-run outsourcing system that manages non-clinical services in government hospitals, including sanitation, housekeeping, biomedical and general waste disposal, security, patient care assistants, pest control and related facility services. REPRESENTATIONAL PHOTO

assistants. Dr. Narendra Kumar said the government is now planning to strengthen this structure by increasing manpower, revising qualification norms and raising tariff rates to reflect rising operational costs.

The IHfMS policy, first introduced in 2017 and revised in 2022, will undergo another revision in 2026. As part of the proposed changes, the per-bed tariff is expected to be increased from the current level of around ₹7,500 to approximately ₹9,500. The hike

factors in inflation and the escalating costs of consumables such as cleaning chemicals and other essential materials used in hospital maintenance.

"The earlier revision in 2022 raised the tariff from ₹5,600 to about ₹7,500 per bed. Since then, costs have continued to rise, making another revision unavoidable," Dr. Narendra Kumar said.

The revised proposal has been placed before the Health Minister. Once cleared, it will be sent to the Finance Department

for approval.

Dr. Narendra Kumar also pointed to shortcomings in pest and rodent control under the current system, noting that only Agriculture Department-certified personnel are authorised to carry out such work.

"This norm is not being followed uniformly, leading to ineffective pest control in several hospitals. As part of the revised IHfMS guidelines, stricter enforcement of certification requirements and improved chemical usage will be mandated," he added.



Hyderabad District Collector Hari Chandana Dasari inaugurating Project Shakti, an initiative to distribute reusable sanitary pads, at Veeranari Chakali Ilamma Women's University on Monday.

## Reusable sanitary pads for 60,000 students across TG

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

Rotarians, State Bank of India and Unipads Foundation have launched Project Shakti, an initiative to distribute reusable sanitary pads to 60,000 girl students across Telangana. The project, with a total outlay of ₹2.5 crore, was inaugurated at Veeranari Chakali Ilamma Women's University in Koti by Hyderabad District Collector Hari Chandana Dasari on Monday.

As part of the inaugural distribution, the Collector handed over 7,000 reusable sanitary pad kits worth ₹35 lakh to students of the university.

The larger distribution covering 60,000 students across multiple districts is scheduled to be completed by March.

Each reusable sanitary pad kit contains three pads and is designed to last between 12 and 16 months with proper care.

on the quality of fabric, frequency of use, and appropriate washing and drying practices. Maintained well, the pads remain effective and comfortable for multiple menstrual cycles, offering a sustainable alternative to disposable products," said a release.

Addressing the gathering, the Collector urged students to become 'menstrual independent', underlining the importance of control, choice and dignity in matters related to menstruation, free from shame or dependence.

She explained that the reusable sanitary pads are cost-effective, environmentally friendly, washable and gentle on the body. By reducing waste and minimising irritation, they contribute to long-term menstrual dignity.

She reminded the students that the Supreme Court of India has recognised menstrual hygiene as an integral component of the Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

## Compulsory OTR updation for all, TGPSC tells aspirants

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

The Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC) on Monday instructed all candidates registered in its One-Time Registration (OTR) system to compulsorily update and validate their data.

All future notifications, applications, results and final selections will be based on the candidates' unique OTR data, the Commission said. According to it, there are about 31.65 lakh candidates registered in its data system.

The mandatory updation of these details, the Commission noted, is in view of the recent categorisation of Scheduled Castes and changes in educational qualifications of the candidates.

"This initiative is part of the Commission's efforts to ensure faster completion of recruitment processes, early declaration of results and timely issue of ap-

**The mandatory updation of these details, the Commission noted, comes in view of the recent categorisation of Scheduled Castes and changes in educational qualifications of the candidates**

pointment orders and to avoid delays caused by data discrepancies and incomplete documentation," it said.

The process to update the OTR must include verification and correctness of candidate's personal, educational, and category details, all eligible and additional qualifications, uploading all relevant certificates including a latest colour passport-size photograph.

While the last date to complete this mandatory exercise was February 2, it has now been extended to

February 25.

As a rule, each candidate would possess only one OTR, which is valid till it is cancelled by the candidate or the Commission, for any reason.

It also cautioned that not all existing data would be editable and a candidate can only add, enhance his/her data by uploading additional qualifications, changes in correspondence address and communication, EWS status, and details related to the category.

Candidates must exercise utmost caution while uploading and editing the data as the updated OTR will be treated as the primary and final data, and will be considered for all future notifications, the Commission said.

All edit actions will be permitted within the stipulated deadline - February 25. More details are available on the Commission's website (<https://www.tgpssc.gov.in/>).

## Second Telangana seed festival from Feb. 6

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

Against the backdrop of increasing climate-induced stress and natural calamities impacting agriculture, the second Telangana Seed Festival is set to be held from February 6 to 8, at The Earth Center, Anumapally, Kadal, Ranga Reddy district.

The three-day annual festival aims to revive farmer-owned traditional seed systems and strengthen agricultural sovereignty.

## Seed revolution

The festival is being organised by the Council for Green Revolution (CGR) with the support of Bharat Beej Swaraj Manch and several allied organisations. The objective is to lay the foundation for a farmer-led seed revolution across India.

Further details can be sought on 83095-96269 and 96769-57000.

## Fire safety inspections launched within ORR limits

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

In the wake of recent major and fatal fire accidents within the Outer Ring Road (ORR) limits, the Telangana Fire, Disaster Response, Emergency and Civil Defence Department has begun intensive inspections of buildings in the area to check fire and life safety compliance.

The drive was ordered by Director General of Fire Services Vikram Singh Mann, who instructed officials to carry out inspections on a war footing, focusing on violations that pose an imminent risk to occupants. These include the misuse of cellars for purposes other than parking such as storage or accommodation, blocked staircases and ramps, and the storage of large quantities of materials beyond permitted display or sample requirements.

The inspections of vulnerable establishments



An officer from the Telangana Fire, Disaster Response, Emergency and Civil Defence Department during an inspection.

within the ORR limits commenced on January 28. So far, 70 establishments of various categories have been checked. These include three institutional buildings, two hospitals, three mixed occupancy buildings, 26 commercial establishments, 27 mercantile establishments, three assembly occupancies, two business buildings, one residential building, one industrial unit, one multiplex and one mall.

Officials have been directed to take strict action

against management if lapses are found. Building owners and operators have been asked to ensure full compliance with fire safety codes, including the proper functioning of fire safety systems, extinguishers and sprinklers installed on their premises.

Fire officials are also issuing fire safety precautionary advice to owners, tenants and employees during the inspections. Mr. Mann has appealed to all stakeholders to strictly follow fire safety guidelines and prescribed norms.

## EPICS workshop at NMREC

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

Nalla Malla Reddy Engineering College (NMREC) hosted a national-level orientation workshop on EPICS (Engineering Projects in Community Service), a Purdue University initiative, on its campus here on January 30 and 31.

According to Purdue University's website, EPICS is a service-learning design programme in which students partner with local and global community organisations to address human, community and environmental needs.

The programme began in 1995 and aims to engage students in designing technical solutions to the challenges and needs of society. It imbues engineering skills in students through community engagement. Associate dean and director-EPICS, William Oakes conducted the workshop and interacted with about 50 faculty from various institutions across India.

## Woman with two kidney transplants completes full Antarctic expedition



Sneha Raju at Detaille Island in Antarctica.

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

A two-time kidney transplant recipient from the city has successfully completed a full Antarctic expedition, making history by achieving interior landings, camping overnight on the continent and crossing the Antarctic Circle. The expedition was undertaken between December 17 and December 28 last year.

Diagnosed with chronic kidney disease when she was just three-years-old,

Sneha Raju, now 34, underwent her first kidney transplant at the age of seven. In 2013, during her final year of college, she underwent a second transplant after complications from cerebral malaria damaged the first graft.

The journey began from Ushuaia, with the team navigating the notoriously turbulent Drake Passage before reaching the Antarctic Peninsula. The first landing took place at Barrientos Island on December 19, followed by an offi-



Sneha Raju after completing her Antarctic expedition.

cial continental landing at Portal Point. On December 20, Ms. Raju camped over-

night at Portal Point.

Speaking about the experience with *The Hindu*,

Ms. Raju said the journey across the Drake Passage presented an unexpected test. Despite having no such prior history, she experienced severe seasickness during the 48-hour crossing.

For transplant recipients, strict adherence to medication schedules is critical. "We transplant recipients have to take immunosuppressants on the clock. The ship was constantly shaking, there was no pause. Trying to keep my regular medicines

down without throwing up for those 48 hours was a big task," she said.

Preparation for Antarctica went far beyond physical training. Given the remoteness of the continent, she did extensive research before selecting the expedition cruise: "I had to make sure I picked the right cruise. It was not about luxury. I had to ensure they had a helipad and helicopter medical evacuation facilities, and also certified medical nurses and doctors on board."

## SHE Teams arrest 81 offenders

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

A total of 81 offenders, including 64 majors and 17 minors, were apprehended by the SHE Teams of the Malkajgiri Commissionerate during intensified women safety enforcement and decoy operations conducted between January 1 and January 15, 2026 across the commissionerate limits.

During the same period, police received 97 complaints related to harassment of women and girls.

### Timings HYDERABAD

TUESDAY, FEB. 03

RISE 06:48 SET 18:12

RISE 19:42 SET 07:46

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 04

RISE 06:47 SET 18:13

RISE 20:35 SET 08:24

THURSDAY, FEB. 05

RISE 06:47 SET 18:13

RISE 21:27 SET 09:00

Hyderabad Weather max min  
Sangareddy 28 19  
Warangal 29 18  
Hyderabad City 28 19

Hyderabad City Today  
28°C Morning will be slight cool with mist and haze. Day will be comfortable. Night also will be slight cool. Dry weather to prevail.

Hyderabad City Tomorrow  
29°C The weather will be dry. Day will be slight warm. Night will be slight cool but hazy.

© Copyright SkyMet Weather 2026  
All rights reserved.

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

# Cyberabad Police launch e-Office system

Move marks shift towards paperless work culture and digital governance in policing; to streamline file processing, reduce decision making delays

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad Police Commissionerate on Monday launched the e-Office system, marking a shift towards a paperless work culture and digital governance in policing.

Cyberabad Police Commissioner M. Ramesh launched the system at the Commissioner's Office chamber in the presence of DCP Crimes Muthyam Reddy and DCP Cyber Crimes Y.V.S. Sudheendra.

Officials said the move was aimed at streamlining file processing, improving accountability and reducing delays in decision making. The e-Office platform is a workflow based digital system designed to replicate the traditional file



Cyberabad Police Commissioner M. Ramesh

movement process while introducing automation and efficiency. It covers the registration of incoming files, creation of files, movement of receipts and files, and archival of records. The system enables real time tracking of files, strengthens accountability, ensures data security and integrity, and allows access anytime and anywhere. Officials said the platform would help standardise procedures,

reduce turnaround time and improve resource management, while also encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing across departments.

The launch is in line with the Telangana Government's directive to all State offices to adopt the e-Office system as part of its push for paperless governance and improved administrative efficiency. Developed under the National e-Governance Plan, the platform supports electronic file movement, workflow automation, document tracking and secure digital storage to ensure transparency and responsiveness. Officials said training and technical support would be provided to ensure a smooth transition to the new system across departments.

## Mandal Revenue Inspector in ACB net for taking ₹20,000 bribe

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

A Mandal Revenue Inspector from Gurrampode mandal in Nalgonda district was caught red handed by the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) on February 2, while demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹20,000 for extending an official favour.

The accused, Mo-

ammed Abdul Hakeem, was trapped at around 1 p.m. in the premises of the Mandal Revenue Office after he allegedly demanded the amount from the complainant to process and forward an application to the Tahsildar for restoration of deleted land details in the online I-B Register.

ACB officials said that the tainted bribe amount of ₹20,000 was recovered

from accused officer at his instance.

The accused is being arrested and produced before the I Additional Special Judge for Trial of SPE and ACB Cases Court in Hyderabad. Further investigation is underway.

The ACB has appealed to the public to report any demand for bribes by public servants through its toll free number 1064.

**Smart Spending, Better Saving  
Complete Digital Banking**

**PNB One App**

**#JustOneApp**

**Punjab National Bank revamped PNB One App with new features:**

- Prasad Seva:** Facility of online order for prasad seva of different temples\*.
- Smart Features:** Includes a Spend Analyzer, pre-login Quick View Balance, and automated PPF/SSY account linking.
- Advanced Security:** Mobile threat detection to identify malware on your device.
- Card & Loan Control:** Instant debit card management (virtual view/limit control) and flexible education loan payments.
- Supercharged UPI:** Features UPI Lite for pinless small payments and RuPay Credit Card linking.
- Flexi RD:** Freedom to deposit varying amounts into your Recurring Deposit.

Explore the key highlights and experience the future of banking today with **PNB One App**.

Follow us: <https://pnb.bank.in> | Toll Free No: 1800-1800 & 1800-2021 | Give a missed call 1800 180 8888

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक ...भरोसे का प्रतीक !

punjab national bank ...the name you can BANK upon !

# HISTORIC HIGHS. EXPANDING HORIZONS.

Record-breaking Q3 for Vedanta Limited powered by structural cost efficiencies and diversified metals performance

**VEDANTA LTD Q3FY26 HIGHLIGHTS**

<b>REVENUE</b> ₹45,899 Cr ↑ 19% YoY Record-Best Revenue	<b>EBITDA</b> ₹15,171 Cr ↑ 34% YoY Highest-Ever EBITDA	<b>PROFIT AFTER TAX</b> ₹7,807 Cr ↑ 60% YoY Best-Ever PAT
<b>NET DEBT/EBITDA</b> ↑ 1.23x Improved from 1.40x in Q3FY25	<b>EBITDA MARGIN</b> 41%* ↑ 629 bps YoY 2nd Highest-Ever Margin	<b>RETURN ON CAPITAL EMPLOYED</b> 27% ↑ 296 bps YoY
<b>CREDIT RATING</b> Reaffirmed at AA by CRISIL and ICRA	<b>TOTAL SHAREHOLDER RETURN</b> c.30% (Outperformed Nifty by 5 times and Nifty Metal by 2.7 times) 5-year cumulative: 428%	

\*Excluding custom smelting at copper business

Vedanta demerger **APPROVED** by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

**DESH KI ZAROORATON KE LIYE**

Acquired Incab Industries, strengthening downstream footprint in Copper & Aluminium | Invested nearly USD 1.3 billion in growth capex in 9 months

VEDANTA, ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING PRODUCERS OF: METALS | OIL & GAS | CRITICAL MINERALS | POWER | TECHNOLOGY

# 2 held for cultivating ganja in apartment

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

The Special Task Force of the Prohibition and Excise Department, Hyderabad, detected an illegal case of hybrid marijuana cultivation inside a residential apartment at Chintal Basthi on Monday.

Acting on credible information, the STF conducted a search at K.B. Apartments in Shyam Rao Nagar, under the limits of Excise Station Nampally, and found one live hybrid marijuana plant grown under artificial conditions along with 12 grams of dried ma-



Special Task Force officials with the accused and the seized contraband on Monday.

rijuana. Officials said equipment used for indoor cultivation was seized from the apartment.

The accused were identified as Dhruv Thakur and Arpit Stephen Prakash both working professionals. Further probe is on.

**SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
Follow us on [@SCRailwaysIndia](#)  
Details of the Tender Notices of S.C. Railway can be seen on our website: [www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in)

**NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER**  
(through <https://ireps.gov.in>)

CE/C-VI/SC Construction Organisation, S.C. Railway, Secunderabad, respectively, invites e-tender on behalf of the President of India for the following works:

**S.No.: 01 NIT No.: 04-CAO-C-SC-2026** Date: 23/01/2026 **Name of work:** SCR Construction Organization: Secunderabad Division: Augmentation of home capacity from 225 to 300 locomotives at ELS/LGD. **Estimated Cost (₹):** 14,61,04,430.71 **EMD (₹):** 8,80,500.00 **Completion Period :** 12 (Twelve) Months **Date of Opening:** 17/02/2026 15:00hrs.

**S.No.: 02 NIT No.: 05-CAO-C-SC-2026** Date: 23/01/2026 **Name of work:** SCR Construction Organization: Hyderabad Division: Augmentation of infrastructure facilities for Maintenance of Vande Bharat rakes at Train Set Maintenance Depot at Moulali-aid. **Estimated Cost (₹):** 29,00,58,428.24 **EMD (₹):** 16,00,300.00 **Completion Period :** 12 (Twelve) Months **Date of Opening:** 17/02/2026 15:00hrs.

1) For bid document and other details, please login to website <https://ireps.gov.in>.

2) Tenderers can submit their offers online during tender submission period which is the Fifteen days period prior to closing of tender.

3) Tenderers should watch for any corrigenda (issued online only) up to the date of commencement of the tender submission period.

**Chief Administrative Officer, Const., Secunderabad**

**Tender No. M245-BVCM-02-DI-30.01.26**

On behalf of the President of India, The Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer/RYPSS, South Central Railway, Wagon Workshop, Guntupalli-521241 invites e-tender.

**Tender No. M245-BVCM-02-DI-30.01.26** Description: "Upgradation of Brake Vans and Provision of adjustable guard chairs and other essential amenities in brake vans during POH" at the premises of Wagon Workshop, Rayanapadu. **Tender Value (₹):** 20,64,29,654.30/- (Rupees Twenty crore Sixty four lakh Twenty nine thousand Six hundred fifty four and paise thirty only) **EMD (₹):** 11,82,200/- (Rupees Eleven lakh Eighty two thousand and two hundred only) **Cost of Tender document (₹):** Free of Cost **Period of Completion:** 24 Months **Offer Validity:** 90 Days from the date of opening **Type of tender:** Works Tender governed by IRGCC-2022 System of Tendering: Open Tender - Two Packet Similar **nature of work:** Applicable **Permissibility of Participation of Joint Venture Firms:** Permitted **Applicability of Price Variation Clause:** Applicable **Bid Capacity :** Applicable **Date & Time of Tender closing:** 15:00 Hrs. of DI.24.02.2026 **Tender document and Corrigendum:** Visit website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> **Postal Address for correspondence:** Chief Workshop Manager, Wagon Workshop, Guntupalli-521241, NTR District, Andhra Pradesh

**Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer, WWS/Guntupalli**

**TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT**

**THE HINDU**  
South India's No.1 English daily

Hyderabad : 040-27155005  
98497 93373  
97040 74747  
95023 25317  
98852 80564

email : [advthyd@thehindu.co.in](mailto:advthyd@thehindu.co.in)

**Tender Notice No. G/E.29/Tr./Tender Notice/48/2025-26**

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction/Guntakal acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works.

**Tender No.:** GTL-TRD-29-eTN-79-2025-26 **Name of work:** GTL Div: Replacement of worn-out, failure prone NICO/Veevak make contact wire to improve safety and reliability in GDR, RU-TPTY-KPT sections **Approximate Value (₹):** 1,74,77,390/- **EMD (₹):** 2,37,400/-

**Tender Closing date & time:** 23.02.2026 at 15.00 hrs

**Note:**

1. Tender Document may be downloaded from [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) by tenderers, free of cost.

For Bidding the tender and other details login to <http://www.ireps.gov.in> Corrigendum if any will be issued online only.

**Sr.Divisional Electrical Engineer, Traction, Guntakal**

**Tender No. GTL-EM-45-2025-26**  
Date: 30.01.2026

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/Maintenance/Guntakal acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works.

**Tender No.:** GTL-EM-45-2025-26 **Name of the work:** Guntakal Division-1. PTPY-Proposed construction of Community hall in lieu of shifting C&W office into old community hall with HVAC facility (Phase-II). Electrical arrangements. 2.CRS/Tirupati-Construction of new LHB Godown at Stores Depot- Electrical arrangements. **Approximate Value (₹):** 1,53,26,754.92/-

**Closing date and time:** 23-02-2026 at 15.00hrs

For Bidding the tender and other details login to <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. Corrigendum of tender, if any will be issued online only. Tender Document may be downloaded from <http://www.ireps.gov.in> by the tenderers free of cost.

**Note:** To participate/Bid in this e-Tender, tenderer should have valid DSC (Digital Signature Certificate).

**Sr.Divisional Electrical Engineer, Maintenance, Guntakal**

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

1. E-TENDER NOTICE No.02/DRM/Mech/NED/OT/25-26, dt.29.01.2026.

2. E-TENDER NOTICE No.03/DRM/Mech/NED/OT/2025-26 Dated 30.01.2026.

The undersigned invites Open E-Tenders for the following works:-

**S.No. : 01 Tender No. : T-10/NM/RIRO/NED DIV/25-26** **Name of the work:** Provision of Rolling In/Out benches and huts for C&W staff at C&W points of NED division. **Approx. value of work (₹):** 25,89,685/- (Including GST) **EMD in (₹):** 51,800/- **Cost of tender form in (₹):** NIL (Vide FA&CAO/SC's Lr.No. A/GST/1/Clarifications/2029, dt.06.04.2020)

**S.No. : 02 Tender No. : T-11/NM/Pneu-PL/NED/DIV/OT/25-26** **Name of the work:** Provision of Pneumatic pipe lines on pit lines at 5 Pit lines (NED-3 Pit lines, PAU-1 pit line and ADB-1 Pit line) **Approx. value of work (₹):** 37,42,810/- (Including GST) **EMD in (₹):** 74,900/- **Cost of tender form in (₹):** NIL (Vide FA&CAO/SC's Lr.No. A/GST/1/Clarifications/2029, dt.06.04.2020)

The above said tenders will be closed on 23.02.2026 at 15.00 Hrs.

For Other details & submission of e-tenders, please check tender doc on website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

**Sr.Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Nanded**

**E-Tender Notice No. 485/DRM/WGNT**

The undersigned invites e-tenders for the works mentioned below up to 15:30hrs of 27.02.2026.

**S.No. : 01 Tender ID. : 2837 Sr DEN/DEN: Sr DEN/ Br lines Description of the work:** Strengthening of Br.No.427 and Replacement of damaged elastomeric bearings for ROBs and PSC girders bearings for ROBs and PSC girders **Approx. Value (₹):** 79,67,049/- **Bid Security (₹):** 1,59,400/-

**S.No. : 02 Tender ID. : 2838 Sr DEN/DEN: Sr DEN/ Br lines Description of the work:** Provision of Inspection arrangements for Top Boom of Bridge No.314, 25UP & 28UP. Replacement of corroded side and center Footpath with New Chequered Plates **Approx. Value (₹):** 3,26,64,861/- **Bid Security (₹):** 3,13,300/-

1. Last date for online submission of E-bids is upto 15:30hrs of 27.02.2026. For detailed information login to website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

2. Any further Communication/Corrigendum shall be intimated through E-portal [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

**Divisional Railway Manager A2347 (Works), Guntur**

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at <https://www.ireps.gov.in> or [www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in)

**GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER BUILDINGS AND ROADS (NORTH) DIVISION PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

No.978/PW/BRN/DB/IE/Tender/2025-26 Pudukcherry, the 02-02-2026

**PRESS NOTICE FOR e-TENDER**  
e-Tender No. 83 to 84/PW/EE/BRN/2025-26

On behalf of the President of India, tenders are invited through e-Tendering by the Executive Engineer, Buildings and Roads (North) Division, Public Works Department, Pudukcherry for 2 works consists of "Construction of 75 Nos of Type-I & 25 nos of Type-II Modernized Bus Shelters at various locations in Pudukcherry and Improvements to the drainage system at Alankuppam main road from Alankuppam state border to Sanjeevi Nagar, Pudukcherry" in Tender No. 83 to 84 /PW/EE/BRN/25-26 for total estimated cost of ₹.10,01,65,390/- (Approximately) Inclusive of GST @ 18%. For further details please refer to the website <https://pudutenders.gov.in>.

Pre-Bid Meeting: 11.02.2026-10.30 A.M conference hall, Date, Time & Place: Central office, PWD, Pudukcherry

Availability of NIT from: 10.00 AM on 04.02.2026 to 04.00 P.M. on 16.02.2026

Closing time for submission of e-tender at 4.00 PM on the same day of last date of availability of NIT.

Date and time of opening of bid: on 17.02.2026 at 10.00 A.M (Next Working Day)

No.780/DIP/ADT/Press/2025-2026 **EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**

**INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
(An Autonomous Institute under Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India)  
Paschim Boragaon, Garchuk, Guwahati-781035

**Advt. No. 579 (NIQ) Date :02/02/2026**

**Advertisement of Notice Inviting Quotations (NIQ)**

IASST invites Sealed quotations from reputed Manufacturer / authorized distributors / dealers for supply of Atomic Force Microscope (AFM).

Please refer to the detailed advertisement published in the website <https://iasst.gov.in/>

**Registrar, IASST**

**BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED**  
(Wholly Owned by Government of Karnataka Undertaking)  
CIN - U04010KA2002SGC030438

**BRIEF TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
(Through KPP Portal)

BESCOM invites tenders through KPP Platform from eligible Bidders against Enquiry/Indent No. BESCOM/2025-26/EL/WORK\_INDENT918 for Preventive and Breakdown maintenance of all makes of RMUs of all combination of both DAS and Non DAS RMUs in South Circle area of BESCOM for a period of 1 year (extendable to one more year) under TTK basis.

**Bid Documents available :** 04.02.2026. **Last date for Bid Submission :** 05.03.2026 17:00 Hrs. **Opening of Bid Document :** 06.03.2026 17:15 Hrs.

The Tenders can be obtained through KPP portal web-site <http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. Aspiring Bidders need to register on KPP portal. Further Bidders can take assistance with KPP help desk contact numbers (+91-8046010000, +91-8068948777) or email at [support@eprocelpdesk.com](mailto:support@eprocelpdesk.com). Further details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/-  
Chief General Manager (El...), Procurement, BESCOM

For electricity related complaints call : 1912  
Download BESCOM Mithra Mobile APP

**RAICHUR POWER CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(YERMARUS THERMAL POWER STATION)  
CIN : U40101KA2009PLC049582

**BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
(Through e-Procurement Portal)

No. KPCL/2025-26/RD/WORK\_INDENT3892; Dtd. 28.01.2026.

RPCL is invited tender from eligible contractors through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> for the work of Construction of Bituminous service road for the use of adjacent land owners of YTPS site. Approx. value of work (Exclusive of GST): Rs.464.50 Lakhs. EMD: Rs.6,96,750/-. For any details and clarifications contact Executive Engineer (Civil), YTPS, Chicksugur-584 134 (Dist: Raichur) Mobile-9480682523.

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE**  
Bangalore - 560012

**IISc/CCMD/Tenders/2025-26** Date: 30.01.2026

**Tender Notification- IISc/ Tender-ELE-04/2025-26**

Indian Institute of Science invites bids in two cover system through e-procurement platform <https://eprocure.gov.in>. Any specialised firms company registered under KPWD / CPWID/ railways/ MES/ central PSUs/ or any Government department of Class I/Class A Electrical Contractors are eligible to apply for the work of "Providing 120KVA UPS and Replacement of Main LT Panels for Main Building at IISc Bangalore." Estimated Cost of Project is Rs. 98,30,769.00. Last date of receipt of application is 19th February 2026 at 15:30 Hrs. Any other details can be obtained from the office of the Centre for Campus Management & Development, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore on all working days or e-mail: [office.ccmd@iisc.ac.in](mailto:office.ccmd@iisc.ac.in)

Sd/-, Registrar

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD**  
O/o Chief General Manager (Engg), PCC-I, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-500004, TG.

**e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**

e-Tender Notice No. and Date	Name of Work	Approximate Estimate Contract Value
EP-02/CGM (E)/PCC-III/ RCC & SWG pipelines/ 2025-26, dated: 02.02.2026	Laying of RCC and SWG pipelines at various colonies of Karwan, Nampally and Goshamahall areas.	Rs.46.36 Crores

(1) The bid documents download starts online on or after: 07.02.2026.  
(2) Name and address of Chief General Manager (Engg), concerned- Chief General Manager (Engg), Project Construction Circle-I, HMWSSB, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-500004. (3) The contractors/firms are requested to upload the information in the 'ZIP' format preferably.  
(4) Further details can be seen @ <https://tender.telangana.gov.in>

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Engg), PCC-I, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-500004, TG.

# Funding gaps, execution delays hit PMJVK works at minority institutions in Telangana

Of the 92 buildings approved, only 41 have been completed so far; govt. official says works are being expedited and timely review is being done

Syed Mohammed  
HYDERABAD

The pace of infrastructure development for minority educational institutions sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) in Telangana appears slow, with only about half of the approved buildings completed so far.

The PMJVK, earlier known as the Multi Sectoral Development Plan, was launched in 2008-09 and rechristened in 2017-19. A joint initiative of the Centre and the State, the

scheme follows a 60:40 cost-sharing pattern. Under the programme, States propose infrastructure projects in districts where minorities constitute over 25% of the population within a 15-km 'catchment area'.

Official data shows that of the 92 infrastructure units approved under the scheme - primarily buildings meant for educational institutions - only 41 have been completed so far. Construction is currently under way at 39 sites, while 12 projects have been dropped, largely due to feasibility-related issues.



Minister for Minorities Welfare Mohammed Azharuddin

Launched as a Centrally-sponsored scheme during the 12th Five Year Plan with a 60:40 cost-sharing ratio between the Centre and the State, the pro-

gramme approved 92 units across Telangana. These include minority residential schools, hostels, junior colleges, Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Common Service Centres (CSCs). Of the 54 residential schools sanctioned, 19 have been completed. Two of the five approved junior colleges, 12 of 20 hostels and one of the two ITIs are complete. Among II CSCs sanctioned, seven have been completed so far.

As for funding, the total approved budgetary outlay for PMJVK projects in Telangana stands at ₹1,170.33 crore, with the

Centre contributing ₹712.81 crore and the State ₹457.52 crore. However, budgetary releases from both sides together amount to ₹698.52 crore, leaving ₹471.81 crore yet to be released. Data shows ₹426 crore has been released as the Centre's share and ₹270 crore as the State's share.

At a recent review meeting chaired by Minister for Minorities Welfare Mohammed Azharuddin, emphasis was laid on expediting the completion of pending infrastructure works. While sources attributed delays to gaps in

fund releases, Minorities Welfare Secretary B. Shafulah said the issue has since been resolved. He said PMJVK buildings have recently been completed in Bodhan, Nizamabad and Adilabad. "By this March, another 25 buildings will be completed. The Chief Minister is particularly about Centrally Sponsored Schemes and they will be completed on time. Timely review of the PMJVK projects and their monitoring is being done. In fact, we have proposed construction of another 25 buildings for the next year," he said.

# Skywalk on Raidurg-T-Hub stretch for pedestrians soon

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

Civic authorities have proposed the construction of a skywalk along the Raidurg-T-Hub stretch in Cyberabad to improve pedestrian safety, walkability and traffic flow in one of the city's busiest IT corridors.

Cyberabad Police Commissioner M. Ramesh conducted a field inspection of the proposed alignment along with senior police and traffic officials. The proposed skywalk is planned from the Raidurg Metro Station, via the IKEA flyover and the IOCL junction, up to T-Hub.

Officials said the inspection focused on identifying pedestrian risk zones and traffic congestion points in the high density corridor, which witnesses heavy footfall from Metro commuters, office goers and visitors to commercial hubs. The proposed facility is aimed at providing a continuous and safe pedestrian network through

Cyberabad Police Commissioner M. Ramesh conducted a field inspection of the proposed alignment of the project

skywalks and tunnels, while also easing vehicular movement. Authorities estimate that the project could reduce traffic congestion along the stretch by nearly 30%.

The proposal is being developed with support from the Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC) in coordination with multiple private stakeholders. As part of Phase I, a 500-metre-long skywalk has been proposed. Plans are also underway for a 400-metre-long underpass connecting T-Hub with Mindspace C-Gate to improve last mile connectivity.

The proposals are to be submitted to the State government through the Industrial Area Local Auth-

# Missing five-year-old boy reunited with parents

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

Police on Monday reunited a five-year-old boy with his parents after he went missing from his locality earlier in on Monday.

Miyapur Inspector Shivaprasad said Siddharth, son of Rajesh, a resident of Miyapur New Colony, had wandered nearly a kilometre from his house while playing in the morning and could not be traced by his family.

Police personnel who were on patrol duty noticed the child and took him into their care. After searching for his parents for about two hours, the police were able to identify and trace the family, and then safely hand the boy over to them.

The parents expressed relief and gratitude to the police, saying they were preparing to lodge a complaint after their own efforts to find the child were unsuccessful.

**SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED**  
(A Govt. of Telangana Undertaking)

**e-Procurement Tender Notice - 23/2025-26**

Details are: New Specification Nos. 47/2025-26, 48/25-26 & 49/25-26 and Recall of Specification No's. 22/25-26, 23/25-26, 31/25-26 (Reserved for W.S), 42/25-26.

1. Bid Download starts from: 03.02.2026 from 14.00 Hrs. (2) Bid Download closing date & time online: 10.02.2026 upto 14.00 Hrs. (3) Bid Submission Last date & time: 10.02.2026 upto 14.30 Hrs. (4) Last Date & time for Hard copies along with DDs/BGs: 11.02.2026 at 14.00 Hrs. (5) Technical Bid opening date & time: 11.02.2026 at 15.00 Hrs. (6) Price Bid Opening date & time: 18.02.2026 at 15.00 Hrs. For further details please visit [www.tender.telangana.gov.in](http://www.tender.telangana.gov.in) and [www.spsdpc.com](http://www.spsdpc.com) and contact O/o. the CE/Op/Rural Zone/Saganahar, Nampally, Hyderabad. Ph. No. 040-2301311. Sd/- Chief Engineer, Operation, Rural Zone

DIPR R.O.No.14877-PP/CLADVT/1/2025-26 Dt.02.02.2026 1699PCL, Gagan Vihar, Nampally, Hyderabad

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
Office of the Executive Engineer-II, Khairatabad Zone, Hyderabad 'e' Procurement No. 06/EE-II/Khairatabad Zone/GHMC/2025-26, Dt. 02.02.2026

NIT No.	Name of Work	Estimate Amount /ECV	Start date / Download End Date & time	Name & Address Officer Cell No.
36/EE-II/KZ/GHMC/2025-26	Civil works (11 Nos)	Rs. 165.20 Lakhs	For Works at Sl. No. 01 to 11 03-02-2026 @ 12.00 PM to 06-02-2026 upto 12.00 PM Only	Executive Engineer-II, KZ, GHMC

Further details can be seen at e-procurement @ <https://www.tender.telangana.gov.in>, e-mail address: [ee35.khairatabad@gmail.com](mailto:ee35.khairatabad@gmail.com) Mobile No: 7331189501

Sd/- Executive Engineer-II, Khairatabad Zone, GHMC

DIPR R.O.No. 14878-PP/CLADVT/1/2025-26 Dt. 02.02.2026

**Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder**

Call our toll-free number **1800 102 1878**

Or write to us at [customercare@thehindu.co.in](mailto:customercare@thehindu.co.in)

Scan the QR code to register your feedback

THE HINDU [thehindu.businessline.com](http://thehindu.businessline.com)

FRONTLINE SPORTSTAR [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com)

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
UPPAL ZONE

Date: 31.01.2026

NIT No.	Name of the work	Estimate Amount	Last date & Time for receipts of Bids	Name & Address Officer
Tender Notice NIT No. 05/ SE/NM/JUZ/ GHMC/2025-26, Dated: 31-01-2026	For 35 Work "Laying of Storm Water Drain for removal water stagnation at Krupa Villas in W.No. 14, Kagra of Kagra Circle-7, GHMC..... Laying of CC road from H.No. 1-9-177 to H.No. 1-9-179, H.No. 1-9-228 to H.No. 1-9-224/4, H.No. 1-9-225/1/2 to Sishumandir School, H.No. 1-9-216 to Sishumandir School and internal lanes of Kusthaiguda in Ward No. 16, Kusthaiguda of Kagra Circle-07, GHMC."	2768.00 Lakhs	09-02-2026 @ 3.00PM	Sri. G Hari Kishore Superintending Engineer, Uppal Zone, GHMC

For further details can be seen at e-procurement @ <http://www.tender.telangana.gov.in>.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Uppal Zone, GHMC

DIPR R.O.No. 14868-PP/CLADVT/1/2025-26 Dt. 02.02.2026

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD**  
O/o Chief General Manager (Engg), PCC-I, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-500004, TG.

**e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**

e-Tender Notice No. and Date	Name of Work	Approximate Estimate Contract Value
EP-02/CGM (E)/PCC-III/ RCC & SWG pipelines/ 2025-26, dated: 02.02.2026	Laying of RCC and SWG pipelines at various colonies of Karwan, Nampally and Goshamahall areas.	Rs.46.36 Crores

(1) The bid documents download starts online on or after: 07.02.2026.  
(2) Name and address of Chief General Manager (Engg), concerned- Chief General Manager (Engg), Project Construction Circle-I, HMWSSB, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-500004. (3) The contractors/firms are requested to upload the information in the 'ZIP' format preferably.  
(4) Further details can be seen @ <https://tender.telangana.gov.in>

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Engg), PCC-I, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-500004, TG.



# Congress, Communists two sides of same coin: Revanth

Chief Minister says that while Communists led struggles for common man, Congress governments gave legal sanctity to the results achieved thereafter like distribution of lands to landless

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy recalled the contributions of Communist veteran Raavi Narayana Reddy in the Telangana armed struggle and said the Congress and the Communists were two sides of the same coin.

While the Communists led the struggles for common man, the Congress governments gave legal sanctity to the results achieved thereafter like distribution of lands to landless. "The Congress is on the one side of the coin and the Communists are on the other," he said.

He was speaking after presenting the Raavi Narayana Reddy National Award to Justice (Retd) B. Sudarshan Reddy here on Monday. He recalled the contributions of Raavi Narayana Reddy who played a key role in the peasant uprising in spite of being born in a well to do family. "He donated his 500 acres for the cause of the poor and waged relentless struggle against the feudal system," he said adding that the legendary leader influenced scores of people, including illiterates.

Raavi Narayana Reddy was elected to Parliament with more majority than former Prime Minister late Jawaharlal Nehru and the latter invited Raavi Narayana Reddy to inaugurate the



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy speaking at the Raavi Narayana Reddy National Award programme in Hyderabad on Monday. SIDDHANT THAKUR

Parliament building giving due respect to the public mandate.

Stating that Raavi Narayana Reddy stood as an inspiration to the people by voluntarily retiring after attaining 60 years of age, the Chief Minister said people were not ready to leave their posts even after being defeated at the hustings. While leaders like Raavi Narayana Reddy and Burgula Ramakrishna Rao inspired the people in the past, senior leader S. Jaipal Reddy and Justice Sudarshan Reddy, who contested the vice president elections against the BJP's moves towards 'One Nation, One Party' were inspirations of the current generation.

The Chief Minister also criticised the BJP-led Cen-

tral government for introducing the special intensive revision of electoral rolls, claiming that SIR was brought in to deny the right to vote ensured by the Constitution. He exhorted the Left parties to create awareness among the people on the 'attack on the Constitution' being indulged in by the BJP. The Left parties should take the initiative to educate people at the grassroots level against the conspiratorial policies of the Central government.

Responding to an appeal by the organisers, the Chief Minister said that his government was committed to give due recognition to Raavi Narayana Reddy and would take a decision in this direction after consulting stakeholders.

## Harish flays CM for his 'hate speech'

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Senior leader of BRS T. Harish Rao criticised Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for exposing his nature of spitting venom at political opponents within minutes after Justice (Retd.) B. Sudarshan Reddy advocated against hate speech at the Raavi Narayana Reddy memorial award event here on Monday.

The Chief Minister had given a live demo for hate speech immediately after the former Supreme Court Judge spoke on hate speech, Mr. Rao said in a statement. The Chief Minister's speech made it clear one more time the extent of his animosity against former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao, Mr. Harish Rao added.

Despite a four-day study in Harvard University, Mr. Revanth was unable to shed his true colours. There was no change in his culture, cheap talk and taunts. He was a standing example for hate politics and spitting venom at political opponents, Mr. Rao said. He stated that Mr. Revanth Reddy had no moral rights to speak about the movement for Statehood to Telangana.

# Harish faults SIT chief's remarks on phone-tapping

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Deputy Floor Leader of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in the Assembly and former Minister T. Harish Rao strongly objected to the manner in which the chief of the special investigation team of the phone-tapping case V.C. Sajjanar has publicly referred to the issue of phone-tapping as 'illegal' even before the matter has been examined and decided by a competent court of law.

In a statement, Mr. Rao said on Monday that such a statement is deeply disturbing, especially coming from the head of a SIT. In a



T. Harish Rao

constitutional democracy, it is a well-settled principle that until a court of law records a finding, no allegation can be treated as an offence.

He pointed out that the role of the police is strictly

limited to investigation and that police officers are not judges or adjudicators and they have no authority to declare any act as 'illegal' at the stage of inquiry. He was reacting to a social media post of Mr. Sajjanar, wherein he stated that 'SIT has concluded the questioning of Gajwel MLA and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao in connection with the illegal phone-tapping case'.

By using the expression 'illegal phone tapping' in a message in his official capacity, the SIT Chief has displayed a preconceived notion about the outcome of the investigation, Mr. Harish Rao said.

# Phone-tapping an insult to self-respect of TG: Ponnam

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Transport Minister Ponnampaluri Prabhakar said the Telangana movement symbolised self-respect and collective struggle but the illegal tapping of phones of Telangana citizens, officers, political leaders and even their family members was an insult to the self-respect.

Describing it as a 'heinous crime' that strikes at the very foundation of the Telangana Statehood movement, he asked the BRS leadership to introspect why they had to insult the Telangana society with such a crime.

Speaking to reporters in Husnabad, he alleged that when those involved in the case were summoned as part of the investigation, they attempted to create unrest by calling for violent protests and trying to gain political mileage.

"If an investigation causes so much discomfort, it only raises serious questions. By tapping phones, you intrude into the private lives of individuals and collect information related to their economic, business, political, professional and family matters," Mr. Prabhakar said.

At another press conference, senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao said the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the phone tapping case had already questioned several individuals and that former CM KCR was examined as part of the same process.

# 'BRS view that KCR shouldn't be quizzed reflects feudal mindset'

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Telangana Jagruti founder K. Kavitha argued in favour of leaders appearing before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the phone tapping case, and said phone tapping occurred during Mr. K. Chandrashekhara Rao's tenure and that anyone summoned for inquiry must cooperate.

"No one is above the law. I myself have faced ED and CBI inquiries despite doing no wrong," she said adding that she was willing to cooperate with the SIT if it plans to question her as



K. Kavitha

she too was a sufferer. She wanted a transparent investigation but expressed scepticism over whether it would be taken to its logical conclusion.

However, she criticised

BRS working president KT Rama Rao's argument that KCR should not even be summoned for inquiry, calling it a "feudal mindset". She also targeted BRS MLA Harish Rao, alleging that he had colluded with the Congress government to defame KCR.

Ms. Kavitha also criticised remarks attributed to KTR, alleging that voters were being asked to vote based solely on KCR's image, irrespective of whether the candidate was good or bad. "Asking people to vote blindly based on a label reflects feudal and authoritarian thinking," she said.

## INBRIEF

### BRAOU exams postponed; to be held from February 17

The semester examination schedule for Degree first, second and third year at Dr. BR Ambedkar Open University stands postponed due to civic polls on February 11. The exams will be held from February 17 to March 10.



### PCC distributes 'B' Forms to municipal poll candidates

TPCC unanimously approved the list of municipal election candidates recommended by the Screening Committee formally clearing the way for Congress to enter municipal polls with its official candidates. Later in the evening, B-Forms were distributed to approved candidates.

# Bandi kick-starts BJP's civic poll campaign in Karimnagar

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KARIMNAGAR

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar kicked off the BJP's civic poll campaign for Karimnagar Municipal Corporation by performing puja to the campaign vehicles and addressing street corner meetings in Karimnagar on Monday.

Addressing a roadside meeting at Kisannagar on Monday evening, Mr. Bandi Sanjay alleged that the ruling Congress dispensation failed to release a single pie for the KMC in the last two years.

He hit out at the BRS accusing its leaders of looting public money and indulging in land grabbing during the 10-year-rule of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi.



Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay performing puja before flagging off the party's municipal election campaign vehicles in Karimnagar on Monday.

He alleged that the BRS rulers diverted the Central funds. "Given the BJP mandate to govern the KMC and I will take up the responsibility of bringing

more funds to the civic body," he said, making an appeal to the denizens of Karimnagar to elect the BJP candidates in the February 11 civic polls.

# Tummala flays Centre's lack of support to farm sector

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Minister for Agriculture Tummala Nageswara Rao criticised the Centre for neglecting the agriculture sector of Telangana that has been contributing substantially to the State's economy. Repeated requests made to the Centre to enhance the duty on palm oil imports to encourage the cultivation oilpalm plantation crop have yielded no result as there was no word on it in the Budget. He faulted the Centre for not allocating any funds to the Turmeric Board and not recognising it as a high value crop, leaving the farmers raising the spice crop in Telangana highly disappointed.

The farmers were also expecting dedicated funds to promote turmeric cultivation. Similarly, the Union Budget was also disappointing as it had no announcement on the establishment of the coconut board, the Minister said in a statement on Monday.

The Minister stated that the Budget proposals had also indicated an increase in fertilizer prices and it would burden the farming community further as there were no interventions in the Budget to bring down the input costs. The Centre had also failed to provide the backing of a legislation to the minimum support price and the Budget had also lacked direction on the agricultural marketing, price stabilisation and market reforms.

Further, there was no effort to encourage farmers of oilseeds producers as no decision was announced on the duty on edible oil imports.



BJP Telangana president N. Ramchander Rao with Maharashtra Minister Ashish Shelar and others at the launch of the 'chargesheet' against Congress in Hyderabad on Monday. RAMAKRISHNA G

# BJP targets Congress over failed election promises, civic issues

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party Telangana Unit promised a 'corruption-free, development-oriented civic administration' with a special focus on improving basic amenities if the party wins the ensuing Municipal Polls - to be held on February 11.

"We will secure sufficient funds from the Modi government for infrastructure development. The Centre is already supporting several urban projects under the Smart Cities and AMRUT schemes. The State government has no funds, so it is the Centre that has been financing streetlights, roads and other civic works," claimed the State party president N. Ramchander Rao.

Speaking to the media on Monday after the party's in-charge for municipal polls and Maharashtra Minister, Ashish Shelar, released a chargesheet against the Congress government in Telangana, Mr. Rao said the BJP would go to the people with the slogan 'Save Telangana, Vote for BJP'.

He held Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy responsible for the 'municipal mess'.

"Can any citizen say that living standards have improved after the Congress government came to power? Property tax collections of about ₹2,500 crore in Municipal Corporations have been siphoned off, and central funds are being diverted," alleged the BJP Telangana president.

Mr. Rao further accused the Congress government of failing to fulfil several guarantees and promises made during the Assembly elections in 2023.

"There is a total breakdown of law and order, with daylight murders, robberies and vandalism of temples becoming rampant. Mr. Revanth Reddy has been a total failure as he in charge of both Home and Municipal Administration & Urban Development," he said.

He claimed that government employees did not receive salaries on time, pensioners ran from pillar to post for their benefits, and universities continued to suffer due to inadequate faculty, funds and staff.

# Govt's rising expenditure on salaries, pensions and subsidies limits developmental spending: study

**M. Rajeev**  
HYDERABAD

A study has pointed out the State government's rising expenditure for payment of salaries, pensions and subsidies (part of welfare schemes) as they account for a major chunk of budgetary allocations and in turn, leave little space for other developmental spending.

**Expenditure on wages**  
The study, "State Finances: A study of budgets 2025-26" by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), says the State's expenditure on account of payment of wages and salaries in different categories is set to cross ₹63,000

crore and reach ₹63,344 crore going by the budget estimates of the current financial year. The amount includes committed expenditure like salaries as well as payments that are being made to different categories of employees like work charged staff, grant-in-aid employees, home guards, daily wage workers and contract/outsourcing workers. The spike in the expenditure over the past decade can be seen from the fact that expenditure on wages and salaries was ₹10,801.4 crore in 2014-15, the year of Telangana's formation and rose gradually to reach the present levels.

**Major jump**



The impact of rising expenditure on salaries, pensions and subsidies by Telangana government on developmental spending was mentioned in a RBI study.

A major jump in expenditure was registered in 2022-23 to 2023-24 when it rose from ₹36,161 crore to ₹60,908 crore, according

to the RBI data. The rise can be attributed to the implementation of the fitment benefit of 30% to all categories of employees over and above the quantum recommended by the Pay Revision Commission headed by retired bureaucrat C.R. Biswal.

**Pension payments**  
There has also been significant rise in pension payments which have been exceeding budget estimates since the past few years. In the financial year 2023-24, for instance, the Government allocated ₹13,024 crore for pensions in the budget estimates, but the actual payments were ₹16,841 crore at the end of

the fiscal. The same was the case with the current year with pension exceeding the budget estimates of ₹13,109 crore and reaching ₹14,126 crore by December end, according to the provisional data submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

**Subsidies**  
Subsidies, a major chunk of which is consumed by the free power to agriculture sector, too have grown manifold. From ₹6,303 crore in 2018-19, the subsidy burden enhanced to ₹21,237 crore as per the revised estimates of 2024-25 and ₹21,347 crore projected in the budget estimates of the current fiscal.

**Pennaiyar river dispute: SC directs Centre to form tribunal**

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Centre to constitute a tribunal to adjudicate the dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka over the sharing of Pennaiyar river water.

A Bench, headed by Justice Vikram Nath, directed the Centre to issue a notification to constitute the inter-State water disputes tribunal within a month. "The Centre may place the complaint filed by Tamil Nadu before the tribunal upon its constitution," the Bench said. This direction of the court comes under Section 5 of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act of 1956.

In 2018, Tamil Nadu moved the Supreme Court against Karnataka over its work on dams and diversions structures on the river. Karnataka had no right to utilise the waters of Pennaiyar to the detriment of the people of Tamil Nadu, the State had told the court. Tamil Nadu argued that the flowing of water of an inter-State river was a national asset and no single State could claim exclusive ownership of its water. An 1892 agreement over the river water was "valid and binding" on the party States, it had contended.

Tamil Nadu had wanted a prohibition on Karnataka from initiating any new schemes in the Pennaiyar basin until a tribunal was constituted by the Centre.

**Rise in southern States' share of funds gives no relief to T.N.**

The share of Tamil Nadu, which was 4.079% in the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, rose to 4.097% in 16<sup>th</sup> panel, with a rate of increase of only 0.44%; weights assigned to per-capita GSDP came down too

**T. Ramakrishnan**  
CHENNAI

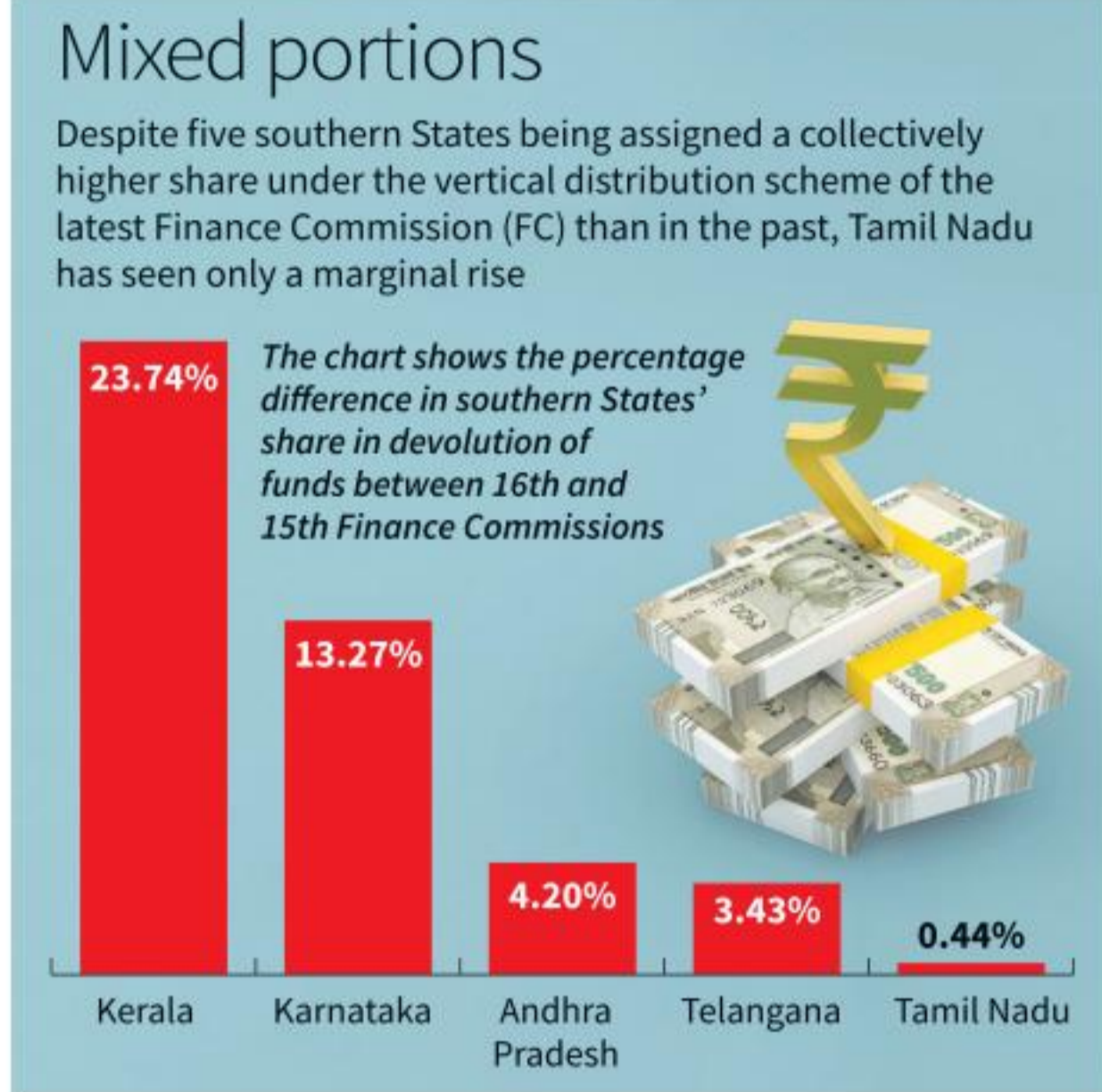
Despite five southern States being assigned a collectively higher share under the vertical distribution scheme of the latest Finance Commission (FC) than in the past, Tamil Nadu's share has seen only a marginal rise.

The share of Tamil Nadu, which was 4.079% in the 15th FC, rose to 4.097% now, accounting for a rate of increase of 0.44%. This was followed by Telangana with a rise of 3.43% and Andhra Pradesh with 4.2%. Only Karnataka and Kerala have witnessed a double-digit rate of increase — 13.27% and 23.74%, respectively.

At the all-India level, Kerala's degree of rise is only next to Haryana's 24.52%, while the third slot goes to Karnataka.

**'Virtually nothing'** Veteran experts in public finances say Tamil Nadu has got virtually nothing extra. "Yet again, unfair treatment," is the refrain of the experts.

One of the experts contends that this time, the 16th FC included contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as one of the criteria for horizontal devolution. But for this element, the share of Tamil Nadu may have gone down. The criterion of tax and fiscal efforts has been



removed, while the weights assigned to the criteria of area, demographic performance and per-capita GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) have been reduced. Only the criterion of population has seen an increase of weight from 15% to 17.5%, which, however, does not benefit the southern States including Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

K.R. Shanmugam, former Director of the Madras School of Economics, says the increase in the vertical devolution for the south seems to have been achieved by decreasing the share of six northern States such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, besides West Bengal. The combined share of the seven States, which stood at 51.2%, has been brought

down to 49.93%. Pointing out only relief and temporary restoration works are covered under disaster response fund schemes, a veteran policy maker suggests that the Union government follows the example of the Tamil Nadu government, which had created, in the light of the December 2015 floods in Chennai and surrounding areas, a project preparation fund of ₹100 crore for the formulation of projects to be posed to funding agencies.

**Subsidy levels** The 16<sup>th</sup> FC has dealt elaborately with the subject of subsidies, an area where the south has been a trendsetter. "At ₹78,453 crore, Tamil Nadu had the highest absolute level of sub-

dy in 2023-24, followed by Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana at ₹70,149 crore, ₹63,951 crore and ₹62,847 crore respectively," the panel records.

Pointing out that the absolute subsidy levels are "somewhat misleading" given the State's size, the Commission names Telangana as one of the States wherein subsidy levels, as a proportion of respective GSDP, exceeded 5% during 2024-26, and Andhra Pradesh having the subsidy level standing between 3% and 5%.

As for channelising subsidies to the eligible beneficiaries, the latest FC report refers to measures taken by Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu governments. It acknowledges that by employing information technology (IT) enabled data analysis on integrated databases, such States have been able to de-duplicate and streamline beneficiary listing, leading to substantial savings.

Though the southern States had taken a similar stand on many issues, they differed among themselves over revenue deficit grants meant for bridging the revenue gap. While Karnataka expressed scepticism, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu stood for the continuation of such grants. However, the 16<sup>th</sup> FC's recommendation was against the grants.

**Kerala court suspends sentence of ex-Minister Antony Raju**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Thiruvananthapuram District and Sessions Court on Monday suspended the sentence of former Thiruvananthapuram MLA Antony Raju in an evidence tampering case.

Mr. Raju had challenged the verdict of the Nedumangad Judicial First Class Magistrate-I which had sentenced him to three years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹10,000. The verdict had subsequently led to his disqualification as an MLA.

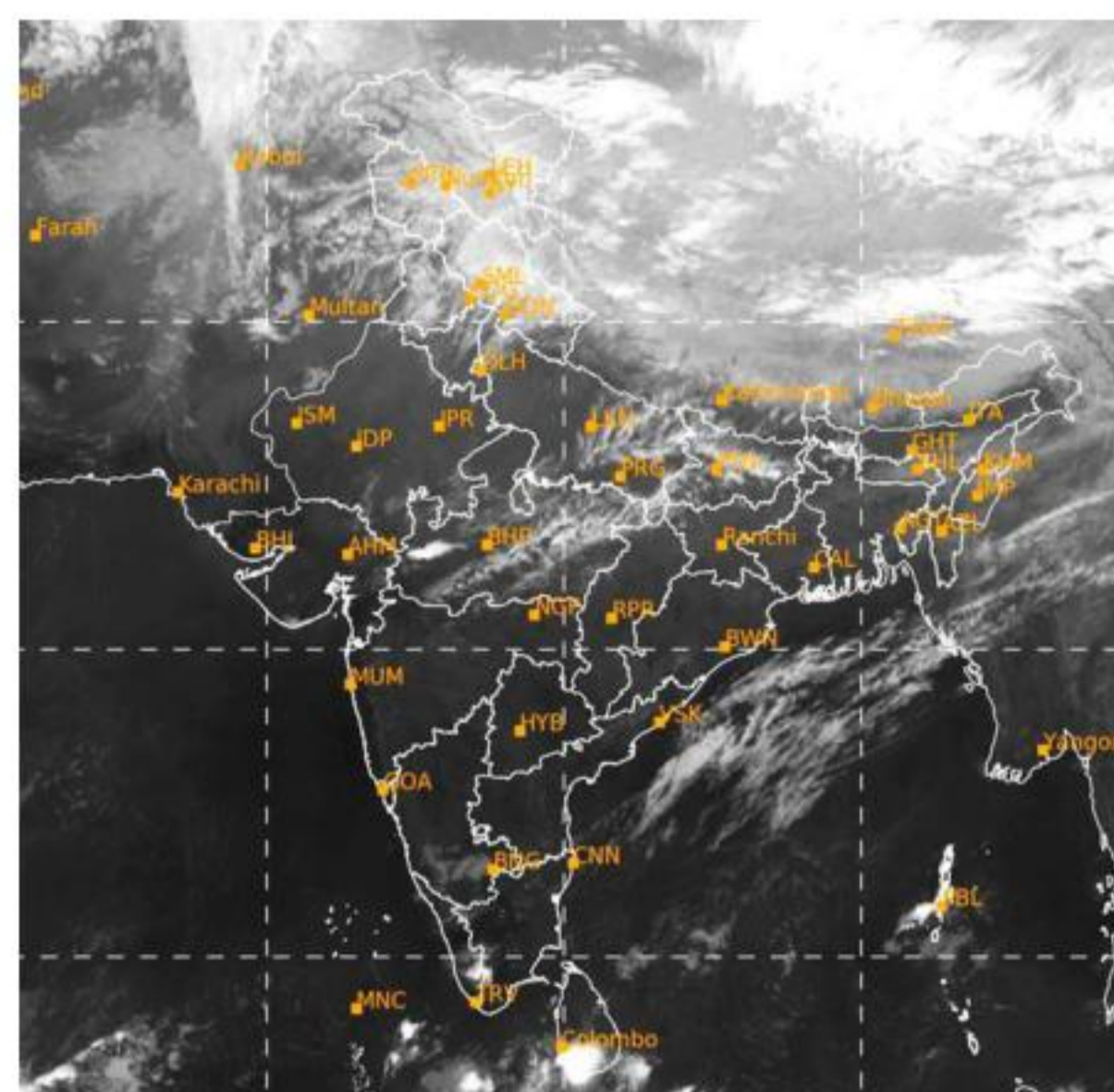
The former legislator and K.S. Jose, a court clerk, were both found guilty of causing the disappearance of evidence, forgery and fabricating false evidence that had resulted in the acquittal of an Australian national who was arrested from Thiruvananthapuram International Airport in 1990 with possession of ganja.

While staying the execution of the sentence until the final disposal of the appeal, the District and Sessions Court clarified that the finding of guilt against Mr. Raju as well as his disqualification will continue to stand during this period. The next hearing will be on February 6.

Mr. Raju had approached the court seeking to set aside the magistrate court's judgment, arguing that the court had delivered the verdict without fully considering his arguments.

**WEATHERWATCH**

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



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

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Dense/very dense fog likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	.....	28.6	13.2	Kozhikode	.....	33.2	24.9
Ahmedabad	.....	30.1	19.5	Kurnool	.....	31.9	19.2
Aizawl	.....	29.5	9.4	Lucknow	.....	26.3	13.0
Allahabad	.....	24.4	11.5	Madurai	.....	29.5	23.6
Bengaluru	.....	24.4	17.4	Mangaluru	.....	33.6	21.4
Bhopal	.....	28.0	13.8	Mumbai	.....	33.0	20.4
Bhubaneswar	.....	30.8	15.8	Mysuru	.....	32.0	16.0
Chandigarh	.....	21.9	9.8	New Delhi	.....	17.5	10.4
Chennai	.....	29.4	23.3	Patna	.....	23.3	12.3
Coimbatore	.....	32.4	21.0	Port Blair	.....	31.3	25.4
Dehradun	.....	24.0	11.0	Puducherry	.....	28.7	20.9
Gangtok	.....	18.0	8.3	Pune	.....	31.2	18.4
Goa	.....	34.2	21.2	Raipur	.....	30.9	16.3
Guwahati	.....	26.8	13.9	Ranchi	.....	26.4	12.0
Hubballi	.....	32.0	18.0	Shillong	.....	18.0	7.4
Hyderabad	.....	29.0	17.5	Shimla	.....	17.6	6.2
Imphal	.....	24.6	6.5	Srinagar	.....	9.8	2.6
Jaipur	.....	25.9	11.7	Thiruvananthapuram	.....	35.6	24.8
Kochi	.....	31.8	25.4	Tiruchi	.....	31.7	21.6
Kohima	.....	18.6	8.2	Vijayawada	.....	29.8	20.8
Kolkata	.....	27.5	15.0	Visakhapatnam	.....	29.3	22.3

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub> CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad	.....	74	84	44	.....	113	1148
Bengaluru	.....	6	24	24	.....	152	117
Chennai	.....	8	8	53	.....	203	136
Delhi	.....	11	222	65	.....	292	262
Hyderabad	.....	6	10	79	.....	123	134
Kolkata	.....	6	98	50	.....	208	124
Lucknow	.....	11	65	57	.....	265	292
Mumbai	.....	21	.....	.....	.....	218	151
Pune	.....	.....	33	32	.....	274	200
Visakhapatnam	.....	9	.....	24	.....	231	149

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 321 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 26

**Air Quality Code:** Poor (Red), Moderate (Yellow), Good (Green) (Readings indicate average AQI)

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

**NO<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

**PM<sub>10</sub> & PM<sub>2.5</sub>:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

**INBRIEF**



**Nine A.P. fishermen return from Bangladeshi prison**

The nine fishermen from Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh who were detained for three months in a Bangladeshi prison when their boat drifted into Bangladeshi waters were reunited with their families on Monday. After the fishermen were handed over at the International Maritime Boundary Line, local fishing boats escorted them to the Visakhapatnam harbour. On October 21, 2025, their boat had suffered an engine failure and they had drifted into Bangladeshi territory, leading to their arrest by the Bangladesh Coast Guard.

**CPI(M) to observe black day against Union Budget today**

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] will observe 'black day' on Tuesday in protest against the "gross neglect" shown to Kerala in the Union Budget. Black flags will be raised in booth centres in all districts. The CPI(M) State secretariat said in a statement on Monday that the State had raised 29 demands in a discussion with the Union Finance Minister before the Budget, but none were considered. "The Budget has been presented in such a way that Kerala does not exist on the map of India. Kerala did not get any project..." said the statement.

**'Around 52,000 not received Gruha Lakshmi benefits'**

Around 52,000 women in Karnataka have not received benefits under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, Minister for Women and Child Development Laxmi Hebbalkar informed the Legislative Council on Monday. She said that the issue had arisen because beneficiary details matched records of the GST and Income Tax Departments, leading to withholding of payments under the scheme. Issues faced by about 20,000 women have been resolved and the rest are being addressed, she said.

**British-era irrigation locks in Godavari delta to open for tourism**

**T. Appala Naidu**  
CHOPPELLA

The District Tourism Council in Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema district plans to assess and document the British-era irrigation locks in the Godavari Delta before opening them up for tourism related activities. Built in the 1850s, these irrigation locks play a pivotal role in the distribution and conservation of river water meant for agriculture.

They regulate water released from the Sir Arthur Cotton barrage at Dowleswaram in the Godavari Delta. The personnel deployed at the irrigation lock are tasked with guarding against illegal diversion of the Godavari water for aquaculture ponds.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema district, falls in the Central and Western



Locals gather in the evening at an irrigation lock at Sakhinipalli in Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema district. T. APPALA NAIDU

Delta, and the irrigation locks at Lolla, Choppella, Mukkamala, Vijjeswaram and Sakhinipalli Lanka are known for their scenic beauty. Additionally, the sites also feature British-era built structurally sound administrative buildings long been abandoned.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema District Tourism Council, led by District Col-

lector R. Mahesh Kumar met on Monday to explore the possibilities of opening the existing building infrastructure at the irrigation locks for tourism activities.

**Feasibility report** "The District Tourism Promotion Council will document all the irrigation locks, buildings and the availability of land to high-

light the tourism potential. A detailed feasibility report will be prepared on the irrigation locks and the stability of the building structures surrounding them by February 15," said Mr. Mahesh Kumar.

The Collector has also asked the council to plan boat races in the irrigation canals to attract tourists to the Konaseema region.

**Temple tourism**

By the end of February, the council is expected to submit a Detailed Project Report (DPR) on the potential of temple tourism at five major temples in the Konaseema region, which include the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Antarvedi, and the Bhimeswara Swamy temple in Draksharamam, which is a protected monument of the Archaeological Survey of India.

**KTR slams Congress govt. for indulging in 'diversion politics'**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

K.T. Rama Rao, working president of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), criticised the Congress government in Telangana, saying it has delivered nothing substantial to the people and is instead indulging in "diversion politics" through false propaganda and politically motivated investigations since coming to power.

In an informal chat with presspersons on Monday, he said making former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao sit for hours in the name of inquiry amounted to an attack on democratic values and was done merely to satisfy the government's political vendetta.

Mr. Rama Rao alleged



K.T. Rama Rao

that the Congress and BJP had failed to secure adequate funds for Telangana, and demanded that the claims about investments announced at Davos be taken up for discussion in the next Assembly session.

He thanked BRS supporters for the massive protests held across Telangana in over 12,000 gram panchayats.

**SC to examine plea against Kerala HC decision on priests**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday decided to examine a plea challenging a Kerala High Court decision that temple priests must be appointed in accordance with religious texts.

A Bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath issued notice to the State of Kerala, Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) and Kerala Devaswom Recruitment Board (KDRB). The petition was filed by the Akhila Kerala Thanthri Samajam and its office-bearer.



A Bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath issued a notice to Kerala govt., TDB and KDRB

The High Court in October 2025 had rejected a plea to declare certificates issued by accredited Thanthra Vidyalayas by the TDB

or the KDRB unconstitutional.

It had found untenable the contention that individuals unconnected with spiritual functions were being considered for such posts.

**Approved by govt.** The qualifications prescribed for the post of part-time *santhi* (temple priest) were formulated by the TDB after obtaining expert inputs from the KDRB, the High Court had observed, adding that they had been approved by the government.

**Outlet for eco-friendly agarbatti launched at Bhadradi temple**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BHADRADI KOTHAGUDEM

Devotees visiting the historic Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy temple in Bhadrachalam can now buy eco-friendly agarbattis (incense sticks) made from flowers, collected from temples, as the Prisons Department opened an herbal agarbatti outlet at the famous temple, popularly known as 'Bhadradi'.

The charcoal-free incense sticks made by the inmates of the Bhadrachalam Special Sub-Jail have been made available for sale at the outlet.



The herbal agarbatti outlet at Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy temple in Bhadrachalam.

An herbal Agarbatti manufacturing unit was set up at the jail in November last year and the unit has so far produced around 2,400

packets of eco-friendly Agarbattis under the brand name 'Valmiki'.

It forms the crux of the skill-development initiatives of the Prisons Department to help inmates earn wages to support their families while in jail and become financially self-reliant after their release, says J. Upender, Superintendent, Special Sub-Jail, Bhadrachalam. Additionally, it offers devotees an eco-friendly alternative to buy charcoal-free incense sticks with natural fragrance to contribute to the welfare of jail inmates and conservation of nature.



## A cautious nudge

### Only structural change can restore the balance in fiscal federalism

In its much-awaited recommendations, which were also tabled on Sunday, the Sixteenth Finance Commission (FC-16), as anticipated, has recommended that the vertical devolution ratio – the States' share in the divisible pool of Central taxes – be retained at 41% for the period 2026-31. States want this to be 50%. This is despite the Commission acknowledging the tightening fiscal space States face under the GST framework, and that the growing mismatch between expenditure responsibilities and assured revenues has increasingly left them with "recourse to market borrowings" as the principal adjustment mechanism. Predictably, several States have criticised the projected devolutions for the coming fiscal but have also cautiously welcomed a tweak in the horizontal devolution formula. The FC-16 has reworked the earlier "tax effort" criterion into a broader "contribution to GDP" measure and raised its weight sharply – from 2.5% under the FC-15 to 10%. This change is intended to reward productive and efficient States and represents a modest but meaningful attempt to link governance outcomes with fiscal transfers.

However, the resulting gains are deliberately restrained. The FC-16 makes it clear that any restructuring of horizontal devolution must be undertaken "gradually", to avoid abrupt redistributive shocks to States that are more dependent on transfers. Accordingly, the weight accorded to demographic performance has been reduced, reflecting the view that penalising population growth is no longer appropriate at a time when India is close to the peak of its demographic dividend. Conversely, the weight for population size has been modestly increased. The net effect is that industrialised States such as Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra see only incremental improvements in their inter-State shares. This caution is understandable but also underscores the limits of the Commission's ambition. A stronger signal could have been sent through a staggered increase in vertical devolution, for instance by committing to raise the States' share to 45% by 2031, expanding discretionary fiscal space while preserving stability. The FC-16 flags the shrinking of the effective divisible pool due to cesses and surcharges but stops short of correcting this by recommending their inclusion in the pool. To be sure, total transfers to States are budgeted to rise by 12.2% between 2025-26 (RE) and 2026-27 (BE). But ₹1.2 lakh crore – or about 42% of this increase – is from revenue transfers under Centrally Sponsored Schemes, reinforcing a governance model in which States act as implementers of priorities set in New Delhi. The FC-16's recommendations recognise the stresses in State finances but do not push for the structural change needed to restore the balance in fiscal federalism.

## A full stop

Making access to menstrual hygiene for girls a fundamental right is a big step

The perspicacious judgment of the Supreme Court last week encapsulating the right to menstrual health and hygiene into the fundamental right to life and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution is precisely the kind of intervention needed, with all the power of Thor's hammer. A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan wrote in their sterling judgment that takes a rare, rights-based, 360 degree view of the problem: "Autonomy can be meaningfully exercised only when girl children have access to functional toilets, adequate menstrual products, availability of water, and hygienic mechanisms for disposal." Shifting the onus, the judges called upon the state to make menstrual health accessible to all girls and remove the triptych of stigma, stereotyping and humiliation that girls who do not have access to these facilities are regularly subject to. The judges noted that this violates the bodily autonomy of menstruating girl children. Terming it as 'menstrual poverty', the Bench said that it hinders menstruating girls from exercising their right to education with dignity equal to their male counterparts, or students who can afford sanitary products. The Court ordered States and Union Territories to ensure that every school has functional, gender-segregated toilets, and wrote in punitive action for non-compliance. The state will be held accountable if government-run schools did not comply, and private schools can be derecognised.

The lack of access to health-care products during menstruation, even clean water and toilets, arises from a clear, gendered lack of equity. While the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5 data claim that the percentage of women aged 15-24 years using hygienic methods during their menstrual cycles has risen to 77.3% in NFHS-5 from 57.6% in NFHS-4, it still leaves about a fourth of all women of eligible age in the country adrift, without support. While the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has said that it has developed guidelines on menstrual hygiene management for creating awareness in rural areas, implementation has always been patchy and the energy is project-based, not sustained. Fragmented, though well-meaning, efforts by non-governmental organisations have formed the bulk of interventions for years now, but the ability to erase the stigma requires a larger force to act. With the judgment there is finally a chance of that happening. Commitment from a policy and financial perspective alone can ensure menstrual hygiene for all young girls and women and enable them to achieve their full potential. As the judges said, inspired by the motto of The Pad Project: "A period should end a sentence, not a girl's education."

On February 2, 2026, the world marked World Wetlands Day 2026 under the theme, 'Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage'. In India, this theme feels especially apt. There is a rich history of communities sustaining themselves through wetlands following practices that inherently safeguarded ecosystems.

Traditional practices in Tamil Nadu's wetlands revolve around ancient water management and community livelihoods, human-made tanks or *kulam*s, forming cascading irrigation networks for paddy and other crops. In Wayanad, Kerala, shallow wells called *kenis*, crafted over 200 years ago, support drinking water, rituals, and festivals, while wetlands in Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh, sustain traditional fishing practices. Such stories can be told from any part of India, where communities have thrived for generations around wetlands that are both ecology and economy, habitat and heritage, essential to social wellbeing.

But we must be honest. Although the benefits and services of wetlands abound, wetlands remain among the most threatened ecosystems because they sit at the intersection of land, water, and development.

### Policy background, challenges at home

Policy and regulatory frameworks are often blamed, but India does not lack laws. It lacks consistent, high-quality implementation. The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 provide a framework for identifying, notifying, and managing wetlands through authorities to restrict damaging activities. However, nearly 40% of India's wetlands have vanished over the last three decades, and around 50% of what remains show signs of ecological degradation.

Updated guidelines under the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA) push for structured planning, monitoring and outcome-oriented management. The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) framework aims to maintain the ecological integrity of coastal wetlands, while Ramsar site designation offers global recognition and responsibility. The 98 Ramsar sites in India are not just badges but commitments that encourage action.

These instruments span freshwater, coastal, urban, natural, riparian and high-altitude wetland but must be coordinated into a single operational rhythm that starts with mapping, leads to notification and enhanced protection, enables restoration where needed, and continues monitoring through adaptive management.

Through site-based wetland conservation and restoration initiatives, organisations such as the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation have worked with State governments, local communities and stakeholders to support wetland mapping, participatory management



**Dr. Soumya Swaminathan**

is Chairperson, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)



**Rupesh K. Bhomia**

is Director – Wetlands, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)

There is a need to shift the focus from 'projects' to programmes and 'beautification' to ecological functionality, and ensure watershed-scale governance

planning, and livelihood-linked conservation.

Wetlands are "multiple-use" systems, which make them valuable and vulnerable. In a highly populated country, encroachment and land conversion have already erased around 40% of natural wetlands, replacing them with infrastructure, real estate and road networks. Even where wetlands persist, their catchments are often irreversibly altered, and old cadastral maps rarely match current ground realities.

Wetlands rely on timing and flow of water. Dams, embankments, channelisation, sand mining and groundwater over-extraction disrupt these flows, eroding their natural characteristics. Riparian wetlands and floodplains are especially vulnerable because they are treated as spare land rather than active river space. Urban wetlands are expected to store floodwater, receive storm runoff, absorb sewage, and remain clean and biodiverse, often without legal buffers.

Growing pollution results in the eutrophication of water bodies when untreated sewage, industrial effluents, agricultural runoff, and solid waste are pushed into wetlands. When a wetland becomes a dumping ground, its biodiversity collapses, along with its ability to buffer floods and purify water. In coastal areas, sea-level rise, cyclones and shoreline change collide with ports, tourism, aquaculture and settlement growth. Mangroves and lagoons face a double bind: development pressure on landward sides and rising seas on seaward sides, leaving them little room to migrate.

Lastly, a major challenge is capacity constraints. State wetland authorities are often understaffed, underfunded, and stretched across competing mandates. Training gaps in hydrology, ecology, GIS, legal enforcement, and community engagement often translate into weak management plans, weaker implementation and continued degradation of valuable wetlands.

### Pragmatic and contextual approaches

There is an urgent need to shift from "projects" to programmes, from "beautification" to ecological functionality, and from "departmental silos" to watershed-scale governance. Through coordinated, efficiently monitored approaches, we can begin to address this complex problem.

Here are some ideas to start with.

First, notification and safety of wetland boundaries. The 2017 Rules are only as strong as notification and demarcation, which should be paired with publicly accessible maps, grievance redress and participatory ground-truthing with communities where disputes are likely.

Second, treat wastewater before it meets wetlands. For urban and peri-urban wetlands, a key action is ensuring treated inflows. Wetlands cannot substitute for sewage treatment plants. Where feasible, constructed wetlands can complement but not replace primary treatment.

Third, protect the wetland's catchment and hydrological connectivity. Wetlands must be managed as part of a basin or catchment system – restore feeder channels, prevent blockages by roads and embankments, stop solid waste dumping, and regulate extraction that alters water regimes.

Fourth, make coastal and riparian wetlands central to disaster risk reduction. Mangroves, mudflats, floodplains, and urban wetlands are nature-based infrastructure. Planning authorities should treat them as risk buffers, worthy of investment comparable to "grey" infrastructure. CRZ enforcement should be paired with livelihood-sensitive approaches that support coastal communities while defending ecological no-go areas.

Fifth, build skills and institutions. A national capacity mission for wetland managers with accredited training in hydrology, restoration ecology, GIS/remote sensing, environmental law and community-led governance. NPCA investments can be more transformative if paired with systematic capacity building and measurable performance indicators, including direct livelihood benefits to local communities.

There are already strides in this direction, with enhanced attention being given to wetlands by various state and non-state actors, and it deserves amplification. Better mapping and monitoring are now possible through satellite remote sensing, drones, and time-series analytics to track encroachment, inundation, and vegetation change.

Updated NPCA guidelines enable science-based, monitorable management plans for outcome-oriented design, while Ramsar's focus on clear boundaries and wise use aligns with India's needs – especially through community stewardship.

The 2026 World Wetlands Day theme highlights traditional knowledge that can strengthen restoration and compliance when treated as evidence.

### Align science and policy

World Wetlands Day 2026 may have passed but let us make a societal pact. Governments must notify, enforce, fund, and coordinate; cities must stop treating wetlands as wastelands; industry must prevent pollution at source; research and education institutions must train the next cadre of wetland managers; and citizens must defend local lakes, ponds, floodplains, mangroves, and springs as shared heritage.

If we align science with policy, and policy with people drawing strength from both modern tools and traditional wisdom, we can restore wetlands not as museum pieces, but as thriving, working ecosystems. The future of India's water – and a significant part of India's resilience – depends on it.

# A hat tip to Tamil Nadu's industrial strength, reforms

The Economic Survey of India (2025-26), while underscoring India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals and its resilience amid geopolitical fragmentation and global economic turbulence, accords significant recognition to Tamil Nadu's performance across a range of development indicators.

As India emerges as the fastest-growing large economy, Tamil Nadu stands out as the fastest-growing State economy, registering 11.19% real growth in 2024-25. As India's second-largest State economy, Tamil Nadu is also a major contributor to national growth. This performance is driven primarily by the secondary sector, which grew by 13.43%. Within this, manufacturing has emerged as a key growth engine, recording 14.74% real growth – more than three times the all-India average of 4.5%. Tamil Nadu also leads every State in four-year average real manufacturing growth (2021-22 to 2024-25) at 9.38%, while its overall GSDP grew by 8.63%. Headline CPI inflation declined to 2.45% in 2025-26 (till December). The State's merchandise exports have nearly doubled from \$26.15 billion in 2020-21 to \$52.07 billion in 2024-25, reflecting rising global competitiveness and industrial diversification.

The Survey makes multiple references that reinforce Tamil Nadu's position as an investment-ready, industry-first State, highlight its strength in manufacturing employment, ecosystem-led cluster development, and also its enablement of reforms that support faster project execution and sustainable industrial growth. It also highlights achievements in urban development, skill development, higher education, agriculture and services output.

### Industrial diversity

Building on its legacy in textiles and leather, Tamil Nadu has developed a diversified industrial ecosystem. The Survey cites the automobiles and auto components cluster and the electronics manufacturing ecosystem at Sriperumbudur as exemplary cases of effective industrial policy intervention. Tamil Nadu is among the few States where 85% of the cement industry is concentrated. It is also one of three States to receive final approval for financial assistance of ₹100 crore to establish a Medical Devices Park



**K.R. Shanmugam**

is Economic Consultant to the Government of Tamil Nadu

The Economic Survey of India (2025-26) reinforces Tamil Nadu's position as an investment-ready, industry-first State

under the Scheme for Promotion of Medical Devices Parks.

According to the Survey, Tamil Nadu contributes 15% of India's manufacturing employment – the highest among all States – surpassing Gujarat (13%), Maharashtra (13%), and Uttar Pradesh (8%). This leadership is attributed to the State's higher concentration of large-scale manufacturing units with superior productivity, supported by infrastructure development, availability of skilled manpower and investor-friendly policies.

Under the Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) 2024, Tamil Nadu has enhanced ease of doing business through single-window clearances, digitised approvals and land reforms, while promoting solar parks, district-level decarbonisation plans and energy-efficiency programmes. These initiatives accelerate industrial projects while strengthening environmental compliance.

### On pollution control, climate action

The Survey specifically highlights the role of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board in actively monitoring industrial effluent treatment systems and supporting the establishment of common effluent treatment plants, particularly for tanneries and textile clusters. Tamil Nadu has secured a pivotal role in India's green hydrogen economy with the designation of the V.O. Chidambaram Port as one of only three green hydrogen hubs under the National Green Hydrogen Mission. This positions the State at the forefront of India's target to produce five million metric tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030. The Chennai-Vellore-Villupuram-Chengalpattu corridor has also been identified as a potential Regional Rapid Transit System route.

The Survey takes note of the Tamil Nadu Sustainably Harnessing Ocean Resources and Blue Economy Project addressing climate vulnerabilities along the State's 1,076-kilometre coastline across 14 coastal districts. The initiative adopts a multi-pronged approach encompassing coastal biodiversity enhancement, protection infrastructure, livelihood support, marine pollution mitigation and strengthened project management. The Climate Resilient Villages

initiative is recognised as a model for institutionalising climate resilience at the grass-roots level.

It further notes that Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Telangana together account for nearly 40% of India's services output, driven by high-productivity sectors such as IT, finance and professional services, with a strong concentration in southern urbanised States.

Tamil Nadu is also identified among high-performing States in groundnut productivity, alongside Gujarat and Karnataka, due to improved varieties, multiple crop cycles and sustained policy focus on oilseeds. Its achievements in banana cultivation are similarly recognised as region-specific success stories in horticulture.

### Urban development and education

On urban development, the Survey highlights Chennai to be one of the world's largest urban agglomerations and an example of orderly boarding and disciplined civic conduct. Chennai's Metropolitan Area Parking Policy 2025 is cited as a national best practice, and Tamil Nadu ranks first in Civic Behaviour in the *India Today* Gross Domestic Behaviour Survey. The State is also among those which have liberalised building by-laws and simplified development norms.

In higher education, 17 institutions from Tamil Nadu feature in the NIRF 2025 Top 100 Overall Rankings – the highest among all States. The Tamil Nadu Working Women's Hostels Corporation (*Thozhi* Hostels) is recognised as a national blueprint for enhancing women's workforce participation. The Skill Voucher Scheme launched in 2024 by the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department is also acknowledged for supporting students from disadvantaged communities.

Overall, the Economic Survey affirms Tamil Nadu's development strategy to be anchored in the integration of economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability. Industrial expansion has strengthened production, employment, technology and trade, while the State's leadership in education, renewable energy, urban governance and social welfare positions it as a key contributor to India's Vision 2047.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The Budget and the farmer

Having seen sluggish growth, falling crop yields, and mounting pressures for years, farmers believed that their plight would be

addressed in the Union Budget. But, from their perspective, what they got was a failure of empathy and a missed historical opportunity. That cashew

and sandalwood were chosen over concrete action for wheat, rice and pulses was strange. The Budget has only sown the seeds of discontent and

not prosperity.  
**R. Sivakumar,**  
Chennai

**The Australian Open**  
Carlos Alcaraz torpedoed

the older Novak Djokovic. The four setter had disciplined rallies and big serves by both, but Alcaraz outsmarted Djokovic in all departments. Alcaraz gave

us power tennis.  
**S. Viswanathan,**  
Srirangam, Tamil Nadu

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

# Visible progress, invisible exclusion

**B**udget 2026-27 signals a transition away from pandemic-era crisis management to what is now a borrowing-heavy doctrine for financing growth and capital expenditure (capex) spending.

By guiding fiscal deficit to 4.3% of GDP and scaling public capital expenditure to ₹12.2 lakh crore, the government aims to project a broader infra-capex enabled vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' while giving a necessary push to MSMEs in manufacturing this time. That public infrastructure and MSME growth are no longer framed as areas of temporary stimulus, but part of the structural backbone of the economy is reassuring.

And yet, beneath the veneer of macro-economic stability, the fiscal math, as projected by the Finance Minister, masks a more precarious reality. As manufacturing scales in strategic frontiers like MSMEs, semiconductors, and biopharma, the mechanism connecting this massive capital expansion to actual employment outcomes has become increasingly tenuous. While capital formation successfully drives headline GDP, absorption of labour is stalled. This suggests that India is perfecting a growth model designed to function with clinical efficiency, while quietly leaving its vast labour force behind.

## Towards a growth doctrine

For much of India's fiscal history, capex played a secondary role. It expanded when revenues permitted and was restrained when deficits widened. That changed after the pandemic. From 2020-21 onwards, capex expenditure ceased to function as a counter-cyclical instrument and instead became the organising principle of fiscal policy.

The data capture this shift. Capex expenditure as a share of total expenditure rose from roughly 12% in 2020-21 to over 22% in recent estimates. The underlying logic is well established. Public infrastructure



**Deepanshu Mohan**

Professor and Dean, O.P. Jindal Global University



**Ankur Singh**

Research Analyst with the Centre for New Economics Studies

spending is expected to crowd in private investment, raise productivity, and generate employment. Yet, the labour indicators running alongside this expansion reveal a disconnect. The youth NEET rate (share of people who are not in education, employment, or training) for ages 15-29 remains in the 23%-25% range, materially higher than several peer economies. Nearly one in four young Indians is structurally outside employment, education, or training even as public investment accelerates.

## Structural U-turn

Construction reflects the sector most directly fuelled by public investment in the post-2015 infrastructure push. Agriculture reflects the sector a developing economy typically sheds labour from as productivity rises elsewhere. The trajectories of the two have moved in directions opposite to what development theory would anticipate across periods.

Construction's employment elasticity declined from 0.59 in the pre-COVID period of 2011-12 to 2019-20 to 0.42 in the post-COVID years of 2021-22 to 2023-24. This occurred when infrastructure spending was at record levels. The implication is stark: each additional unit of capex is now associated with fewer construction jobs than before.

Agriculture is the more troubling story. Employment elasticity rose sharply from 0.04 during 2011-12 to 2019-20 to 1.51 during 2021-22 to 2023-24. Rather than releasing labour, the sector has been reabsorbing it. This reflects distress-driven fallback into low-productivity activity. Taken together, the pattern resembles a structural U-turn. India is modernising its physical asset base while its workforce is being pulled back towards subsistence.

The weak employment is rooted in the kind of production structure the capex turn reinforces. Public investment, as

currently configured, systematically favours capital intensity. This is visible in the widening gap between productivity and wages. Net value added per worker has risen sharply, while average emoluments remain far lower. The divergence suggests that efficiency gains enabled by infrastructure are being captured largely as profits rather than transmitted as labour income.

The industrial structure compounds this bias. The Annual Survey of Industries shows that a large majority of factories remain small, employing fewer than 100 workers, yet contribute modestly to output. Large firms, capable of integrating into new logistics and infrastructure networks, dominate value creation while remaining relatively labour light. Labour-intensive MSMEs struggle to scale, automate, or compete.

The result is a dual economy: a capital-intensive upper layer drives headline GDP growth with limited employment generation, while a vast lower layer absorbs labour through informality and self-employment with low productivity and weak income growth.

## New economic citizen?

Read together, fiscal strategy and labour outcomes point to an implicit reordering of priorities. Employment no longer appears as a variable that must be directly engineered and the state is quite incapacitated in doing that at this point. It is treated as an eventual by-product of growth rather than a co-equal objective.

Official projections reinforce this orientation. Formal skills, urban location, and compatibility with automation determine inclusion. Those outside this profile adjust downward, into informal work, own-account activity, or agriculture. Even within the organised sector, wage growth remains subdued.

The economy does not stall. It simply advances without requiring broad-based labour absorption.

# For Punjab, taking a leaf out of Haryana

The BJP is reaching out to SCs and OBCs, hoping to repeat its success in Haryana

## STATE OF PLAY

**Vikas Vasudeva**  
vikas.vasudeva@thehindu.co.in



**A**s political momentum builds across Punjab in the run-up to the 2027 Assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) appears to be crafting a new strategy of social engineering to get a foothold in the border State, where it has historically struggled to make inroads.

The party is attempting to strengthen its electoral hold on two crucial voting blocs — the Scheduled Castes (Dalits), who comprise 31.91% of the population in Punjab (2011 Census); and the Other Backward Classes (OBC), who account for about 25-30% (academic estimates).

On February 1, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Dera Sachkhand Ballan in Jalandhar, on the occasion of the 649th birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas. His visit signals the party's effort to appeal to Dalit voters, as the revered saint and social reformer belonged to the Dalit community.

As the Prime Minister met the Dera head, Sant Niranjjan Dass, who was recently conferred the Padma Shri, he struck a chord with the gathering by highlighting his connection to the birthplace of Guru Ravidas in Uttar Pradesh's Kashi. Mr. Modi was elected to the Lok Sabha from Varanasi, which is also known as Kashi.

The SCs of Punjab are not a homogeneous category. They are divided into some three dozen castes and are further fragmented into various blended faiths, many of which have evolved into Deras (sects). In Punjab, there are around half a dozen key Deras, including Radha Soami, Namdhari, Dera Sacha Sauda,

Nurmahal, Nirankari and Dera Sach Khand Balan. These have an influence in at least 56 Assembly constituencies of the 117 in the State. Traditionally, in Punjab, SCs have not consolidated behind just one party; instead, their support has been spread across different parties, reflecting cultural and regional differences within the community. This is why consolidating SC votes has remained a formidable challenge for all the political parties in the State.

In neighbouring Haryana, the BJP appeared to focus its electoral strategy in the 2024 Assembly polls on consolidating support among OBCs and SCs. This proved to be effective: the BJP improved its tally in the 17 SC-reserved seats from five in 2019 to eight in 2024, and won the election. While Punjab is a distinct political landscape, caste-based coalitions remain central to its electoral arithmetic.

Of late, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, an OBC leader, has been frequently visiting Punjab. This is a clear sign of the BJP's outreach towards the community.

In a well-thought-out strategy, Mr. Saini, invariably donning a turban, visits social and religious functions, besides party events. The party is also showcasing Haryana's development and governance model in Punjab. Mr. Saini has criticised the ruling Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab for failing to deliver on

its pre-poll promises, including the provision of a monthly assistance of ₹1,100 to women. He has pointed out that in contrast, Haryana has already implemented its promised ₹2,100 monthly assistance scheme for women.

After parting ways with the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in 2020, the BJP has been focusing on expanding its footprint in Punjab. It has inducted several Sikh leaders into the party, including Amarinder Singh, former Congress leader and Chief Minister; and Raveeneet Singh Bittu, who is now a minister in the Union Cabinet. It has also inducted many Hindu leaders, such as Sunil Jakhhar, who was earlier with the Congress. The BJP has also tried to project a pro-Sikh image by highlighting steps taken by the Union government in the interest of Sikhs since 2014. These include the formation of a Special Investigation Team to probe the 1984 anti-Sikh riots cases; the initiative to start the Kartarpur Corridor, which connects the Dera Baba Nanak in India to the Darbar Sahib Gurdwara in Pakistan; and the waiving of GST from 'langar' (community kitchens). Despite all this, however, the BJP only won two seats in the 2022 Assembly polls. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the party contested all the 13 constituencies but failed to win a single seat. However, its vote share went up from 9.63% in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls to 18.56% in 2024.

Whether the party's multi-pronged social engineering strategy, backed by visible gestures such as Mr. Modi's visit to Dera Sachkhand Ballan and the deployment of Haryana's OBC Chief Minister as a bridge to backward classes, can finally help it crack Punjab's complex electoral code remains to be seen.

# Finance Commission triples grants to urban local governments

A record allocation of ₹3.5 lakh crore and a higher share of local grants signal a policy shift towards India's rapidly urbanising towns and cities

## DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

**I**n February 1, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the 16th Finance Commission report in the Lok Sabha, setting the framework for tax devolution between the Centre and the States. The Commission also recommended an allocation of ₹3.5 lakh crore to urban local governments (ULGs) for the next five years. Generally, funds are devolved to ULGs through transfer by the Central and State governments in the form of grants. According to an analysis by Janaagraha, a non-profit organisation, the Commission's allocation for the coming five years matches the spending of centrally sponsored schemes through the Centre's share over the last 13 years combined (Chart 1). The report expands on how this could improve first-mile infrastructure and services for smaller towns and cities. It also notes the allocation of ₹10,000 crore to the urbanisation premium grant, which could incentivise the process of rural-urban transition.

The Commission has also allocated 45% of local government grants to ULGs, which is a noted increase from its previous share of 36% (Chart 2).

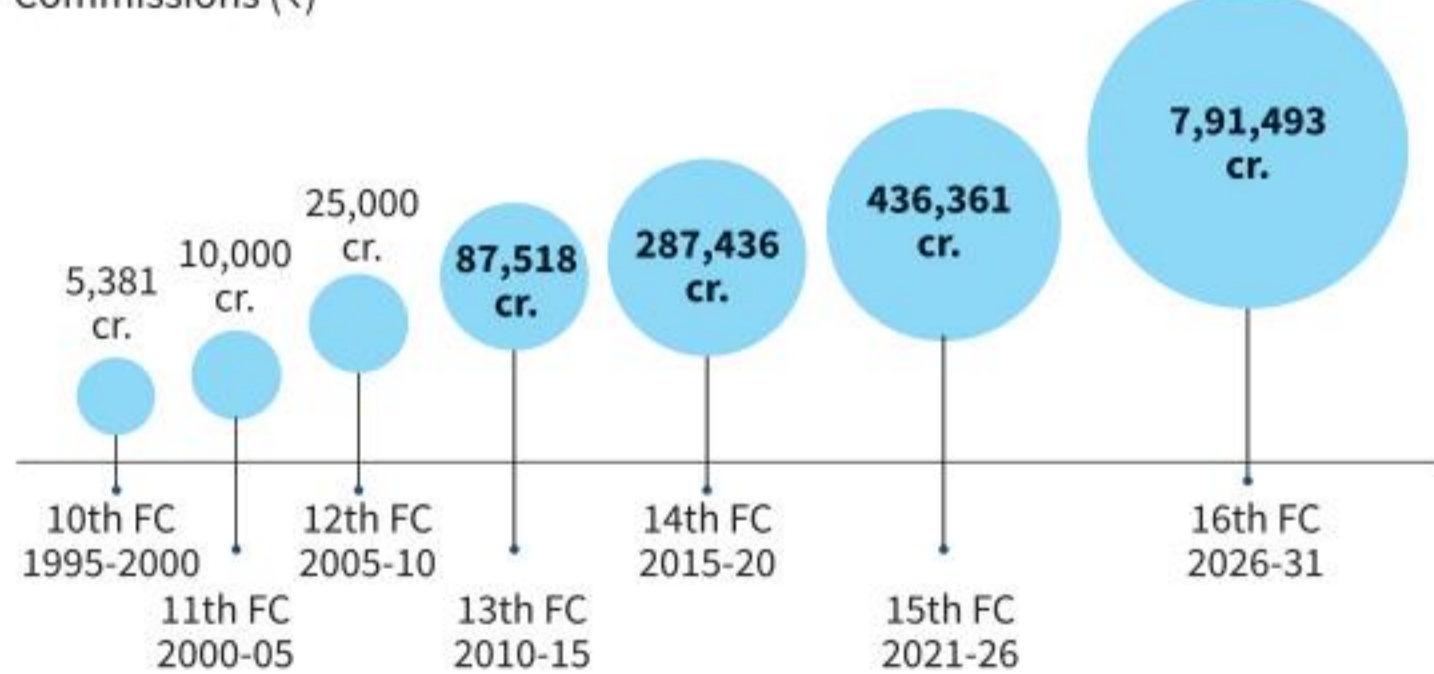
The 15th Finance Commission allocated ₹1.5 lakh crore to ULGs for the years 2021-26. The 16th Finance Commission recommended increasing the allocation by 230% (Chart 3). Among the major States, Kerala received the highest increase in allocation of more than 400%, while Himachal Pradesh saw a near 50% decline in such funds (Table 4).

More than 60% of the grants to ULGs were basic grants, of which "tied" grants can be used for basic services such as sanitation and water supply, while "untied" grants can be used for location-specific felt needs, excluding salary and establishment expenses.

## Urban windfall

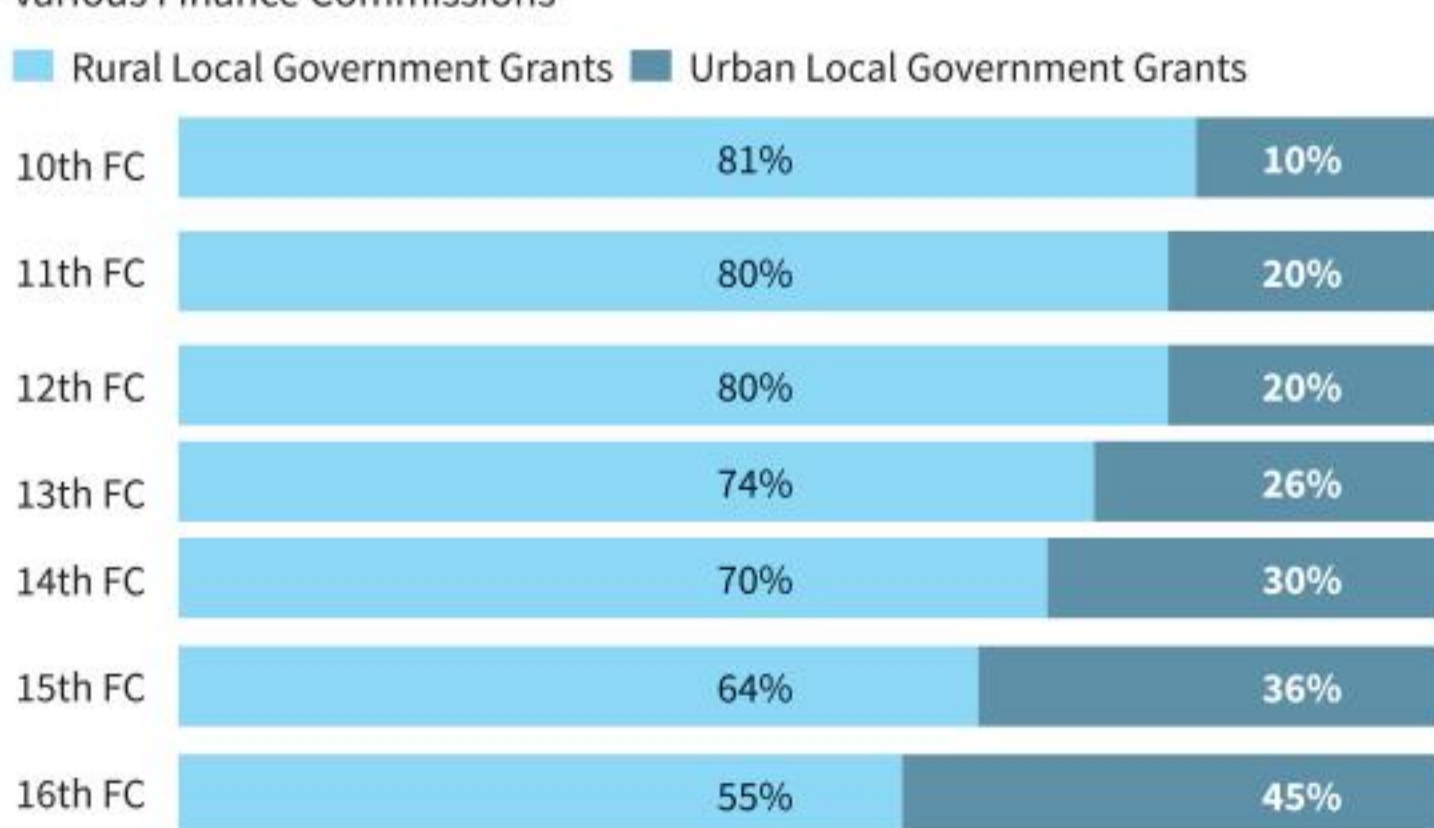
The data for the charts were sourced from Janaagraha's report titled 'The XVI Finance Commission's Recommendations for Urban India: Analysis and Implications (2026-31)'

**CHART 1:** Allocations to local governments across various Finance Commissions (₹)



Total local government allocations increased to ₹7.91 lakh crore (2026-31) from ₹4.36 lakh crore (2021-26)

**CHART 2:** Allocations to Rural and Urban Local Governments in % across various Finance Commissions



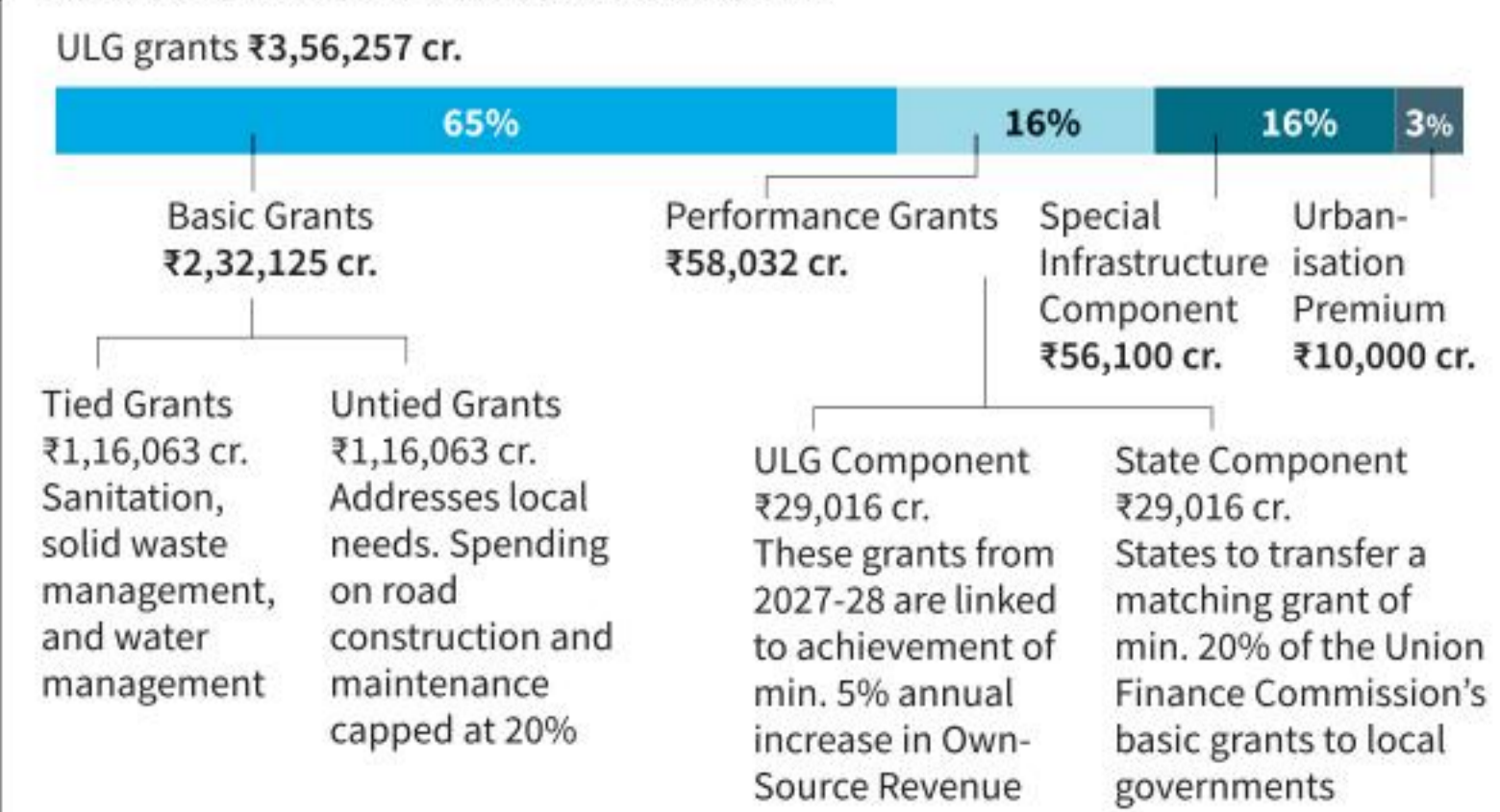
**CHART 3:** Allocations to Urban Local Governments across Finance Commissions (₹)



**TABLE 4:** State-wise allocations to Urban Local Governments across Finance Commissions. ULG allocations under 16th Finance Commission increased to ₹3.56 lakh crore from ₹1.55 lakh crore. Data for select States

State	15th FC (₹ cr.)	16th FC (₹ cr.)	Change
Kerala	3,242	16,683	415%
Goa	149	726	387%
Maharashtra	11,611	46,803	303%
Gujarat	6,367	23,764	273%
Tamil Nadu	7,187	25,069	249%
Telangana	3,682	11,548	214%
Haryana	2,520	7,834	211%
Karnataka	6,409	18,483	188%
Punjab	2,764	7,834	183%
Nagaland	249	667	168%
Manipur	353	609	73%
Uttar Pradesh	19,432	33,543	73%
Chhattisgarh	2,900	4,990	72%
Rajasthan	7,696	12,680	65%
Odisha	4,498	5,078	13%
Meghalaya	363	377	4%
Assam	3,197	3,249	2%
Bihar	9,999	9,169	-8%
Arunachal Pradesh	459	233	-49%
Himachal Pradesh	855	435	-49%

**CHART 5:** Component-wise breakdown of the 16th Finance Commission's allocations to Urban Local Governments in %



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 3, 1976

## Petroleum products from forest waste

Madras, Feb. 2: Space scientists at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Trivandrum, in their quest for rocket fuel substitute have stumbled on a process for converting forest waste into petroleum crude and a variety of other products that could enrich the country by Rs. 730 crores annually, besides providing employment for a million people. This discovery of tremendous significance had been implemented beyond the pilot plant stage leading to a detailed project report, Prof. Satish Dhawan, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), said while delivering the Dr. A.L. Mudallal Lecture at the Indian Institute of Technology here. Prof. Dhawan was speaking on scientific application of rocket propellant technology to areas other than space. Later he told pressmen that the Space Commission had, after detailed study, given the go ahead for the project. This project had far-reaching social and industrial implications, particularly for solving unemployment, effecting import substitution and cutting down crude imports. In short, seven million tonnes of non-edible oil seeds like sal, madhua, neem and half a dozen more could be through chemical processes, converted into two million tonnes of crude, sizable quantity of cooking gas, and most important industrial chemicals which were now being imported at a cost of over Rs. 75 crores in terms of foreign exchange and huge quantities of oil cakes that could be used as 'non-toxic fertilizers'.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 3, 1926

## Australian meat for India

According to a London message to "The Englishman", "The Sydney Sun" understands that a new market is being opened up shortly for Australian and New Zealand beef and mutton. A company with a capital of £500,000 is being floated in London to organise a chain of coldstores in India beginning with units at Bombay, Meerut, Poona and Delhi, the first operating in July. It is understood the Indian Government is supporting the scheme with a view to providing meat for British regiments who, Indian politicians have repeatedly urged ought to be supplied from outside sources as Indian cattle are required for cultivation. The chief source of supplies will be Australia. Lord Amptill is one of the directors.

## From Page One

## U.S. tariff on India cut to 18%, say PM and Trump

Mr. Trump said that Mr. Modi had "committed" to increasing purchase of U.S. products to \$500 billion. The two announcements from Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump drew prompt response from the Congress, with its general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh saying, "It appears Mr. Modi has capitulated finally."

The telephone conversation between Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump took place as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar started a visit to the United States from February 2 to 4, when he will participate in the Critical Minerals Ministerial meet convened by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

"The Ministerial will focus on supply chain resilience, clean energy transitions, and strategic cooperation in critical minerals," said the Ministry announcing that Mr. Jaishankar during the ongoing tour "will also hold meetings with senior members of the U.S. administration". Apart from India, dozens of other countries such as Kenya, South Korea, and Democratic Republic of Congo that have significant national minerals production will be part of the meeting. The ministerial is aimed at reducing critical minerals dependence on China and create a supply chain that will cover the entire supply chain from mining, processing, recycling, to pricing mechanism. The participating countries are also expected to sign a non-binding document.

## Bulk applications for deleting voter names

Subhan Khan was sitting outside his tiny grocery shop in the village barely 111 km from the India-Pakistan border. As a BLA himself, he has been keeping tabs on duplicate entries and deceased and shifted voters in his booth after the Election Commission's special intensive revision exercise got under way in October. His BLO Rukhmana Ram said he has more than 105 such Form 7 applications lying with him, but clarified that no further action had been taken as many people denied signing them and most voters whose names were sought to be deleted under the "shifted" category had been residing in the villages for generations. He had collected the applications from a room in the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM)'s office after he was intimidated through a local WhatsApp group of BLOs.

Mr. Ram is a teacher at the Government Senior Secondary School in Janpaliya which hosts two polling booths. Janpaliya is a part of the Chohatan Assembly constituency of Barmer district.

The other BLO, Fakrudin, says he has 87 Form 7 applications with him for deletion of names. All forms have been filed in the names of Mr. Khan and Krishna Ram, the two BJP BLAs of the village. According to EC rules, one BLA can only file up to 10 Form 7 applications a day.

While a BLA is a political party representative for each booth, a BLO — usually a schoolteacher — is appointed by the EC for poll-related work and maintaining voter lists. Form 7 is filed to object to an existing name on the electoral rolls or to request the deletion of a name for reasons such as death, shifting, or ineligibility. The BLO or the Electoral Registration Officer has to conduct an enquiry and issue a notice to the voter before taking action. Both Mr. Khan and Mr. Krishna Ram denied filing the forms at all. According to Mr. Fakrudin, on the evening of January 15, there was an update on the BLOs' WhatsApp group that Form 7 applications were lying at the SDM's office and all BLOs should collect and process them.

Hundreds of Form 7 applications have been filed in the name of BJP BLAs who claim they never signed or filed them. A host of BLOs *The Hindu* spoke with said they picked up the applications from the SDM office. What is unclear though is how the forms landed in the SDM office.

When contacted, SDM Badri Narayan Vishnoi, who is also the Assistant Electoral Registration Officer for Sedwa Tehsil under which the village falls, said Form 7 applications were filed by political parties and he was not aware of how they reached his office. He declined to comment when told that the BLAs had denied signing the forms submitted in their name. The office of Rajasthan's Chief Electoral Officer in a response said action would be taken as per EC guidelines.

## Outrage in villages

Meanwhile, the "fake" Form 7 applications created a furore in the local community. The BLAs who spoke with *The Hindu* said that they were being viewed with suspicion within the community. "For nearly a week since January 15, there was a lot of outrage among people. They were constantly questioning us as to how we could fill these forms seeking deletion of their names. They calmed down only when we explained that these were fake and we had nothing to do with them," says Aasu Lal, a BJP BLA from Harpaliya village.

He said around 500 voters whose names were sought to be deleted visited the SDM office on January 19 and submitted representations demanding an inquiry. However, despite assurances, no such inquiry had been ordered. He also added that the SDM did not meet them and they submitted their representation to junior officials.

Sachchu Khan, husband of Harpaliya village sarpanch Sati Bai, said: "We have submitted a memorandum seeking an inquiry to the SDM as well as to Tina Dabi, the District Magistrate of Barmer and the Deputy Electoral Officer. Both of them had assured an inquiry". Apart from Janpaliya and Harpaliya, such "fake" Form 7s in bulk have emerged in nearby villages of Jalila, Bisaser and Jharpa as well, Mr. Khan said.

## Activists slam allocation for rural jobs schemes

They say govt. has offered little clarity on the transition from the MGNREGS to the VB-G RAM G framework and the promised 125 days of employment cannot be financed with outlay provided

Sobhana K. Nair  
NEW DELHI

Civil society groups and rural employment activists have criticised the Union Budget's allocations for rural job schemes, alleging that the government has offered little clarity on the transition from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to the new Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) framework, and that the promised 125 days of employment cannot be financed with the outlay provided.

The Budget has earmarked ₹95,692.31 crore for the VB-G RAM G and ₹30,000 crore for the MGNREGS, taking the combined allocation for the two rural employment heads to ₹1,25,692.31 crore, which the government has projected as a 43% increase over the Revised Estimate of ₹88,000 crore for the MGNREGS in 2025-26.

However, Nikhil Dey, founder member of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) and a key architect of MGNREGS, said the Budget "creates confusion about the transition to the new law and its real implications". He argued that the ₹30,000 crore provision for the MGNREGS was particularly



The Budget has earmarked ₹30,000 crore for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. G.N.RAO

opaque. "While it has not been made clear what the ₹30,000 crores allocation to MGNREGA is meant to fund," he said, adding it may be used either to clear liabilities and wind down the programme or to run a short transition period.

Mr. Dey contended that even a transition cushion appeared unlikely because of pending dues and near-term spending. "There are current dues of about ₹15,000 crore. Additionally, there is likely to be an expenditure of about ₹15,000 crores in the next two months. Therefore, the MGNREGA ₹30,000 crore allocation seems to have no relevance for next year," he said.

Mr. Dey flagged unresolved operational questions, including when the MGNREGA would formally end, when its repeal would be notified, when the VB-G

RAM G would start, and when its guidelines — especially on cost-sharing and State-wise normative allocations — would be brought into effect. He warned that States were being forced to budget "in the dark" without knowing their required 40% share until the Centre discloses allocations. "On paper, the Centre appears to have completed its role by fixing its budget share, but has left major implementation and funding burdens on States, making the actual functioning of VB-G RAM G highly uncertain," he said.

The NREGA Sangarsh Morcha (NSM), a coalition of organisations working with MGNREGS workers, echoed these concerns. "The Budget speech and documents aggravate the Modi government's lack of transparency on VB-G RAM G," it said, pointing

out that the Finance Minister's 90-minute Budget speech did not mention either the MGNREGS or the VB-G RAM G. The Budget documents provided "no indication whatsoever of where and when VB-G RAM G is to be notified, what the State-wise 'normative allocations' are likely to be, or how the transition is to take place".

The NSM described the 125-day guarantee claim as untenable at current funding levels. "The 125-day promise of the VB-G RAM G Bill is nothing but an eyewash. The budget allocation is a mere 42% of what will be required actually to finance this guarantee," it said, estimating that to provide 125 days of work even to active households, the total outlay would need to be about ₹3.84 lakh crore, with the Centre's share at roughly ₹2.3 lakh crore. It added that if the Centre's VB-G RAM G figure was treated as a 60% share, the total programme envelope would be about ₹1.59 lakh crore, which could translate to only around 52 days of work for active households.

Activists warned that without clear transition rules, timely disclosure of State-wise norms, and adequate funding, workers could face uncertainty over job availability and payment timelines during the shift to the new regime.

## A Budget less driven by elections, more by global headwinds

## NEWS ANALYSIS

Nistula Hebbar  
NEW DELHI

In a year when four States and one Union Territory — Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam, West Bengal, and Puducherry — are headed for Assembly elections, expectations around the Budget, at least in political circles, were that they would receive some goodies.

While the Budget did include announcements touching these States, the measures were packaged within broader multi-State initiatives that reflected the government's attempt to balance domestic political expectations with global economic uncertainties.

"There is enough to cover all the election-bound States. Much has been announced for election and non-election States," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said at the post-Budget press conference.

For West Bengal, the announcements included a proposed high-speed rail corridor between Siliguri and Varanasi, a Dankuni (East)-Surat (West) dedicated freight corridor, and an East-West Industrial Corridor. Tamil Nadu and Kerala featured in the announcement about a Rare Earth Corridor, alongside incentives for farmers growing cashew, coconuts and cocoa. The "Turtle Trails" project includes coastal areas of Odisha, Karnata-

ka, and Kerala. Assam is set to be a part of a Buddhist tourism circuit.

By wrapping these measures in a multi-State spread, the government signalled that the global headwinds and the trade issues outweighed domestic political concerns.

The establishment of a National Institute of Hospitality for training in the service sector, setting up girls' hostels in STEM institutions across districts, and several measures in the tax proposals to boost the manufacturing sector were significant announcements. A ₹40,000-crore push for Semiconductor Mission 2.0 and an electronics manufacturing boost were also announced. All these measures, sources said, were aimed at insulating India from global trade disruptions, strengthening supply chains, and preparing Indians for different skill set demands from countries with which India has concluded or is finalising FTAs.

Many of these measures, however, are not immediately saleable in electoral terms and will require careful support from the government to bear fruit. The broader aim, government managers argue, is to craft a new narrative — of constructing a rail track in anticipation of a train running on it not today, but several years later — a horizon that may be distant, but could affect the legacy of the Modi years.

## BJP names Tarun Chugh as observer for legislature party leader election in Manipur

Vijaita Singh  
NEW DELHI

In further indication of the restoration of an elected government in Manipur, the Bharatiya Janata Party Parliamentary Board on Monday appointed Tarun Chugh, national general secretary, as central observer for the election of the legislature party leader in Manipur.

Over the past two days, the BJP central leadership had asked all its legislators as well as alliance partners for Manipur to be present in New Delhi for a crucial meeting. President's Rule was imposed in Manipur on February 13, 2025 following the resignation of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh.

On Tuesday, a meeting of all BJP MLAs has been scheduled at the party headquarters in New Delhi



Tarun Chugh

at 3 p.m., which will be preceded by a meeting with alliance partners — the National People's Party (NPP) and Naga People's Front (NPF) — at 2 p.m., sources said.

In addition, Kuki-Zo insurgent groups in suspension of operations (SoO) agreement with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Manipur government are expected to meet Adviser (Northeast) A.K Mishra on Tuesday in

Delhi, where the ground rules of the pact and the impending political developments are likely to be discussed.

On January 13, the Kuki-Zo civil society groups, including the SoO groups, resolved to agree to the prospects of a popular government in Manipur provided the Centre and the State give a written commitment to support the negotiated political settlement for a Union Territory with legislature.

The SoO groups are likely to reiterate the community's stand that the legislators should not join the government formation, leaving the final decision to the MLAs, sources said.

There are 37 BJP MLAs in the 60-member Assembly, which includes seven Kuki-Zo legislators. In all there are 10 Kuki-Zo MLAs in the Assembly.

## SC issues notices to 12 States on plea over anti-conversion laws

Krishnadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday decided to examine the validity of anti-religious conversion laws enacted by 12 States across the country even as Christian groups submitted that these statutes "incentivise" vigilante groups to commit acts of violence against minorities.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant issued notice to the Union government along with Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand and Rajasthan.

"Their Acts have been structured in such a manner that it incentivises certain vigilante groups to take action because there are rewards out there. So,

**Petitioner claims the statutes 'incentivise' vigilante groups to commit violence against minorities**

even if there is no case at all against a person, someone would make a complaint and that person would be arrested," senior advocate Meenakshi Arora, appearing for the petitioner National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), submitted. Ms. Arora urged the court to stay the anti-religious conversion laws of the States.

**Not 'factually correct'** Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said the government had "our answers". He said the submissions made by the petitioner were not "factually correct".

## Wangchuk incited youth in Ladakh: Centre tells SC

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Centre and the administration of Union Territory of Ladakh on Monday accused detained climate activist Sonam Wangchuk of using the veneer of Gandhian non-violence to disguise actual incitement of younger and impressionable generations to turn to violence.

Appearing before a Supreme Court Bench headed by Justice Arvind Kumar, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said that Mr. Wangchuk's investigation even touched upon "self-immolation" and non-cooperation in case of an external aggression. He said Mr. Wangchuk had actively tried to instigate Gen Z by referring to protests like in Nepal and Bangladesh. He had brought up the possibility of an Arab Spring-like agitation.

## 7 police personnel injured in violence in Chhattisgarh village

Shubhomoy Sikdar  
GARIABAND

A mob in Dutkaiya village of Gariaband district in Chhattisgarh on Sunday vandalised and set on fire over half a dozen houses owned by members of a minority community, the police said.

At least seven policemen suffered injuries while shielding over two dozen people, including women and children, against a mob of hundreds for several hours.

The communal clash was the fallout of a chain of events that began a few hours earlier when three men, one of them out on bail in a temple desecration case, allegedly assaulted locals, said the police.

"The crowd set vehicles ablaze and demanded they be allowed to enter the homes of Muslims. For the next few hours, we stood guard and ensured that the mob did not enter or harm the residents," said a police officer. Two FIRs were filed over the rioting.

## Bengal govt. questions maintainability of ED plea in top court on I-PAC case

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The State government has questioned the Directorate of Enforcement's (ED) move to approach the Supreme Court seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the alleged obstruction of its raids at the offices of political consultancy firm I-PAC by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and State officials.

The government asked whether the plea was maintainable when a similar case was pending be-



Presspersons outside the residence of Pratik Jain, director of political consultancy firm I-PAC, in Kolkata on January 8. PTI

fore the Calcutta High Court. A Bench headed by Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra had, on January 15, stayed the Kolkata Police probe against ED officials who conducted raids at I-

PAC office and the residence of its co-founder Pratik Jain on January 8.

The probe had been based on allegations that sensitive election records of the ruling Trinamool

Congress, which consults I-PAC on electoral and political strategy, were "stolen" by the officials during the raids.

Filing its response to the ED plea, the State government said there cannot be "parallel proceedings" before the High Court and the Supreme Court. It said the ED did not have the fundamental right to file a writ petition before the top court. It argued that the ED did not have the power to conduct "omnibus search and seizure" and that the agency had violated privileged communications.

# LS adjourned as Rahul insists on citing unpublished book

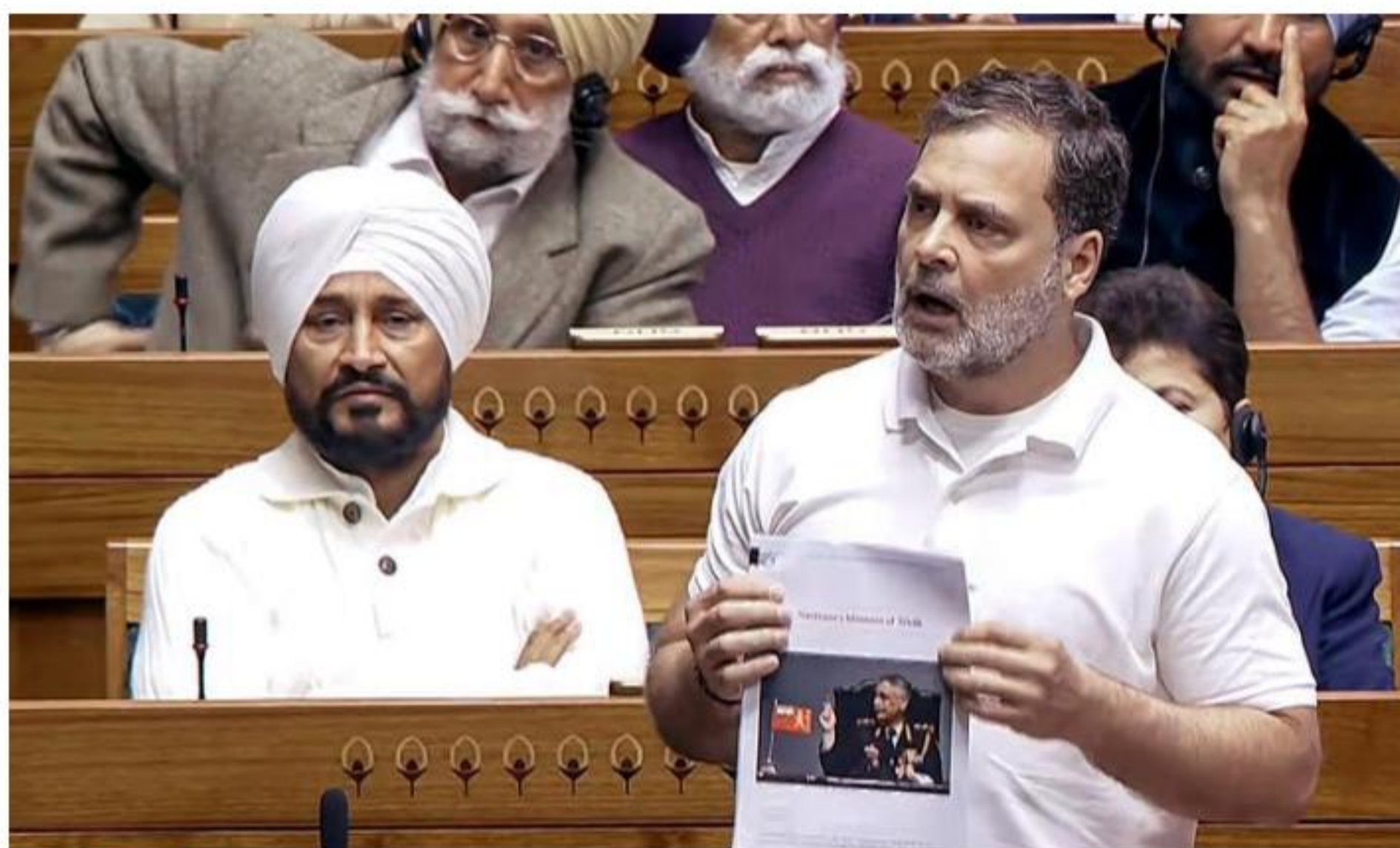
Leader says the reference from Gen. Naravane's unpublished memoir is needed to respond to allegations in LS questioning the Congress's patriotism; Speaker blocks reading, invoking Rule 349(i), which bars quoting books or articles in the House

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi's insistence on quoting a part about 2020 border tensions with China from former Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Naravane's unpublished book, excerpts of which were carried by a magazine, paralysed the functioning of the Lok Sabha on Monday as it took up for discussion the Motion of Thanks to the President for her address to Parliament.

Mr. Gandhi said he was referring to incidents during the border tensions with China in 2020, mentioned in the excerpts, in response to BJP MP Tejasvi Surya's allegations made in the House earlier that the Congress was indifferent to national security.

Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju repeatedly asked Speaker Om Birla not to let him mention the book as it was not published. Mr. Birla gave a ruling, invoking Rule 349(i) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha, that no book or article can be quoted except in connection



**Raising a point:** Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi speaks in the Lok Sabha during the ongoing Budget Session on Monday. ANI

with business in the House.

However, Mr. Gandhi insisted on taking it up each time he rose to speak. As the stalemate between the Congress and the Treasury benches, as well as the chair, continued, the House saw repeated disruptions and was finally adjourned for the day at 4 p.m.

The publication of the memoir, *Four Stars of Destiny*, has been put on hold, with the Defence Ministry saying that it will review it and the former Army chief saying that the issue is now between the publisher and the government.

Mr. Gandhi, who was the first speaker from his party in the House on the day, said he had no intention of bringing the subject up, but "a young colleague made an allegation against Congress". "He has raised the issue about our patriotism and understanding of Indian culture," Mr. Gandhi said, adding that hence he needed to take it up.

"I am not able to understand. They say they are fighting terrorism, and they are scared to hear one quotation. What is written in it that they are so scared that I am not allowed to read it? If they are not

scared, they should allow me to read it," he said.

### 'Trying to hide'

He maintained that he was speaking on national security, which was central to the President's Address.

"Everyone in the Army knows what happened... you are trying to hide it from the people here. That reality every soldier of this country knows..." he added.

Mr. Shah said that nowhere had Mr. Surya questioned the patriotism of the Opposition and had just referred to the President's speeches from the

UPA era that made no mention of "Viksit Bharat".

The Defence Minister said the book Mr. Gandhi was referring to had not been published. If the book was not allowed to be published as alleged, then why did not Mr. Naravane go to court against it, he asked.

Mr. Rijju said if the Leader of the Opposition repeatedly ignored the Speaker's ruling and flouted rules, the House would have to discuss what action should be taken against such a member. He was setting a wrong example for young MPs by not following the rules of the House.

Congress MP K.C. Venugopal and Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav urged the Speaker to allow Mr. Gandhi to speak.

Speaking to presspersons outside the House, Mr. Gandhi said he was not allowed to quote from Mr. Naravane's unpublished book because it indicted Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Defence Minister for "letting down" the Army during the 2020 conflict with China.

"... They are scared because if it comes out, the reality of Narendra Modi and Rajnath Singhji will be revealed," he said.

# Rahul hurting Army morale with same 'imaginary claims' on Doklam issue, says BJP

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI



Anil Baluni

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday accused the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, of "misleading" the nation, stating that the former Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Naravane (retired) had himself said on multiple platforms how the brave Indian soldiers had given a befitting reply to China in Doklam and forced them to retreat.

Through his X handle, the party's national media chief, Anil Baluni, MP, said, "While tarnishing the image of the country and the Indian Army from foreign soil, Rahul Gandhi has now begun defaming the nation and insulting India's brave soldiers even within the

halls of Parliament! This is the pinnacle of the ideological bankruptcy of this childish Rahul Gandhi."

"Rahul Gandhi is not only wounding the dignity of Parliament through continuous false accusations and statements that spread confusion, but he is also hurting the morale of our valiant soldiers," he said.

Mr. Baluni said, "If the book has not even been

published yet, how on earth did Rahul Gandhi find out what is written in it? Moreover, despite the arrangements made by the Chair, repeatedly reiterating the same imaginary claim in the House is not only an insult to the Chair but also to the country and the Army."

### 'No evidence'

The BJP leader said it was "extremely unfortunate" that, despite repeated interventions by the Speaker, Mr. Gandhi was "misleading" the nation from the floor of the House without any evidence, even as General Shri Manoj Naravaneji has himself stated on multiple platforms how our daring soldiers gave a befitting reply to China in Doklam and forced them to retreat."

# Congress accuses Modi govt. of silencing debate on 2020 India-China border clash

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI



K.C. Venugopal

The Congress on Monday accused the Narendra Modi government of "misusing rules to heckle and silence" the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, preventing him from speaking on the 2020 India-China border conflict by objecting to references to former Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Naravane's memoir.

Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal, who repeatedly took on the Treasury benches as Mr. Gandhi attempted to raise the issue in the House, said the government was afraid that the "truth of its incompetence" would be exposed.

"This faux-nationalist government is so afraid of the truth of their incompetence coming out that they have deployed a bunch of senior-most Cabinet Ministers to prevent LoP Sh. Rahul Gandhi from speaking. They moved heaven and earth to stall the publishing of Gen. Manoj Naravaneji's book. And now, when excerpts are coming out exposing their so-called nationalist commitments, they are heckling and silencing the Leader of Opposition," Mr. Venugopal said in a post on X.

"It is a textbook case of 21st-century fascism, where first you stifle dissent in public, and then misuse rules to further silence your opponents," he added.

The magazine, which quoted from Gen. Naravane's unpublished memoir, wrote about an incident on August 31, 2020, when four Chinese tanks were reported to be moving up a steep mountain track towards Rechin La in eastern Ladakh. Though the Army Chief asked for clear orders from the government, the report, quoting the memoir, said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reverted after two hours, conveying the Prime Minister's message: *Jo uchi samjho, wohkaro* [do whatever you deem appropriate].

"The Prime Minister,

the Home Minister, and the Defence Minister don't want you to read this," Congress communication chief Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X.

Speaking to presspersons, Mr. Gandhi said, "The leader of the country is supposed to give directions. The leader is not supposed to run away from decisions and leave them on other people's shoulders. That is what the Prime Minister has done."

Mr. Venugopal alleged that the government was "blatantly misinterpreting the rules of procedure" so that the House and the people of the country are deprived of knowing "their Himalayan blunders" during the face-off with China.

Referring to Rule 349(i) of the Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure, Mr. Venugopal argued that the rule does not allow a member to read any book, newspaper, or letter except in connection with the business of the House. "National security was very much part of the Hon'ble President of India's address. Rahul ji was well within the rules to quote a published magazine report on India's security situation vis-a-vis China. How is it a violation of rules?" he told *The Hindu*.

# Opposition in RS slams address by the President

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Opposition parties in the Rajya Sabha on Monday said the address to the joint session of Parliament by President Droupadi Murmu did not reflect the realities of the present state of the country, as the Upper House began a debate on the Motion to thank the President for her address.

Congress leader Digvijaya Singh said inequality was rising in the country as the government ignored issues of workers and farmers. "Are you able to provide equal opportunities and justice to minorities? This government is anti-poor, anti-labour and anti-farmers," he said, adding that democracy was under threat because of extremist forces among minority and majority communities.

Trinamool Congress MP Sagarika Ghose said the President's speech was denying the present-day reality. "The D grade government is in denial of the problem, practices distraction and uses division as a political strategy," Ms. Ghose said. AAP MP Sanjay Singh raised the issue of special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in various States and said the entire exercise was a "scam". DMK MP Tiruchi Siva alleged parliamentary democracy norms were being flouted and the voices of Opposition parties were being strangled.

Treasury benches, however, hailed the speech as pragmatic. The BJP's nominated MP C. Sadanandan, who moved the Motion in the House, urged the Opposition to take a uniform stand on issues of national interest and stop opposing the Centre for the sake of opposing.

He said that the country's economic status had improved due to the efforts by the Centre.

# Cong. should introspect, move away from persistent criticism: Sonowal

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Monday launched a sharp attack on the Congress, accusing its past governments of corruption and misgovernance, and urged the Opposition party to cooperate with the ruling alliance in working towards the goal of a developed India by 2047.

Initiating the Motion of Thanks in the Lok Sabha to President Droupadi Murmu for her address to the joint sitting of Parliament, Mr. Sonowal said the Congress should introspect and move away from what he described as persistent criticism of the Narendra Modi government.

The Dibrugarh MP



Sarbananda Sonowal says the country has been witnessing 'corruption-free governance' under Narendra Modi since 2014. PTI

claimed that the Congress had been "rejected" by the people of the Northeast because of its alleged failure to address the region's aspirations during its years in power.

Referring to earlier Congress-led governments, Mr. Sonowal alleged that they

had been marked by major scams and policy paralysis. He cited cases such as the 2G spectrum, coal block allocation and Commonwealth Games scams.

In contrast, he said, the country had witnessed "transparent and corruption-free governance"

# In RS, Opposition flags farm distress, surge in migration, rising human-wildlife conflict

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

During Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha, Opposition MPs raised a series of issues, including agrarian distress and rising human-wildlife conflict, and the growing exodus of Indians seeking opportunities abroad.

Speaking for the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Sasmit Patra said paddy procurement had collapsed in Odisha, with dysfunctional *mandis* and delayed lifting pushing farmers into distress sales far below the minimum support price (MSP). He flagged the continued malpractice of *karni-chatni* - arbitrary deductions at procurement centres - as well as arti-



Sasmit Patra

"unilateral attack" on human beings. Wild boars, he noted, were responsible for significant loss of life and crop destruction, yet the Centre had rejected Kerala's request to classify them as vermin.

NCP(SP) MP Fauzia Khan drew attention to India's rising outward migration, calling the trend "alarming". Citing official data, she said more than two lakh Indians had renounced their citizenship each year between 2022 and 2024, while nearly 25 lakh citizens left the country annually for education and employment.

India, she noted, had become the largest source of international migrants, with nearly 18 million Indians living overseas.

# CEC insulted and humiliated us during meeting: Mamata Banerjee

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Accusing the Election Commission of "parroting" the ruling BJP's line, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee walked out of the EC office here on Monday. Ms. Banerjee alleged that she was "insulted and humiliated" by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar during the meeting.

Ms. Banerjee, accompanied by Trinamool Congress MPs and 12 voters from West Bengal - five of whom were declared dead and had their names deleted from the electoral rolls during the special intensive revision (SIR) - met the EC to raise objections. They had black shawls on as a mark of protest.

She alleged that 58 lakh



Mamata Banerjee, along with families affected by the SIR exercise, outside the EC office in Delhi on Monday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

voters in her State had been removed from the rolls without being given a chance to defend themselves. She questioned why the SIR exercise was not being conducted in BJP-ruled States and was limited to Opposition-ruled West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. She said her

party did not oppose SIR in principle, but it should not have been carried out in a "hurried manner".

Accusing the EC of attempting to "choose the government before the election", Ms. Banerjee said she had "never seen an Election Commissioner so arrogant and such a

liar" in her political career. While asserting that she respected the Election Commission as an institution, Ms. Banerjee said the present panel, especially Mr. Kumar, was working under the BJP's direction. She accused the EC of paralysing her government.

### CM confronts police

Meanwhile, Ms. Banerjee confronted police personnel deployed outside the State guest house, Banga Bhavan, in Chanakyapuri here, alleging that they harassed the SIR-affected families from West Bengal brought to the national capital to meet Election Commission officials. However, the Delhi Police said they had deployed the security personnel for VIP security and in view of the Union Budget session.

**IN BRIEF**



**14 Jharkhand workers in Dubai seek State's help**

Fourteen migrant workers from Giridih, Hazaribagh and Bokaro districts of Jharkhand, allegedly facing unpaid wages in Dubai, have sought the State government's help for their return. In a video released on Monday and shared by Giridih-based social activist Sikandar Ali, the workers described their plight and appealed for assistance. Speaking to *The Hindu* from Dubai, Ajay Kumar Mahato, 27, said their passports had been seized by the employer, preventing them from returning home. All 14 people are working for EMC Electromechanical Co. LLC in Dubai and are engaged in transmission line work.

**Top court grants bail to three accused in Pune Porsche case**

The Supreme Court on Monday allowed bail to three accused in the 2024 Pune Porsche accident while highlighting that loss of parental control over children may lead to fatal consequences involving the loss of innocent lives. On May 19, 2024, a Porsche allegedly driven by a 17-year-old boy under the influence of alcohol, fatally knocked down two IT professionals in Pune's Kalyani Nagar area. On January 23, the top court sought a response from the Maharashtra government on a plea filed by accused Amar Satish Gaikwad seeking bail in the case. Mr. Gaikwad was alleged to be a middleman, who gave ₹3 lakh to the assistant of the doctor to switch the blood sample of the juvenile.

**Form 7 filings spark outrage in Gujarat**

Voters have claimed that their names, phone, and EPIC details were misused, and signatures forged to file false claims; Opposition parties blame the BJP, while the ruling party says SIR exercise is a transparent process and neither the party nor the government has any role in filing the applications

**Abhinav Deshpande**  
AHMEDABAD/ANAND

**A**llegations have emerged in Gujarat of mass submissions of Form 7 applications seeking the deletion of names from poll rolls.

Amid the ongoing SIR exercise, several voters have claimed that their names, phone, and Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers were misused, and signatures forged to file false claims.

In some cases, voters alleged they were asked to sign hundreds of Form 7 applications and were told the forms were for inclusion of names, not deletion.

Opposition parties, including the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), have alleged that leaders of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party orchestrated the exercise. They claim that while the objectors' names and signatures appeared handwritten, the applications were filed in bulk, potentially leading to the deletion of lakhs of names across the State.

The BJP, however, denied the allegations, asserting that the SIR exercise was a transparent process and that neither the party nor the government had any role in filing the appli-



Villagers alleging that unknown people submitted Form 7 to remove their names from the electoral rolls, at Vaherakhadi Village, Anand, Gujarat on Saturday. VIJAY SONEJI

cations. According to the Election Commission, any registered voter in a constituency may submit a Form 7 objection. While there is no limit on the number of objections a person can file, submission of more than five applications by a single individual requires mandatory scrutiny by the Electoral Registration Officer to prevent misuse.

When *The Hindu* contacted some objectors in Devbhoomi Dwarka, Rajkot, and Ahmedabad districts after accessing Form 7 applications submitted to BLOs in their names seeking deletion, they said they had never authorised any deletions and were unaware of such forms. However, the applications

carried their names, EPIC numbers, contact details, and signatures.

One such application was submitted in the name of Maitra Maheshbhai from Rajkot South, objecting to the inclusion of Ranajisinh Bhatti's name. While Mr. Maitra's details were handwritten, Mr. Bhatti's particulars were pre-printed on the form. When contacted, Mr. Maitra, an electrician, said he had never submitted any Form 7. "No, I am not aware of any such form, and I did not submit any," he said. On whether he was associated with any political party, he replied that he was linked to the BJP.

Another application was submitted in the name of

Mansukh Kadavala, a farmer from Bhanvad, objecting to the inclusion of Mustafa D. Surma's name in the electoral rolls. The contact details provided on the application were incorrect, and the mobile number did not exist. After obtaining Mr. Kadavala's actual contact details and reaching him, he too said he had not submitted any such form. Mr. Surma, a local journalist, said he found more than three dozen Form 7 applications submitted to the BLO in Mr. Kadavala's name, even though Mr. Kadavala denies filing any of them.

Similar complaints have surfaced across the State. In Junagadh, a BJP councillor filed an objection seek-

ing the deletion of Padma Shri awardee and Gujarati folk artist Mir Haji Kasam Rathod's name from the voters' list, triggering outrage and allegations of irregularities. He later claimed that the objection was due to a discrepancy in the surname.

Devayat Rajshibhai Karmur, a farmer from Sanakhala in Devbhoomi Dwarka, also said he had neither authorised anyone nor submitted any forms and was unaware of any such process. "I am a farmer in a remote village and do not go to Bhanvad, the taluka headquarters, even once in two months. Why are you enquiring about this?" he said. An application in his name had been submitted to the BLO seeking the deletion of Ibrahim Sanghar of Nana Mandha in Khambhalia Taluka, said Rambhai Jogani, a local AAP leader from Khambhalia.

*The Hindu* found that in Gomitpur area of Ahmedabad, some residents were asked to sign between 300 and 1,200 Form 7 applications at the residence of a local leader. They were told the forms were meant for the inclusion of names. After discovering that the applications were actually for deletion, they submitted affidavits to the EC on

January 25, requesting that the forms they had signed not be considered.

**Alleged coercion**

"On January 11, we were taken to the office-cum-residence of a local BJP leader, where he asked me to sign 700 forms, saying they were for inclusion of voters from our ward, not deletion. Later, a BLO informed me that the forms I had signed were for deletion, after which I objected and filed an affidavit. The leader had promised to appoint us as BLA-2 and ensure that our municipal work faced no hurdles if we signed the forms," said Patan resident Arbaz Khan, 29, a steam press worker.

As the western State moves towards finalising its electoral rolls, election officials said on January 29 that the SIR exercise had so far recorded 6.88 lakh applications for the addition of names and 9,88,621 Form 7 applications for deletion. However, contradicting this statement, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer issued another release two days later, on January 31, stating that January 30 was the last day to submit claims and objections, with a total of just 1,83,235 Form 7 submissions.

**AI grounds Boeing 787-8 plane after pilot reports fuel switch malfunction**

**Jagriti Chandra**  
NEW DELHI

An Air India pilot reported an instance of a fuel switch malfunction on a Boeing 787-8 flight from London to Bengaluru after it landed on Monday, following which the airline says it has grounded the aircraft and is examining the matter.



The pilot says the crew reported abnormal behaviour of the LEFT fuel switch. REUTERS

The switches that supply fuel to the two engines were at the heart of the preliminary report into the Air India AI 171 crash in Ahmedabad last June. The report into the crash, which also involved a Boeing 787 aircraft, said that the two switches that supply fuel to each of the two engines shifted or "transitioned" to the CUTOFF position one after another and there was a loss of engine thrust and both engines shut

down, precipitating the crash of the Boeing 787-8 plane which killed 269.

The latest incident was brought to public attention by Captain Amit Singh, Founder of NGO Safety Matters, who has petitioned the Supreme Court for an independent probe into the Ahmedabad crash. He claimed the crew of the London to Bengaluru flight reported a similar mal-

function with one of the two fuel switches. On X, he wrote that the crew "reported abnormal behaviour of the LEFT engine fuel control switch".

He said that "during engine start, the switch failed to remain locked in the RUN position on two attempts, moving towards CUTOFF," a malfunction that has the potential to cut off fuel supply to the engine and force engine shutdown in certain scenarios.

It was not clear why the crew decided to proceed with the flight if the malfunction was observed during "engine start", the post claims. "We have grounded the aircraft and are involving the OEM (original equipment manufacturer) to get the pilot's concerns checked." Air India said in a statement.

**AYUSH Ministry to invite proposals for Ayurveda institutes**

**Bindu Shajan Perappadan**  
NEW DELHI

The Union Minister of State for AYUSH, Prataprao Jadhav, said on Monday that the Ministry would soon seek proposals from States to set up the three new All India Institutes of Ayurveda (AIAs) announced in the Union Budget 2026-27.

"This will be a massive exercise as all States are keen to have an AIIA which would bring in enhanced healthcare, more skilled manpower and focused research," said the Minister, speaking exclusively to *The Hindu*.

The AIAs will help expand high-quality undergraduate and postgraduate education, advanced research, and tertiary care services, he added.

The Budget allocation for AYUSH, which saw a



Prataprao Jadhav

10% increase from ₹3,671.82 crore (Revised Estimates) in FY 2025-26 to ₹4,408.93 crore in FY 2026-27, was a clear indication of the growing importance of the sector, the Minister noted, adding that the sector was eyeing upgrades to AYUSH pharmacies, testing labs and manpower.

He noted that the Ministry was looking at bringing in courses for AYUSH pharmacists and nurses.

**External team involved in PSLV probe; next launch date in June, says Minister**

**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

The investigation into the causes behind the consecutive failures of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is ongoing, and an external team is also involved in the probe. But none of the companies that had satellites onboard the doomed rockets have expressed reservations over its reliability.

**New launch date**

The ISRO is considering a fresh launch date in June, the Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, and Space, Jitendra Singh, said at a press briefing on Monday.

On January 12, the PSLV C-62 failed in its mission to



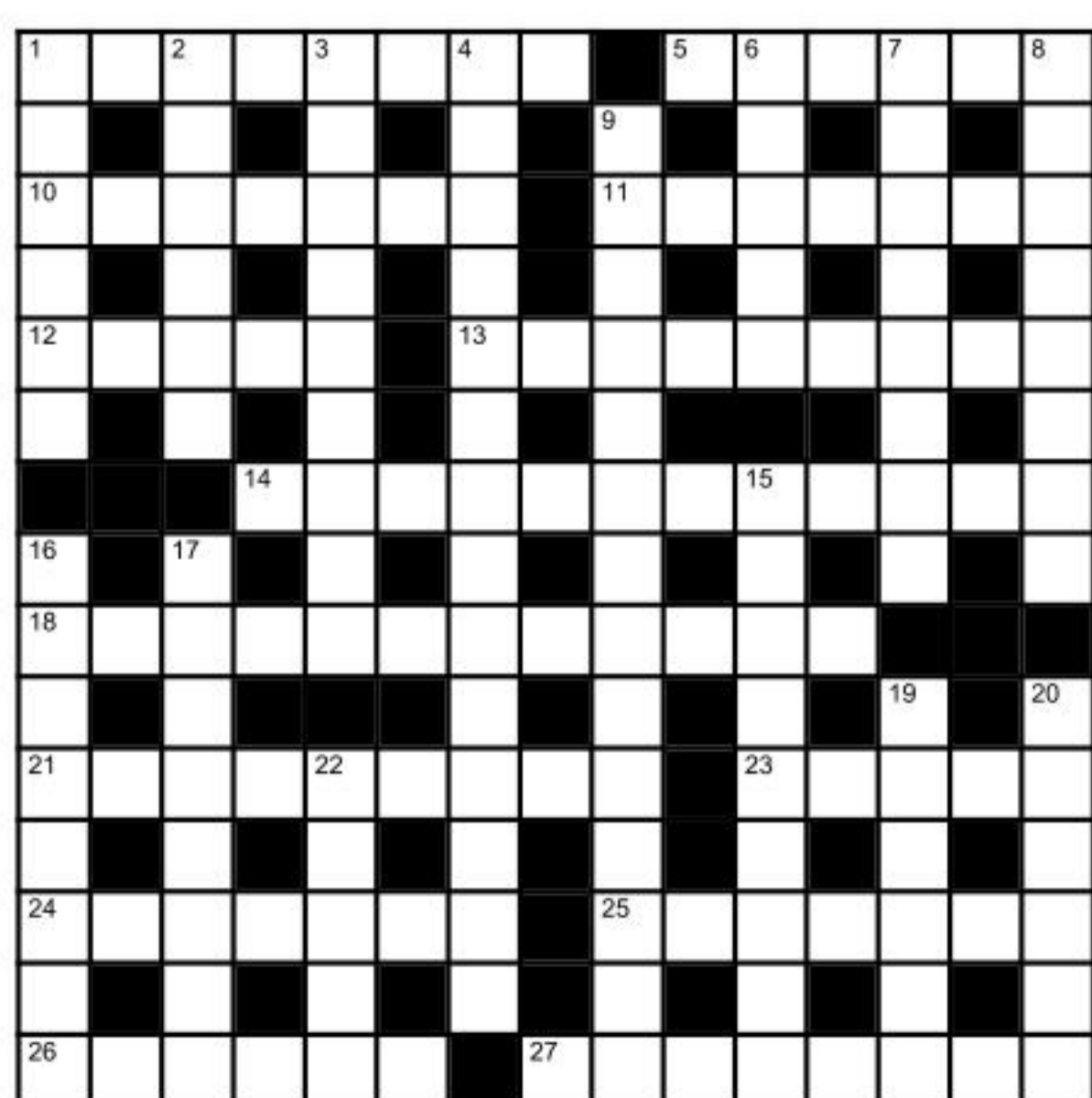
The ISRO's previous mission, PSLV C-62, on January 12 failed during the third stage. PTI

deliver 16 satellites into orbit, and crashed into the sea after the third stage of the rocket failed to ignite. This was similar to the May 18, 2025 failure of the PSLV (C-61), in which, too, the third stage failed to fire, destroying as a result the EOS-09 satellite intended for the government's strategic needs.

"It isn't that we (ISRO) are so unwise that we could not detect the reason for failures...this time, we are having a third party [appraisal] to create confidence, though we have expertise within ISRO for such analysis. Our probable next [launch] date, which we are ambitiously targeting, is June, after we satisfy ourselves that the problem is rectified. This year, we have 18 launches scheduled, with six of them involving private sector satellites. None have withdrawn their request to launch...this means, trust is intact. Next year, we have three big foreign launches - Japan, the United States, and France, and none have shown apprehension. That means our credibility is intact," Mr. Singh said.

**THE CROSSWORD+ 14707**  
(set by Dr. X)

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



- 14 Dine after one and pick up model in retro bar instantly (2,1,9)
- 18 Problem caused by conservative politician in shaky coalition (12)
- 21 Opener rocks, cracking century on primarily rough English wicket (9)
- 23 / 4 Conceal instruction to one cleaning room (5,5,3,6)
- 24 Border caught by More in Oval (7)
- 25 Leaders of Russia and USA meeting in the countryside (7)
- 26 One captivated by a tsar's fancy crowns (6)
- 27 Dominated by wife sadly - he's miserable (4,4)

- Down**
- 1 Promoting extremely hearty girl captivating press (6)
  - 2 Difficult to catch ultimately slippery fellow? Nonsense! (2,4)
  - 3 Separate at once! Lady is promiscuous (9)
  - 4 See 23 Across
  - 6 Enthralled by liqueurs on vacation, rogue totters (5)
  - 7 Lifted rubbish outside bar in Asian country (8)
  - 8 Separate from husband going astray inside hut (8)
  - 9 On the contrary, tiff in bedroom fast turned into an even more unpleasant situation (4,3,2,5)
  - 15 Model excited about extremely remarkable stole (9)
  - 16 Ungainly techies consuming cocaine to become cooler (3,5)
  - 17 Essentially, mumps and rubella shot provides protection (8)
  - 19 Mature maiden for fine chap (6)
  - 20 Devious snoop enters nimbly (6)
  - 22 Chose piano having a reddish-brown colour (5)

- Across**
- 1 Crude barbarian penning naughty poems (8)
  - 5 Censured batter in ground (6)
  - 10 Fine expert cracking case is humourless (2-5)
  - 11 Crushes married priest breaking commandments (7)
  - 12 Recollected Omani girl's name (5)
  - 13 Finally, nuclear radiation is lessening (9)

**SUDOKU**

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

**Solution to previous puzzle**

S	T	R	A	I	G	H	T	O	F	F	E	N	D
R	I	V	E	T	S	E	A	S	O	N	I	N	G
I	T	A	S	C	H	E	M	K	E	G			
D	I	S	E	N	G	A	G	E	T	H	E	S	E
E	H	D	R	O	H								
D	I	S	C	U	S								
B	N	O											
R	E	G	A	R	D	S							
A	M	B	L	E									
C	A	L	G										
H	E	A	R	T	L	A	N	D					
E	T	E	L	O									
D	I	R	N	D	L	I	M	P	R	O	P	E	R

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

**FAITH**

**Efficacy of Thai Pooam**

Many people wonder why there is so much of importance accorded to Thai Pooam, when Pooam is a star that falls every month. That may be a fact, but Pooam, being the brightest star, holds a special significance when it falls in the month of Thai.

On this day, the Sun is in Capricorn and the Moon is in Cancer (its own house). In other words, the two meet in a straight line on this day, said P. Swaminathan. The Sun is the repository of spiritual strength while the Moon is the lord of mental strength. The Sun is full of Siva's aspects, while the Moon is an aspect of Sakti. When both come together, the day is a significant day, spiritually.

Our spiritual texts say that God danced alone on Tiruvadhira falling in the month of Margazhi and with Parvati on the day of Thai Pooam. It is a day of positive vibrations and although one can pray to all gods, it is very efficacious to appeal to Siva, Parvati and Murugan, which explains the rationale behind the enduring appeal of Thai Pooam over centuries. Devotees begin to celebrate and pray a day in advance and continue the festive fervour for a few days more, due to everyone seeking spiritual strength as well as mental fortitude.

With exponential growth in the number of visitors to temples on this auspicious day, devotees plan temple visits meticulously a year in advance, if not months. The Palani Thai Pooam Pada Yatra is another way of observing this auspicious day.

While many modes of transport are available to reach various temples, walking (pada yatra) is the best form of worship.

**IN BRIEF**



**Markets recover 1% a day after STT announcement in Budget**

India's benchmark Nifty 50 increased 1% to 25,088 points, a day after the Budget announcement increasing securities transactions tax (STT) spooked the markets. Nifty 50 opened at 24,796.50 and gradually dipped to a low of 24,679.40 points, increasing to the day's high of 25,108.10 before settling down to the day's close on Monday. BSE Sensex, too, increased 1.2% to 81,666.46 points. All sectoral indices gained, barring Nifty IT and healthcare.

**Marri Retail eyes ₹522 cr. via fresh issue; files for IPO**

Marri Retail, an apparel and jewellery retailer, has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator SEBI to raise funds through its initial public offering (IPO). The Hyderabad-based company's proposed IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of shares worth ₹522 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 2.7 crore shares by promoter Marri Venkat Reddy, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed on Sunday. PTI

**Lupin launches generic cancer drug in U.S.**

Lupin has launched generic cancer drug Dasatinib Tablets, in multiple strengths, in the U.S. The product, bioequivalent to Bristol-Myers Squibb Company's Sprycel Tablets, was developed by Lupin in partnership with Pharmascience Inc. The launch follows U.S. FDA's approval for its abbreviated new drug application (ANDA). Dasatinib Tablets (RLD Sprycel) had an estimated annual sale of \$930 million in the U.S., Lupin said, citing IQVIA MAT Oct. 2025 numbers.

**'No influence of issues with U.S. in Customs Duty cuts'**

FM says Centre has already started using cess proceeds, usually its domain exclusively, in matters that are in the States' list of responsibilities

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The issue with the U.S. or the ongoing negotiations with that country on a trade deal did not have an impact on the Budget-making process or influence the decision to remove Customs tariffs on several key items, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday.

Speaking a day after laying the report of the Sixteenth Finance Commission before Parliament, the Finance Minister added that the Centre had already made a start towards sharing cesses with the States, by using the proceeds of the Health and National Security Cess on public health, which is constitutionally a State subject.

"The U.S. matter had no influence on us," Ms. Sitharaman said in response to a query from *The Hindu*.

"For the last two years, on Customs, every Budget had announcements, and since last year I have openly been saying that Customs reforms is the next one and that I would bring that about during this Budget. As a continuation of that, this has happened."

The issue gains relevance because, several of the Customs Duty relaxations announced in Budget 2026 – such as those on



Nirmala Sitharaman

electronics and components, semiconductors, medical devices, select chemicals, civil aviation parts, and clean energy inputs – had been part of the demands the U.S. team negotiating the trade deal had made on India.

The FM added that Budget 2025 had brought about income tax reforms, while reforms of GST were carried out later that year, in September.

"These were all a part of the larger scheme of things for the Indian citizens," she said. The FM had said in her Budget speech that the Centre had accepted the recommendations of the 16th Finance Commission.

"We have accepted the recommendations of the Finance Commission, but on this particular question, it was a suggestion more than a recommendation," she said on Monday.

The government is considering how to revise provisions of Press Note 3, which places additional clearances on investment coming from China, Economic Affairs Secretary Anuradha Thakur told *The Hindu* in an interview, adding that this was not specifically part of the pre-Budget discussions.

Press Note 3, issued in 2020, specified that any entity of a country that shared a land border with India can invest in the country only after securing Government approval.

Earlier, this rule had applied only to entities in Bangladesh and Pakistan. The revised rules expanded the curbs to include investments from China, Bhutan, and Nepal.

"In the Department of Economic Affairs and here [the Ministry of Finance], no discussion on Press Note 3 has happened here," Ms. Thakur said. "In the larger part of government, that is a discussion which is ongoing."

"The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) handles it and we let them handle it," she added. "I think discussions are ongoing about how to deal with that. In one sense, investments are not restricted. There is only an additional layer of checks that is happening as a consequence of Press Note 3."

increases in new orders, output, employment and buying levels during January," the report said. It added that survey participants continued to mention that demand buoyancy, new business growth and tech investment were supporting production.

**Discussions underway on how to deal with regulation on Chinese investments: Thakur**

**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**  
NEW DELHI



Anuradha Thakur. R.V. MURTHY

The Secretary added that, in her experience in the Ministry of Finance, the existing mechanism works "quite efficiently so far, but there is merit in the idea of revisiting it".

On the larger issue of foreign investments, Ms. Thakur pointed out that the government was seeking to address the fact that net foreign direct investment in the country had been negative for a few months now by trying to encourage investments in India.

"The way that we are institutionally looking at this is to see what are the reforms that we can make to make it easier for people to invest here," she said.

"One of the small things in the Budget is the announcement regarding the person's residence outside India. The route that was earlier available only to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs), the portfolio investment scheme route has been liberalised and that route is now available to all persons resident outside India," she pointed out.

**MARKETS**

**MARKET WATCH**

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	81,666	1.17
US Dollar	91.49	0.47
Gold	1,52,700	-7.73
Brent oil	65.99	—

**NIFTY 50**

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	1995.40	52.60
Adani Ports	1403.10	58.20
Apollo Hosp	6933.50	-14.50
Asian Paints	2402.00	45.00
Axis Bank	1311.50	-28.90
Bajaj Auto	9496.50	-3.00
Bajaj Finserv	1930.10	21.30
Bajaj Finance	903.70	1.35
Bharat Elec	439.10	13.75
Bharti Airtel	1965.40	16.40
Cipla	1311.60	-17.30
Coal India	423.50	3.95
Dr Reddys Lab	1182.50	3.80
Hindustan Unilever	40.20	0.6*
Eicher Motors	6985.50	96.00
Eternal Ltd.	272.65	3.10
Grasim Ind.	2774.60	37.00
HCL Tech	1676.80	10.60
HDFC Bank	928.10	6.00
HDFC Life	717.50	2.20
Hindalco	930.50	22.30
Hind Unilever	2357.30	6.60
ICICI Bank	1352.80	18.60
IntGlobeAvi	4687.00	97.50
Infosys	1629.40	-25.10
ITC	314.70	5.25
Jio Financial Services Ltd.	244.10	1.80
JSW Steel	1199.20	7.70
Kotak Bank	408.20	0.95
L&T	3921.30	107.30
M&M	3462.20	99.40
Maruti Suzuki	14384.00	185.00
Max Healthcare	958.10	-18.60
NestleIndia	1308.30	25.80
NTPC	350.35	5.60
ONGC	253.95	-0.35
PowerGrid Corp.	270.40	19.05
Reliance Ind.	1390.40	43.40
SBI Life	2001.00	26.70
Shriram Finance Ltd.	1028.70	10.50
Sun Pharma	962.10	-35.50
Tata Consumer Products	1627.90	17.80
Tata Steel	1125.40	38.10
TCS	188.51	3.13
Tech Mahindra	3169.60	-17.30
Titan	1724.00	-6.70
Titan Motors	3953.20	-32.10
Tata Motors PV	362.90	18.25
Trent Ltd.	3720.90	-8.10
UltraTech Cement	12535.00	251.00
Wipro	242.30	0.50

DE: Demerged Entity

**'Funding framework essential to ensure UPI remains a free service'**

**Lal Tendu Mishra**  
MUMBAI

Now that India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is handling about 21 billion transactions every month and has become a crucial financial infrastructure for consumers and small merchants, a funding framework is essential to keep UPI free for majority users, say industry officials.

UPI's success reshaped everyday commerce, bringing millions of small merchants into the formal economy and making instant digital payments routine across income groups, they added.

For individuals and kirana stores, UPI's zero-cost structure has been central



**Crucial service:** A customer buying dairy products using UPI Digital payment at a shop in Bengaluru. THE HINDU FILE

to this transformation and remains a policy priority.

Stating that person-to-person transactions continue to be free, and small and micro-merchants remain exempt from charges, officials said for sustainability a long-term funding

framework should be put in place to support this scale of activity.

**System priorities**

"UPI has reached a level of scale where sustainability and reliability must be treated as system priorities.

Keeping UPI free for consumers and small merchants is essential and should not change," said Vishwas Patel, chairman, Payments Council of India.

"At the same time, a payments infrastructure of this magnitude needs predictable investment in uptime, fraud prevention, and dispute resolution."

"A differentiated approach that recognises the role of large, high-volume merchants can help strengthen the ecosystem without compromising inclusion," he added.

UPI today enables merchant transactions, mandates, credit-linked products, recurring payments and early-stage cross-border use cases.

**City Union Bank Q3 net rises 16% to ₹332 crore**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

City Union Bank Ltd. reported third-quarter net profit grew 16% year-on-year to ₹332 crore while net interest income surged 28% to ₹752 crore.

Net interest margin stood at 3.89% compared with 3.58% a year earlier.

The bank made a provision of ₹468 crore against ₹402 crore in the same period last year. Total deposits rose 21% to ₹70,516 crore while total advances also increased by 21% to ₹60,892 crore. Gross NPAs reduced to 2.17% from 3.36% while net NPAs slid to 0.78% from 1.42%.

**Hyundai Motor India Q3 net profit rises 6%**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

Hyundai Motor India Ltd. net profit for the third quarter ended 31 December rose 6.3% year on year (YoY) to ₹1,234.4 crore.

Revenue climbed 8% to ₹17,973 crore.

"The third quarter performance underscores our resilience and strong execution of "Quality of Growth" strategy, marked by healthy growth in volumes, revenue and profitability," said Tarun Garg, MD & CEO.

"On a year-to-date basis, EBITDA margins expanded to 12.8% as against 12.5% last year, supported by efforts towards improving sales mix and prudent cost



The logo of Hyundai Motor India seen on a parked car.

control measures," he said. "As we move ahead, the robust January'26 sales gives us great momentum towards a healthy 2026."

The automaker said GST 2.0 and festive tailwinds supported domestic demand. Wholesale volume rose 5% QoQ.

**Maruti Suzuki January wholesales rise 11.6%**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

Despite production constraints, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. (MSIL) reported a 11.6% year-on-year (YoY) growth in wholesales for January with 2,36,962 vehicles sold. This is the highest monthly sales volume achieved since inception.

MSIL saw a growth of more than 88% by exporting 51,020 vehicles compared with 27,100 units in the same period last year. Exports were also the highest ever recorded in a month, the company said.

Local wholesales of 1,78,300 were the highest ever for any January.

**Best Places to Work 2026**

POWERED BY WorkL

**LIVE**

**WEBINAR**

**Everything you need to know about India's Best Places to Work 2026**

**Stuart Duncan**  
Head of Partnership Leads, WorkL for Business

**Aloke Mahapatra**  
Head of Alternative Revenue & Strategic Partnerships, The Hindu

in conversation with

February 4, 2026 (Wednesday) 02:30 p.m. (IST) Zoom (live)

**What will be covered:**

- The entry process for Best Places to Work 2026 (India)
- Winning strategies and lessons from previous award winners
- Judges' perspectives and expectations for the 2026 panel

FREE FOR ALL | INTERACTIVE | ONLINE | REGISTER FOR SESSION RECORDING

Last date to apply for The Hindu Best Places to Work Awards 2026: February 28, 2026

Scan the code or visit <https://newsth.live/WorkL-feb> to register for the webinar.

**MOSCOW**

**Kremlin confirms new three-way peace talks this week in Abu Dhabi**



Russia has confirmed that a new round of talks with Ukraine and the U.S. in Abu Dhabi on ending the four-year war will start on Wednesday. "They were originally planned for this past Sunday. But additional coordination of the schedules of the three parties was needed," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. AFP

**DHAKA**

**Bangladesh ex-PM Hasina, niece handed jail sentences in absentia**



A Bangladesh court on Monday sentenced deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to 10 years in jail and her niece Tulip Siddiq, a British lawmaker, to four years in prison in two corruption cases related to alleged irregularities in land allocation for a government housing project. The jail terms were handed down after trial in absentia. PTI

**WASHINGTON**

**Kennedy Center will close for two years for renovation, says Trump**



U.S. President Donald Trump said on Sunday he is closing Kennedy Center for two years starting in July for construction. Mr. Trump's announcement follows a wave of cancellations by leading performers, musicians and groups since the President ousted the previous leadership and added his name to the building. AP

**LOS ANGELES**

**Bad Bunny wins big at Grammys, Dalai Lama gets one for storytelling**



Bad Bunny made history at the Grammys, winning Album of the Year for his *Debi Tirar Mas Fotos*, the first Spanish-language work to take the top honour. Kendrick Lamar won Record of the Year award, while Billie Eilish took the Song of the Year prize. The Dalai Lama won his first Grammy for audio book and storytelling recording. AFP

**177 Baloch militants killed in two days, say Pakistan forces**

Security operation in response to coordinated militant attacks that struck 12 towns; the attacks tied to the Balochistan Liberation Army left at least 50 dead, mostly civilians, Pak. authorities claim

Press Trust of India  
KARACHI/ISLAMABAD

Security forces overnight killed 22 militants, raising the death toll of militants to 177 in the last two days in Balochistan after coordinated attacks at multiple places in the restive southwestern Pakistan province left at least 50 dead, mostly civilians, security officials said on Monday.



Cost of conflict: Local residents stand near a damaged bank on the outskirts of Quetta after an attack by Baloch separatists. AFP

The operation was launched after militants, including two female suicide bombers, belonging to ethnic Baloch groups carried out attacks across 12 towns in the province on Saturday targeting civilians in Quetta, Mastung, Nushki, Dalbandin, Kharan, Panjgur, Tump, Gwadar and Pasni. The death toll of militants in operations in the last two days has increased to 177, according to security officials. "Since Sunday night, se-

curity forces have killed 22 more terrorists," Shahid Rind, a spokesperson for the provincial government, said on Monday. He said that 167 bodies have been sent to hospitals so far for future processing and identification. Mr. Rind said most of the militants killed belonged to the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and had support from other insurgent groups. On Sunday, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said

that the security forces were prepared and timely retaliated to push back the attackers, killing 150 militants. The military and the state have designated these militants belonging to insurgent groups or the Tehreek-e-Taliban as "Fitna-al-Hindustan", a term the government uses claiming that the militants allegedly receive support from Indian intelligence agencies. The militants targeted multiple security and go-

vernment installations in their attacks on Saturday. So far, authorities have confirmed the death of at least 17 personnel of the police, frontier corps and security forces. Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said that the attacks were carried out by the outlawed BLA, which also killed at least 31 civilians. In Islamabad, the Senate unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the spate of militant attacks in Balochistan.

**Insurgency-hit region** Balochistan, bordering Iran and Afghanistan, is home to a long-running violent insurgency. Baloch insurgent groups have previously carried out several attacks targeting the \$60 billion CPEC projects. In 2025, the BLA claimed responsibility for the March hijacking of the Jaffar Express train, killing 31 people and holding hostage over 300 passengers.

**Iranian media says President has ordered talks with U.S.**

Agence France-Presse  
PARIS

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has ordered the start of nuclear talks with the United States, local media said on Monday, after U.S. President Donald Trump said he was hopeful of a deal to avert military action against the Islamic republic.

Following the Iranian authorities' deadly response to anti-government protests that peaked last month, Mr. Trump has threatened military action and ordered the dispatch of an aircraft carrier group to West Asia. "President Pezeshkian has ordered the opening of talks with the United States," the news agency Fars reported on Monday. "Iran and the United States will hold talks on the nuclear file," Fars said, without specifying a date. Iran said earlier on Monday it was working on a method and framework for negotiations that would be ready in the coming days.

**Gaza's crucial Rafah crossing to Egypt reopens with limits**

Associated Press  
CAIRO

Gaza's Rafah border crossing with Egypt reopened on Monday for limited traffic, a key step in the Israel-Hamas ceasefire but a mostly symbolic one as few people will be allowed to travel in either direction and no goods will pass through.

An Egyptian official said 50 Palestinians were expected to cross in each direction on the first day of Rafah's operation. Within the first few hours of the opening, no one was seen crossing in or out of Gaza. About 20,000 Palestinian children and adults needing medical care hope to leave the devastated territory via the crossing, according to Gaza health officials.

Thousands of other Palestinians outside the territory hope to enter and return home. Egyptian state media and an Israeli security official also confirmed the reopening. Violence still continued across the coastal territory on Monday, and Gaza hos-



Key lifeline: Egyptian ambulances wait in line before moving into the Gaza Strip through the Rafah border on Monday. REUTERS

pital officials said an Israeli Navy ship had fired on a tent camp, killing a 3-year-old Palestinian boy. Israel's military said it was looking into the incident.

**Medical exit** About 150 hospitals across Egypt are ready to receive Palestinian patients evacuated from Gaza through Rafah, authorities said. Also, the Egyptian Red Crescent said it has readied "safe spaces" on the Egyptian side of the crossing to support those evacuated from the Gaza Strip. Israel has banned sending patients to hospitals in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem

since the war began - a move that cut off what was previously the main outlet for Palestinians needing medical treatment unavailable in Gaza. Israel has said it and Egypt will vet people for exit and entry through the Rafah crossing, which will be supervised by European Union border patrol agents with a small Palestinian presence. Fearing that Israel could use the crossing to push Palestinians out of the enclave, Egypt has repeatedly said it must be open for them to enter and exit Gaza. Historically, Israel and Egypt have vetted Palestinians applying to cross.

**China's probe to strengthen military, says state media**

Agence France-Presse  
BEIJING

China's anti-corruption probe into General Zhang Youxia and other senior officials will "remove roadblocks" and strengthen the country's military, state media said on Monday.

The Defence Ministry said last month it was investigating General Zhang, the vice-chairman of the powerful Central Military Commission (CMC), as well as General Liu Zhenli, chief of staff of the CMC's joint staff department, which oversees combat planning.

**Latest target**

The pair are the latest to fall under a sweeping drive to root out graft at all levels of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and state since President Xi Jinping came to power more than a decade ago. The Ministry did not say why the probe had been opened.

However, the Chinese military's mouthpiece *PLA Daily* said they were "corrupt elements" in a front-page editorial published on Monday. The "resolute investigation and punishment" of Generals Zhang and Liu "removes roadblocks" and "squeezes out the water diluting combat effectiveness", it said. Proponents say China's corruption purge promotes clean governance, but others say it also serves as a tool for Mr. Xi to oust political rivals.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SUNABEDA.  
Letter No : 479 / 2<sup>nd</sup> Corrigendum Date: 27/01/2026  
In continuation to this office Bid Identification No.CCERWCSBD-Online-32/2025-26 invited vide this office Notice No.6245 Dtd.28.11.2025, partial modification of NCB has been made as follows:  
1. Availability of Tender online for bidding Extended up to Dtd.25.02.2026 at 5.00 PM  
2. Last Date and Time of seeking tender clarification Dtd.24.02.2026 up to 2.00 PM  
3. Date & Time of opening of tender (Technical Bid) on Dtd.26.02.2026 at 11.00 AM.  
4. Date & Time of opening of tender (Price Bid) will be intimated later.  
All other terms and conditions will remain unaltered.  
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda.  
25001-14-2526 OIPR-25001/25182/1/25-26/0014

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SUNABEDA.  
Letter No : 497 / 2<sup>nd</sup> Corrigendum Date: 27/01/2026  
In continuation to this office Bid Identification No.CCERWCSBD-Online-34/2025-26 invited vide this office Notice No.6339 Dtd.28.11.2025, partial modification of NCB has been made as follows:  
1. Availability of Tender online for bidding Extended up to Dtd.25.02.2026 at 5.00 PM  
2. Last Date and Time of seeking tender clarification Dtd.24.02.2026 up to 2.00 PM  
3. Date & Time of opening of tender (Technical Bid) on Dtd.26.02.2026 at 11.00 AM.  
4. Date & Time of opening of tender (Price Bid) will be intimated later.  
All other terms and conditions will remain unaltered.  
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda.  
25001-16-2526 OIPR-25001/25182/1/25-26/0016

**PUBLIC (ELECTIONS-II) DEPARTMENT**  
SECRETARIAT, CHENNAI-600 009.  
Tender No.1/2026/7824  
**TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
e-Tenders are invited from reputed Companies / Agencies for Printing and Supply of Election related materials used during the Conduct of Elections, EVM/VVPAT Related Printing during the General Elections to Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, 2026 and Systematic Voters' Education & Electoral Participation (SVEEP) Related Printing in Tamil Nadu for a period of three (3) years as per the guidelines/ instructions of the Election Commission of India. The details can be seen in the tender document which can be downloaded free of cost from the websites: <https://tntenders.gov.in> and [www.elections.tn.gov.in](http://www.elections.tn.gov.in)  
1. Queries from the Companies/Agencies should be raised in the website <https://tntenders.gov.in> by 05:00 P.M. on 06.02.2026. The reply to the queries of the Companies/Agencies shall be uploaded by this Department by 05:00 P.M. on 10.02.2026 in the website <https://tntenders.gov.in>.  
2. The last date for submission of tender document by e-Procurement module - 3.00 P.M. on 17.02.2026.  
3. Technical Bids Opening to ascertain Number of bids received - 03:30 P.M. on 17.02.2026.  
4. Detailed Technical Evaluation by the Tender Evaluation Committee - Will be decided later  
5. Financial Bid Opening - Those bidders who have Technically qualified will be informed.  
6. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) - Rs.5,00,000/- per Region by online mode.  
Additional Chief Electoral Officer & Additional Secretary to Government.  
For contact: 044 - 25665327 DIPR/655/Tender/2026

**ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES**  
Mangalagiri, Guntur District  
Andhra Pradesh - 522503  
[Ref. Advt. F.No./AIMS/IG/Admin/Recruitment/03/Non Faculty/Deputation/2026/01 dtd. 17.01.2026]  
**Advertisement for Recruitment of Non-Faculty Group "A" Post on Deputation Basis at AIMS, Mangalagiri**  
AIMS Mangalagiri invites Online applications from eligible candidates for One (01) Senior Accounts Officer (Non-Faculty Group A) post on Deputation Basis. The closing date of applications will be 30 days from the date of publication of advertisement in Employment News. For more details, please visit website [www.aimsmangalagiri.edu.in](http://www.aimsmangalagiri.edu.in).  
Sd/-  
Executive Director  
AIMS, Mangalagiri

**Office of the Project Director PMU(RWSRPD) & Chief Engineer Water Resources (North) Hanumangarh**  
Notice Inviting Bid  
(NIB Code-WRN2526A0133)  
Bid for 02 Nos. of works related to Strengthening / Up-gradation of Infrastructure estimated cost of work from ₹ 0.95 Crore to 3.28 Crore is invited from prospective bidders up to 11.02.2026 Time 06.00 PM. Other particulars of the bids may be visited on the procurement portal <http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>, of the state and [www.water.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.water.rajasthan.gov.in) departmental website.  
UBN No.- WRN2526WSOB00425, WRN2526WSOB00426  
(Pradeep Rustagi)  
Project Director PMU (RWSRPD) & Chief Engineer  
water resources(North)  
Hanumangarh  
DIPR/C/1543/2026 RajKaj Ref No.:20080373

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION MANAGEMENT (MANAGE)**  
(An Autonomous Organization of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India)  
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030. Tel: 040-24594509, Telangana State, India.  
MANAGE invites eligible Ph.D candidates specialised in Agricultural Extension / Agricultural Economics / Agri-Business Management for one position of MANAGE Fellow (Rs. 56,000/ month). For more details please visit: [www.manage.gov.in](http://www.manage.gov.in).  
Sd/-  
Director (Agril. Extn.)

**WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION COMPANY LIMITED**  
(A Government of West Bengal Enterprise)  
Registered Office: Vidyut Bhavan, Block-DJ, Sector-II, Bidhannagar, Kolkata-700 091  
CIN: U40101WB2007SGC113474 • web: [www.wbsetcl.in](http://www.wbsetcl.in)  
NIT No.: CE(Procurement)/WBSETCL/Composite/Pkg C10/2025-26/36 Date: 03.02.2026  
E-Tender is invited for designing, engineering, civil construction, supply, delivery, erection, testing and commissioning (including transportation, insurance and storage) in respect of the following:  
➤ Construction of 400 kV D/C Transmission Line from Kharagpur 400 kV sub-station to upcoming Thermal Power Plant at the premises of JSW Salboni along with construction of two nos. of 400 kV Line Bays at Kharagpur 400 kV sub-station for upcoming generating unit of JSW at Salboni.  
➤ Construction of 132 kV D/C Transmission Line from Manikchak 132 kV sub-station to Samsi 132 kV sub-station. ICA- T2648(3)/2026  
Bid documents can be downloaded from 03.02.2026, 01:00 PM, and bids shall be submitted online up to 04:00 P.M., 02.03.2026. Visit the following websites - [www.wbtenders.gov.in](http://www.wbtenders.gov.in), [www.wbsetcl.in](http://www.wbsetcl.in) for details.

**WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION COMPANY LIMITED**  
(A Government of West Bengal Enterprise)  
Registered Office: Vidyut Bhavan, Block-DJ, Sector-II, Bidhannagar, Kolkata-700 091  
CIN: U40101WB2007SGC113474 • web: [www.wbsetcl.in](http://www.wbsetcl.in)  
**E-TENDER FOR THE FOLLOWING WORKS ARE INVITED:-**  
NIT No.: CE(P)/WBSETCL/ISO/25-26/33 Date: 03.02.2026 Procurement of 33 kV Isolators. Bid documents can be downloaded from 03.02.2026, 11:00 A.M. and bids shall be submitted online up to 02:00 P.M., 02.03.2026.  
NIT No.: CE(P)/WBSETCL/10 MVA-2nd call/25-26/34 Date: 03.02.2026 Procurement of 10 MVA, 66/33 kV and 66/11 kV 3ph Power Transformer. Bid documents can be downloaded from 03.02.2026, 11:00 A.M. and bids shall be submitted online up to 03:00 P.M., 02.03.2026.  
NIT No.: CE(P)/WBSETCL/Partograph\_Iso-2<sup>nd</sup> call/25-26/35 Date: 03.02.2026 Procurement of 400 kV and 220 kV Partograph Isolators. Bid documents can be downloaded from 03.02.2026, 11:00 A.M. and bids shall be submitted online up to 04:00 P.M., 02.03.2026. ICA- T2648(3)/2026  
Visit the following websites - [www.wbtenders.gov.in](http://www.wbtenders.gov.in), [www.wbsetcl.in](http://www.wbsetcl.in) for details.

**INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) (LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)**  
MAHATRANSCO  
Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.  
SRM e-Tender No. T-2605/MSETCL/CO/Projects/Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001468) (1st Call)  
MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.  
"Establishment of 220/22kV GIS at Mahalunge along with Transmission lines on turnkey basis, Dist. Pune under Pune Zone, MSETCL, Maharashtra."  
Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website <https://srm.tender.mahatransco.in>  
The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from 30.01.2026.  
Sd/-  
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL

**TNPL TAMIL NADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED**  
Kagithapuram - 639 136. Karur Dist. Tamil Nadu.  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
Tender No. Material Description Due date  
252613 Procurement of Filler Grade Precipitated Calcium Carbonate (in Jumbo Bags) for Unit - I. 09.02.2026  
007287  
Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website and NIC Portal only. For further details, please visit websites : [www.tnpl.com](http://www.tnpl.com) / <https://tntenders.gov.in/nicapp>  
DIPR/659/Tender/2026 TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper

**RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED**  
**NOTICE INVITING e-BIDS**  
PROCUREMENT-2/NIB-10/2025-26/BN-9016002523 to BN-9016002525  
Online e-bids are invited from interested bidders as detailed below:-  
1. PURCHASE OF 200 MVA, 220/132kV AUTO TRANSFORMER ALONG WITH NIFFES ON RATE CONTRACT BASIS FOR 2 YEARS (BN-9016002523, UBN-VPN2526GLRC02728).  
2. PURCHASE OF 80 MVA, 132/33kV POWER TRANSFORMER ALONG WITH NIFFES ON RATE CONTRACT BASIS FOR 2 YEARS (BN-9016002524, UBN-VPN2526GLRC02729).  
3. PURCHASE OF 33 kV SINGLE PHASE, 2.4 KVAR & 1.2 KVAR DRY TYPE SERIES REACTORS FOR R&M OF EXISTING 33 kV CAPACITOR BANKS (BN-9016002525, UBN-VPN2526GLOB02730).  
The detailed NIB and Bid document /specification are available for viewing/downloading on the website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>. Details of NIB are available on website [energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvpln](http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvpln).  
Any extension in bid submission/opening date (if any) will be floated/uploaded on <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>; [energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvpln](http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvpln) & <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> only.  
Superintending Engineer  
Raj.Samwadi/C/25/18886 RRVPN/TR-7367/2026 (Proc-II)

**KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(BELLARY THERMAL POWER STATION)  
CIN : U85110KA1970SGC001919  
**BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
(Two Cover System) (Through KPP Portal Only)  
KPCIL invites tenders through KPP portal: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> for the following works.  
1). KPCIL/2025-26/OW/WORK\_IDENT3891, Date: 28.01.2026. Providing Special Assistance for 1x700 MW UNIT #3 Super Critical Boiler Oxygen Dosing System used for oxygenated treatment of boiler feed water at BTPS for the year 2026-27.  
2). KPCIL/2025-26/OW/WORK\_IDENT3894, Date: 28.01.2026. Providing Desk operating charis for UCB1.2 & 3 at BTPS. Last Date and time for submission of Tender: (For Sl. No. 1 & 2): 12.02.2026 upto 17:00 Hrs. Further details contact: Superintending Engineer(Operations), Mobile: 9448290571.  
3). KPCIL/2025-26/PM/WORK\_IDENT3880, Date: 28.01.2026. Providing Commissioning of 1 No. Backhoe Loader for CHP works. Total Tender Amount(Exclusive of GST): Rs. 36,01,695/-. EMD: Rs.72,100/-. Last date for submission of Bids: 11.02.2026 at 17:00 Hrs. Further details contact: Executive Engineer(CHP)Mechanical-2, Mobile: 94482 90755.  
4). KPCIL/2025-26/AUCTION129, Date: 27.01.2026. Sale of Scrap Grinding Roller on as is where is basis available at BTPS, CALL-3. Last date for receipt of tenders: 04.02.2026. Further details contact: Executive Engineer(STORE), BTPS, KPCIL, Kudathini - 583152, Bellary Taluk & District. Mobile: 94808 30601. E-mail: [eestorebtps@gmail.com](mailto:eestorebtps@gmail.com), Website: <https://kpcil.karnataka.gov.in>

**READ EVERY FORTNIGHT.**  
FRONTLINE  
LEADING THE DEBATE SINCE 1981  
TO SUBSCRIBE, VISIT  
[www.thehindugroup.in/subscribe](http://www.thehindugroup.in/subscribe)

**TOEING THE LINE**

**We will follow the decision taken by government and Board: Agha**



FILE PHOTO

We are players contracted to the Board (PCB), and whatever decision our government and Board have taken, all the players are on board with it — Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha on the team boycotting the T20 WC match against India on February 15. Agha & Co. have departed for Sri Lanka after the T20Is against Australia.

**WARM-UP FIXTURE**

**Jagadeesan slams a century to set up India-A's victory over USA**



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

N. Jagadeesan (104, 55b) scored a century to power India-A to a 38-run win over USA in their ICC T20 World Cup warm-up match at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on Monday. **The scores:** India-A 238/3 in 20 overs (Jagadeesan 104, Badoni 60 n.o.) bt USA 200 in 19.4 overs (Gous 44, Sanjay 41, Bishnoi 3/37).

**GETTING THE AXE**

**Sri Lanka drops Dhananjaya from its T20 World Cup squad**



AFF

Sri Lanka dropped Test captain Dhananjaya de Silva from its 15-man T20 World Cup squad led by Dasun Shanaka. **The squad:** Shanaka (Capt.), Nissanka, Mishara, Kusal Mendis, Kamindu, Kusal Perera, Asalanka, Liyanage, Rathnayake, Hasaranga, Wellalage, Theekshana, Chameera, Pathirana, and Malinga.

**NO GUARANTEE**

**Djokovic hints at retirement as clock ticks on history bid**



AFF

Novak Djokovic left the Australian Open still stuck on 24 Majors and with fresh doubts about how many more tries he will have at winning a 25th. But after losing to Carlos Alcaraz in the final, the Serb suggested he may not be back in Melbourne. "God knows what happens tomorrow, let alone in six or 12 months," he said.



**Game-changers:** Gardner has been a consistent performer for GG while Jemimah has shone in key moments in her maiden season as DC skipper. FILE PHOTOS

**Humdinger in store as Giants, Capitals clash in Eliminator**

The winner will earn the right to meet the high-flying Royal Challengers for a shot at a maiden crown in the summit clash on Thursday

**WPL-4**

**Vivek Krishnan**  
VADODARA

Delhi Capitals and Gujarat Giants have already provided two humdingers of high quality in this year's Women's Premier League. At the D.Y. Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on January 11, Giants racked up 209 and restricted Capitals to 205 for five to claim a four-run win. Last week, at the Kotambi Stadium, Giants again held their nerve at the close, pipping Jemimah Rodrigues and Co. by three runs.

When the two teams engage in the Eliminator on Tuesday, the stakes will be higher. The triumphant lot will advance to Thursday's final against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, while the loser will be condemned to

**Today's match**  
**ELIMINATOR**  
GUJARAT GIANTS VS DELHI CAPITALS  
Vadodara, 7.30 p.m.  
**HEAD-TO-HEAD**  
Played: 8  
GG 4 | DC 4  
LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIHOHSTAR

the heartbreak of being so near and yet so far.

Evidently, there isn't much to separate these teams. Having had a few stumbles in the first two weeks of the tournament, both camps have hit a sweet spot at the business end. Ashleigh Gardner's side has won its last three matches. DC has prevailed in three of its last four outings.

In a contest of this magnitude, the experienced players are likely to hold the key. For Giants, Sophie

Devine has been irrepressible. The 36-year-old New Zealander has contributed 237 runs in eight innings at a strike rate of 152.9. Even more significant has been her output as a medium-pacer — she is the tournament's leading wicket-taker with 17 scalps.

In Capitals' case, contributions have been perhaps more evenly spread. While Chinelle Henry and Marizanne Kapp have set the tone with the new ball, Nandani Sharma has risen to prominence with her verve and variation at the death.

A bulk of the runs have been compiled by Lizelle Lee and Laura Wolvaardt. In her first season as captain, Jemimah has also shone at key moments.

If both these outfits play at the level that has brought them this far, another humdinger may well be in store.

**Simple plans key to bowling the final over, says Devine**

**Vivek Krishnan**  
VADODARA

In Gujarat Giants' run to the playoffs in the Women's Premier League, Sophie Devine's impact has been profound. Having spent two decades as a professional cricketer at the highest level, the 36-year-old has brought all her wisdom and know-how into play to help the franchise set up a clash with Delhi Capitals in Tuesday's Eliminator.

Nowhere has Devine's phlegmatic presence under pressure been more apparent this season than in meetings against Capitals. In the first face-off in Navi Mumbai, the former New Zealand captain smashed a 42-ball 95 and then successfully defended seven runs off the final over. At the Kotambi Stadium, De-



Devine.

vine was the game-changer once again as she picked up four scalps and defended nine runs in the

20th over. Devine produced the goods at the crunch against Capitals here last Tuesday after conceding 23 runs in the 17th over.

"In that over, I thought I let Capitals back into the game. But it was just a case of being able to reflect really quickly. I knew I was probably a little bit complacent, especially early on in that over, and got punished," Devine told The Hindu on Monday.

"To get the ball in the last over gives you a level of confidence knowing that the captain backs you to do a job. It comes down to experience. But it's also going back to just really simple planning. I know people probably want an amazing answer, but it's as basic as just a nice, simple game plan."

**Former champions Lanka, Australia eye redemption**

**T20 WC COUNTDOWN**

**Anish Pathiyil**

Winning is a habit. The euphoria of success is often the biggest motivator to attempt another shot at victory. However, the ignominy of defeat is sometimes a more powerful stimulant to put your head down and correct the wrongs. Two teams drawn in Group B of the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup will hope the latter proves true.

Sri Lanka, co-host of the multi-nation tournament, failed to progress through a group comprising South Africa and Bangladesh and missed out on the Super Eight stage in 2024. Australia, ranked second in the men's T20I rankings, suffered a shock defeat at the hands of Afghanistan and failed to reach the semifinals. Despite the poor performance, both sides have chosen to retain most of their 2024 squad rather than make wholesale changes.

Australia, the 2021 champion, has performed well in the shortest format since the previous World Cup, Test skipper Pat Cummins suffered a setback in his recovery from a back injury and has been replaced by left-arm pacer Ben Dwarshuis. Matt Renshaw has been added to the squad in place of Matthew Short.

**Leadership change** Sri Lanka has opted for a change in leadership, with Dasun Shanaka taking over from Charith Asalanka. The island nation has had extensive preparation in sub-continent conditions



**Impact players:** Marsh has led Australia from the front while Nissanka has been prolific for the Lankans at the top of the order. FILE PHOTOS



The ICC T20 World Cup will be held in India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8

with their all-round skill sets.

After being initially named in the squad despite not featuring in the format since the previous World Cup, Test skipper Pat Cummins suffered a setback in his recovery from a back injury and has been replaced by left-arm pacer Ben Dwarshuis. Matt Renshaw has been added to the squad in place of Matthew Short.

**Leadership change** Sri Lanka has opted for a change in leadership, with Dasun Shanaka taking over from Charith Asalanka. The island nation has had extensive preparation in sub-continent conditions

**The Group B schedule**

DATE	TEAMS	VENUE	TIME
Feb. 8	Sri Lanka vs. Ireland	Colombo (RPS)	7 p.m.
Feb. 9	Zimbabwe vs. Oman	Colombo (SSC)	3 p.m.
Feb. 11	Australia vs. Ireland	Colombo (RPS)	3 p.m.
Feb. 12	Sri Lanka vs. Oman	Pallekele	11 a.m.
Feb. 13	Australia vs. Zimbabwe	Colombo (RPS)	11 a.m.
Feb. 14	Ireland vs. Oman	Colombo (SSC)	11 a.m.
Feb. 16	Sri Lanka vs. Australia	Pallekele	7 p.m.
Feb. 17	Ireland vs. Zimbabwe	Pallekele	3 p.m.
Feb. 19	Sri Lanka vs. Zimbabwe	Colombo (RPS)	3 p.m.
Feb. 20	Australia vs. Oman	Pallekele	7 p.m.

(26 out of 32 matches) over the past year-and-a-half, out of which 15 have been at home, where it will contest all its group matches. Much like its group rival, former champion Sri Lanka has a settled batting group to work with.

Pathum Nissanka is one among only three batters from full-member sides to

record more than 1,000 T20I runs since the last World Cup.

The other two being Zimbabwe's Brian Bennett and India opener Abhishek Sharma.

Sri Lanka's struggles arise towards the back end of the innings, with Shanaka acting as the lone aggressor. The bowling will hinge

on spinners Wanindu Hasaranga and Maheesh Theekshana, who have been the team's highest wicket-takers since 2024.

**No pushover** Zimbabwe showed it will be no pushover in this group, beating the Lankan Lions during the tri-series in Pakistan. The side's experienced core will look to support Bennett, who has had a remarkable 18 months with the bat (1,369 runs at a strike rate of 147.52).

Ireland, the fourth full member in the group, and Oman are the other two participants. The former will look to tap into its experience of playing against South Africa and Bangladesh in Asia recently. For the latter, anything other than a last-place finish will be a bonus.

**On cloud nine**



**Victory lap:** Iryna Koliadenko of Haryana Thunders celebrates after winning her 62kg bout in the final of the Pro Wrestling League on Sunday. Iryna's victory against Delhi Dangal Warriors' Anjali helped Thunders clinch the title 5-4. Thunders took home ₹1.5 crore and Warriors ₹75 lakh. Warriors' Turan Bayramov (59 points) was named Player-of-the-Tournament. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**Sports Ministry looks to revive Formula One Indian Grand Prix**

**Uthra Ganesan**  
NEW DELHI

The Sports Ministry is working to try and bring Formula One back to India amidst consultations with all concerned parties.

Ministry sources on Monday confirmed that Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has already visited the Buddh International Circuit (BIC) in Greater Noida and held talks with officials. The Indian Grand Prix was held for three years from 2011-13 before tax issues forced it off the calendar.

"The Sports Minister visited the Buddh International Circuit last week and held discussions on when the event could be restarted. He has told the owners to identify an event management company and let them handle things for the next two to three years. Once things start moving, tax issues will also be resolved," sources said.

The BIC was created and owned by Jaypee Group before its licence was cancelled and taken over by



**Sizing up:** Ministry sources confirmed that Mandaviya has already visited the Buddh International Circuit. FILE PHOTO: RAMESH SHARMA

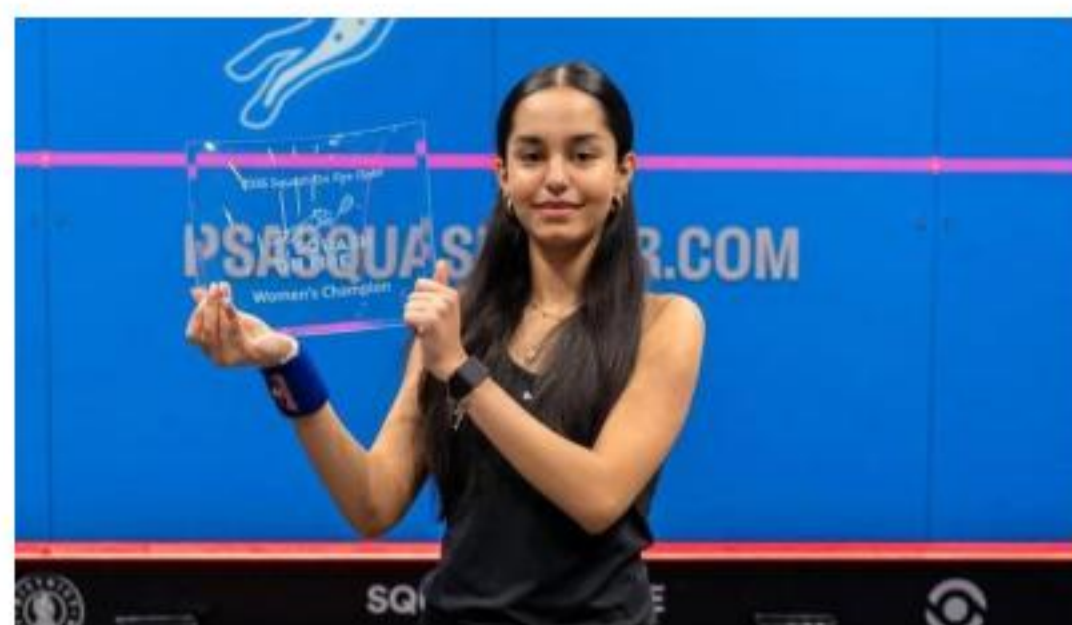
the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority. The Jaypee Group is currently involved in corporate insolvency issues in court.

It would not be easy, however, with an already packed calendar of 24 races - an average of two per month - and growing interest from more countries. The circuit, however, has hosted other events, including the MotoGP in 2023 (which was also discontinued for similar reasons), the Asia Road Racing Championships (2016)

and a few domestic events like the Prima Truck Racing Championship (2014-17).

The Sports Minister has asserted that India has displayed "operational readiness" for the 2030 Commonwealth Games and 2036 Olympics by hosting 45 international competitions across 20 disciplines in the last year. He cited endorsements from several international federations, including the International Paralympic Committee, International Cycling Union and World Boxing.

## IN BRIEF



## Anahat stuns Georgina to win Squash on Fire Open

Seventh seed Anahat Singh defeated top seed and World No. 10 Georgina Kennedy of England 12-10, 11-5, 11-7 in the Squash on Fire Open final in Washington for her maiden PSA Bronze-level crown. It is the biggest title of the young Anahat's career, and the 15th overall on the PSA Tour for the Indian in 26 tournaments. She jumped 12 places to achieve a career-best world ranking of 19. "I'm extremely happy. I wanted to do well in these events, get my ranking up, and I'm glad I was able to do that this time," she said.

## AIFF selects FanCode as the ISL media partner

The AIFF, on Monday, selected FanCode as the official media partner for the Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 season. Meanwhile, Kaleidoscope Production and Services (KPS) was awarded the production rights. The next season of the ISL is set to begin on February 14, with the tentative schedule having Mohun Bagan Super Giant meeting Kerala Blasters in Kolkata.



## Bellingham set to be out for a month with hamstring injury

Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham is expected to miss the upcoming Champions League play-off matches against Benfica after an hamstring injury on Sunday. Spanish media reported the 22-year-old could miss around a month.

## LIVE TELECAST

**Men's U-19 WC:** SS Select 2 & JioHotstar, 1 p.m.  
**WPL:** Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.  
**Serie A:** DAZN, 1.15 a.m. (Wednesday)

## Arsenal wins Women's Champions Cup, gets \$2m

Agence France-Presse  
LONDON

Arsenal scooped the biggest financial prize in women's club football history by beating Corinthians 3-2 after extra-time to win the inaugural FIFA Women's Champions Cup on Sunday. The European champion collected a \$2.3 million payout. That is nearly four times the \$590,000 Arsenal received for winning last season's Champions League.

**The result: Final:** Arsenal 3 (Smith 15, Wubben-Moy 59, Foord 104) bt Corinthians 2 (Zanotti 21, Victoria 90+6).

## India qualifies for Tent Pegging WC finals

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

India on Monday qualified for the Tent Pegging World Cup Championships in Jordan in November after a strong showing in the qualifying competition, where they won six medals, including four team medals and two individual honours. The Indian team comprised Sandeep Kumar, Dhanraj Sirsat, Bonge Ganesh Baliram and Jitender Singh.

## Abdusattorov wins; Gukesh joint eighth

## CHESS

Press Trust of India  
WIJK AAN ZEE

Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan clinched the Tata Steel Masters title with a black-piece victory against out-of-form Arjun Erigaisi while World champion D. Gukesh emerged as the best Indian with a joint eighth finish as the tournament concluded here on Monday.

Gukesh drew with Vincent Keymer of Germany in the final round to end as the top performing Indian on 6.5 points. But, his 50%

score was below par and the Indian ace slipped below the 2,750 rating mark. R. Praggnanadhaa also drew the last round with Jordan van Foreest of the Netherlands to end on 5.5 points.

**The results - Final round:** R. Praggnanadhaa (5.5) drew with Jordan van Foreest (Ned, 7.5); Arjun Erigaisi (4.5) lost to Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 9); Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 6.5) beat Aravindh Chithambaram (4.5); Thai Dai Van Nguyen (Cze, 3) lost to Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 8.5); D. Gukesh (6.5) drew with Vincent Keymer (Ger, 7.5); Matthias Bluebaum (Ger, 7) drew with Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (Tur, 7); Anish Giri (Ned, 6.5) drew with Hans Moke Niemann (USA, 7.5).

## AFI to focus on Asian Games

Sports Bureau  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) will focus on the Asian Games this year while a limited number of athletes will be taking part in Commonwealth Games. Anju Bobby George, the senior vice-president of the AFI, said that the 65th National Inter-State championships in Bhubaneswar, slated from June 24 to 28, will serve as the final trials for the Asian Games in Aichi and Nagoya.

## India to take a call on Nagal closer to the Netherlands tie

The country's top-ranked singles player is expected to train in Bengaluru today; captain Rajpal says the team is ready with alternative game plans if the World No. 281 fails to recover in time

## DAVIS CUP

Ashwin Achal  
BENGALURU

India will hope that Sumit Nagal recovers from his injury in time to spearhead the team's challenge in the Davis Cup qualifiers first round tie against the Netherlands here this weekend.

Nagal (World No. 281), the top-ranked Indian singles player, retired in the first set of his last Tour match - a round-of-16 clash in the Nonthaburi Challenger (Thailand) last month.

India captain Rohit Rajpal stated that Nagal suffered a "little strain on the hip", and that a call will be taken on his availability closer to the tie.

Nagal is expected to



**Fingers crossed:** Rajpal feels the training sessions will give a good indication of Nagal's fitness level. SUDHAKARA JAIN

train at the KSLTA Stadium here on Tuesday, which will give a good indication of his fitness level.

"We will test him Tuesday onwards, where we will start to put pressure. This means that we will put

him in sets, put him in points. That's when you really know," Rajpal said here on Monday.

"Nagal has been in rehab for the last couple of weeks. We are slowly building him up. He has gotten on court in Delhi twice. His recovery work and strength work look good. We have a physio working with him. We are keeping our fingers crossed," Rajpal said.

Rajpal added that the team, which counts Nagal and Dhakshinewar Suresh as the primary singles combatants, is ready with alternative game plans in the event of Nagal's absence.

"We always work on game plan one, two and three. Our guys are playing a lot of sets. We will see who is sharp, and accordingly, we will be ready."

## Martinez and Zielinski on target as Inter extends its lead over Milan

## EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse  
MILAN

Inter Milan extended its lead at the top of Serie A to eight points with Sunday's 2-0 win at Cremonese, a match which was marred by away fans nearly hitting the host goalkeeper Emil Audero with a firecracker.

Lautaro Martinez and Piotr Zielinski's first-half strikes were enough for Inter to extend its unbeaten league run to 11 matches and pile pressure on AC Milan which faces Bologna on Tuesday.

Gleison Bremer helped Juventus up to fourth, the



**Close call:** Cremonese 'keeper Audero goes down after being nearly hit by a firecracker. AFP

Brazilian international defender scoring twice in a comfortable 4-1 win at Parma as the Turin giant continued its revival under Luciano Spalletti.

Serhou Guirassy scored twice in the second half as Borussia Dortmund came from behind to beat last-placed Heidenheim 3-2 at home and move six points

behind Bundesliga leader Bayern Munich.

In LaLiga, Athletic Bilbao struck late to secure a 1-1 Basque derby draw against Real Sociedad and Real Betis rose to fifth with a 2-1 win at Valencia.

**The results: LaLiga:** Real Betis 2 (Avila 23-pen, Fornals 88) bt Valencia 1 (Rioja 20); Getafe 0 drew with Celta Vigo 0; Athletic Bilbao 1 (Ruiz de Galarreta 88) drew with Real Sociedad 1 (Guedes 37).

**Serie A:** Cremonese 0 lost to Inter Milan 2 (Martinez 16, Zielinski 31); Parma 1 (Cambiaso 51-og) lost to Juventus 4 (Bremer 15, 54, McKennie 37, David 64); Torino 1 (Adams 29) bt Lecce 0.

**Bundesliga:** Borussia Dortmund 3 (Anton 44, Guirassy 68-pen, 69) bt Heidenheim 2 (Niehues 45+5, 48); Stuttgart 1 (Demirovic 90) bt Freiburg 0.

READ  
**'SPORTSTAR'**  
EVERY FORTNIGHT.  
TO SUBSCRIBE,  
VISIT  
[www.thehindugroup.in/subscribe](http://www.thehindugroup.in/subscribe)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SUNABEDA.  
email: serwsbd2003@yahoo.com

Letter No : 488 / 2<sup>nd</sup> Corrigendum Date: 27/01/2026

In continuation to this office Bid Identification No.CCERWCSBD-Online-33/2025-26 invited vide this office Notice No.6329 Dtd.28.11.2025, partial modification of NCB has been made as follows:

1. Availability of Tender online for bidding Extended up to Dtd.25.02.2026 at 5.00 PM
2. Last Date and Time of seeking tender clarification Dtd.24.02.2026 up to 2.00 PM
3. Date & Time of opening of tender (Technical Bid) on Dtd.26.02.2026 at 11.00 AM.
4. Date & Time of opening of tender (Price Bid) Will be intimated later

All other terms and conditions will remain unaltered.

Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda.  
OIPR-25001/25182/1/25-26/0014

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SUNABEDA.  
email: serwsbd2003@yahoo.com

Letter No : 435 / 2<sup>nd</sup> Corrigendum Date: 27/01/2026

In continuation to this office Bid Identification No.CCERWCSBD-Online-35/2025-26 invited vide this office Notice No.6363 Dtd.28.11.2025, partial modification of NCB has been made as follows:

1. Availability of Tender online for bidding Extended up to Dtd.20.02.2026 at 5.00 PM
2. Last Date and Time of seeking tender clarification Dtd.19.02.2026 up to 2.00 PM
3. Date & Time of opening of tender (Technical Bid) on Dtd.21.02.2026 at 11.00 AM.
4. Date & Time of opening of tender (Price Bid) Will be intimated later

All other terms and conditions will remain unaltered.

Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda.  
OIPR-25001/25182/1/25-26/0016

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB  
Municipal Corporation Amritsar

Tender Reference No. E-Tender Notice No. 148 Date 30.01.2026

The Department of : Municipal Corporation, Amritsar Invites Bid for Various Works.

Closing Date and Time : 16.02.2026 upto 03:00 PM  
Opening of Technical Bid : 16.02.2026 upto 03:30 PM  
EMD : 2% of Estimate Amount  
For Detail log onto : <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
Note : Any Corrigendum(s) to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.

Superintending Engineer(c),  
Municipal Corporation,  
Amritsar

1596/12/2025-26/7744

PUNJAB STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION  
SCO 74-75, BANK SQUARE, SECTOR-17B CHANDIGARH  
PBX: 0172-5197847, 5197848

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

PSWC invites online tenders through GeM Portal for creation of 2.00 LMT godown capacities at 03 locations in the State of Punjab for guaranteed lease of 10 years on Build, Own and Operate/Lease basis for storage requirements of FCI under two bid system 'Technical Bid' and 'Financial Bid'.

NIT (alongwith GeM Bid IDs) is available on Department's website i.e. <https://pswc.in>

PSWC reserves the right to scrap the tender at any stage without assigning any reason and PSWC will not be held liable for any costs and consequences incurred by the intending bidders.

Note: Any corrigendum(s)/Notification(s) to this Notice Inviting E-Tender shall be published Department's website & GeM Portal.

1004/12/2025-26/7778 Managing Director, PSWC

AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION  
(BRIDGE PROJECT)  
Re-Invite  
E - Tender Notice : 2025-26

Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated Tender Cost
1.	REFURBISHMENT OF EXISTING SUBHASH BRIDGE AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BRIDGE ON EITHER SIDE OF EXISTING BRIDGE ACROSS SABARMATI RIVER ON ENGINEERING PROCUREMENT & CONSTRUCTION (EPC) MODE.	Rs. 232,80,68,937/- (Without GST)

Tender Uploaded on Website on : Date: 03/02/2026  
Technical Bid Opening : Date: 24/02/2026  
Details & Tenders Available on : <https://tender.nprocure.com>

Dy. Municipal Commissioner  
(AMC-Road/Bridge project)

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB  
Tender Reference No. E-Tender Notice No.1145 date 27/1/26

The Department of : Municipal Corporation, Amritsar Invites Bids for various works

Sr. No	Name of Work	Last date of Submission	Opening of Technical Bid
1	Bioremediation & Disposal of Legacy Waste Chhabal Road Dumpsite	12.02.2026 till 03.00 PM	12.02.2026 at 03.30 PM
2	Bioremediation & Disposal of Legacy Waste Chheharta Dumpsite	12.02.2026 till 03.00 PM	12.02.2026 at 03.30 PM
3	Bioremediation & Disposal of Legacy Waste Bhagatnawala Dumpsite	23.02.2026 till 03.00 PM	23.02.2026 at 03.00 PM

For Detail log onto : <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
Note : Any Corrigendum(s) to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.

Medical Officer of Health,  
Municipal Corporation,  
Amritsar.

1613/12/2025-26/7757



# Sindhu's fight is back, but finish remains a concern

The two-time Olympic medallist's 2025 season was defined by late-game collapses, with repeated losses coming after she held leads or reached parity in crucial phases

K.V.S. GIRI

Devyanshi Bihani

For elite athletes returning from injury, the first real marker of readiness is rarely a result. It is movement without restraint, and the body responding before the mind has time to doubt. P.V. Sindhu described that feeling after the Malaysia Open.

"Coming back after injury, you wait for that one feeling... the body moving freely, the legs responding, the game flowing again. This week, I felt it again," Sindhu wrote in an Instagram post.

Sindhu, who was forced to take a break after suffering a foot injury in October, returned to action at the Malaysia Open — the first tournament (Super 1000) of the season. Her run ended with a semifinal defeat but mattered for reasons more fundamental than the scoreline. "A tough semifinal loss... but moving without hesitation. Trusting myself again. Feeling the fight return point after point," she added.

That readiness was tested immediately by Chinese Taipei's Sung Shuo Yun, an opponent she had drawn at the season opener for the second year in a row. Sindhu took time to find her range, trailing 1-7 and then 4-8, but there were early signs that her movement and timing were falling back into place. A run of forehand winners and decisive counter-attacks brought her a 11-9 lead at the interval. The turnaround was capped by a disguised backhand drive to close out the opening game. Sindhu eventually came through 21-13, 22-20 in a 51-minute win.

Her most authoritative display came in the round-of-16 clash against Tomoka Miyazaki. The two-time Olympic medallist looked sharp and assured, sweeping aside the Japanese teenager 21-8, 21-13. The match stood out for the clarity of her attacking intent. She backed her power game consistently, with diagonal drops and flat smashes, and once she seized control, the contest never became complicated. Not once did Miyazaki take the lead, as the Indian dictated both pace and space throughout.

In the quarterfinals, Sindhu faced reigning world champion Akane Yamaguchi, who entered the match wearing a knee brace. Sindhu took charge early, racing through the opening game 21-11 in just over 10 minutes with sharp, short-back-swing winners and relentless pressure from the back court. Yamaguchi, visibly hampered, retired after the first game, sending the veteran into her first Super 1000 semifinal in three years.

The last-four battle against China's Wang Zhiyi offered the clearest picture of where Sindhu, a former world No. 2, currently stands. The final scoreline of 21-16, 21-15 did not fully reflect the pressure Wang was put under, as Sindhu led in the opening phases of both games and repeatedly forced her to defend in a demanding 52-minute contest. For Wang, who had seen her World Championships campaign in Paris cut short by the Indian last year, playing well with her ability to tighten rallies and absorb pace proved decisive.

The two tournaments that followed showed how fragile Sindhu's return still was. At the India Open, she suffered a first-round loss to Vietnam's Thuy Linh Nguyen, going down 22-20, 12-21, 15-21. At the Indonesia Masters a week later, she rebuilt momentum with wins over Manami Suizu and Line Kjaersfeldt, the latter turning out to be her 500th career victory and making her the first Indian

shuttler to reach the landmark in women's singles. Then she faced Chen Yufei in the quarterfinals. The Chinese top seed, whom Sindhu has now lost to five times in a row, ruled the game with her classic half-smashes. Chen started with a five-point lead in the opening game before Sindhu earned her break with a net kill. The Indian produced a few winners but struggled to move ahead, eventually dropping the first game 13-21.

Sindhu began the second game with renewed intent, moving into a 4-2 lead and staying marginally ahead until the mid-game interval. The turning point came soon after. With the score reading 11-12, she lost her second challenge on a close front-court line call. The following rally brought another marginal decision against her, and frustration began to creep in.

Her protests to the umpire were not well received, and she was shown a yellow card for misconduct. A rattled Sindhu soon slipped to 12-16. Moments later, she was penalised for delaying play just as Chen was preparing to serve, resulting in a red card and a point default. Even Chen appeared startled by the call. Despite the disruption, she fought back to reduce the deficit to a single point, but Chen eventually closed out the game 21-17.

"A tough loss when decisions shape the match. Progress is showing. Time to keep building," Sindhu wrote on X. This quarterfinal captured a recurring theme of her 2025 season, with Sindhu losing from winning or level positions in short, match-defining point sequences.

## The 2025 journey

When 2025 began, Sindhu was no longer operating with the cushion of a top seeding or ranking. The women's singles circuit had compressed sharply, with younger players competing with greater belief that they could win and increasingly, they did.

The Indian's season began at the India Open with a clear sense of transition. It was her first tournament under Indonesian coach Irwansyah, the former men's singles coach credited with shaping Jonatan Christie and Anthony Ginting. She described the phase as a new beginning, acknowledging that it would take time to build rhythm and understanding with a coach whose emphasis lay on reading opponents and sharpening tactical choices. On court, the signs were mixed. She reached the quarterfinals, beating Sung and Suizu before losing a three-game contest to Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska Tunjung.

The stretch following the India Open was marked by a string of first-round exits that stalled any chance of momentum. At the Indonesia Masters, she went out in the round of 32, losing in straight games to Nguyen. The All England Open, however, saw the most crushing of her three defeats. Sindhu appeared firmly in command against Korea's Kim Ga-eun, leading 20-12 in the opening game, before a sudden loss of momentum saw her rival claw back with seven straight points.

While she closed out the first game 21-19, there was more relief than celebration, a reflection of how clearly the tide began to turn. Kim's defensive resilience and repeated use of cross-court, round-the-head shots into Sindhu's backhand began to turn rallies. Once the Korean took control, the Indian was unable to arrest the slide, losing 21-19, 13-21, 13-21 in 61 minutes. The Swiss Open a week later followed a similar script; she exited again in the opening round, losing

17-21, 19-21 to Denmark's Julie Jakobsen to mark her third consecutive first-round loss of the season.

The middle stretch of 2025 offered little respite. At the Badminton Asia Championships, Sindhu reached the round of 16 before losing a three-game contest to Yamaguchi. It was a match that displayed both her ability to stay competitive against elite opposition and the difficulty of sustaining control through decisive phases.

Uneven returns continued in the Super 500 and Super 750 events. She fell in the opening round of the Malaysia Masters, losing in three games to Nguyen for her fourth first-round defeat in five tournaments. In Singapore, she reached the second round but went down in three games to Olympic champion Chen after pushing the Chinese for over an hour. The Indonesia Open provided a rare release as Sindhu edged past long-time rival Nozomi Okuhara in a three-game battle, only to fall in the round of 16.

The East Asian leg proved similarly taxing. Sindhu suffered another early exit at the Japan Open, losing in straight games to Sim Yu Jin, a defeat that left her with five first-round and three second-round exits in the season by mid-July. At the China Open, however, she produced her most significant win of the year, defeating world No. 7 Miyazaki in three games. This was her first victory over a top-10 player since late 2024 but she bowed out in the pre-quarterfinals. The loss came against 18-year-old Unnati Hooda in the round of 16 as the teenager became the only Indian woman in the last five years to beat India's most decorated women's singles player.

That momentum briefly carried into the World Championships in Paris, where Sindhu delivered her strongest performance of the year. She dismantled Zhiyi in the round of 16 and came within touching distance of a sixth Worlds medal, losing narrowly in the quarterfinals to Putri Kusuma Wardani after being in contention deep into the deciding game. Yet consistency again proved elusive. She exited in the opening round of the Hong Kong Open, losing for the first time to Line Christophersen, before closing the season at the China Masters with a quarterfinal finish, her third last-eight appearance of the year. That run ended with Sindhu again falling to An Se-young, against whom she remains 0-8 in their career head-to-head.

In 2024, the 29-year-old still collected titles and podium finishes. In 2025, there were no trophies, multiple first-round exits, and quarterfinals became the outer limit of her progress.

## Slipping away

Taken together, Sindhu's 2025 results point not to a player in decline, but to one repeatedly undone at the business end of matches. Scores from the past year show the pattern.

Nine of her 14 losses in 2025 followed a familiar pattern: matches in which she either held clear leads or clawed her way back to parity late in games, only to lose clusters of points that turned the match

decisively against her.

These were not contests where she was comprehensively outplayed from start to finish, but ones lost in short, four or five points at a time when execution and clarity mattered most.

The All England Open loss to Kim, where she led 18-9 before surrendering control, the Indonesia Masters defeat to Nguyen after holding six game points, and the India Open quarterfinal against Tunjung, where she stayed level deep into the decider before fading, all followed similar arcs.

The Sudirman Cup loss to Kjaersfeldt, where she conceded long point runs from commanding positions in both games, and the Swiss Open defeat to Jakobsen further reinforced the pattern.

There were also defeats that reflected the current and in some cases upcoming hierarchy of the sport rather than missed opportunities. Against Se-young at the China Masters, Wardani at the World Championships, Yu Jin at the Japan Open, Hooda at the China Open, and Thuy Linh at the Malaysia Masters, Sindhu was largely chasing the match throughout.

The Olympian's own emphasis on movement without hesitation speaks to the foundation required to address that finishing problem. The fight, as she put it, has returned. The next challenge is ensuring it lasts until the last point.

## THE GIST

After reaching her first Super 1000 semifinal in three years at the Malaysia Open, Sindhu exited early at the India Open and reached the Indonesia Masters quarterfinals, exposing how fragile that return still was

Nine of her 14 losses last season saw her lead or level late, before conceding point runs that swung matches

Quarterfinal finishes became Sindhu's ceiling in 2025, reflecting competitiveness without the sustained control needed to push into semifinals and finals



Coming back after injury, you wait for that one feeling... the body moving freely, the legs responding, the game flowing again



Progress is showing. Time to keep building SINDHU

# Gorillas are what we want to be, says Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka

The fate of Uganda's mountain gorillas, much like India's tigers and elephants, has been shaped by governance, public health, and community relations as much as ecology. The work of Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka, Uganda's first wildlife veterinarian, needs to be understood within this intersection

M. Nobinraja

Uganda's history with mountain gorillas is inseparable from its political turmoil. Mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) are restricted to Central Africa and number around a thousand individuals. They inhabit dense volcanic, bamboo, and montane forests at elevations of 2,200-4,300 m.

Yet from Uganda's independence in 1962 through Milton Obote's centralisation, Idi Amin's brutal dictatorship, and Yoweri Museveni's lengthy rule, poaching and habitat loss have pushed gorillas confined to the Bwindi and the Virunga parks to the brink. And in Uganda's collective efforts to restore both the species and a sense of national identity, Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka stands out as a defining figure.

Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka, Uganda's first wildlife veterinarian and one of Africa's most respected conservationists, has spent more than three decades working during one of the most difficult periods of Ugandan history. She is a globally recognised conservationist and the founder of Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH), where her One Health model has significantly contributed to mountain gorilla conservation. For this work, she received the Whitley and Rolex Awards and the UN Environment Programme's Champion of the Earth Award.

Like India, Uganda is a postcolonial democracy where wildlife conservation has unfolded alongside political instability and debates about who should bear the cost of protecting nature. The fate of Uganda's mountain gorillas, much like India's tigers or elephants, has been shaped by governance, public health, and community relations as well as ecology. And Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka's work must be understood within this intersection.

## First wildlife veterinarian

Being born and raised in Amin's time on Ugandan soil and in a politically influential family was not easy.

"When I was just two years old in the 1970s, my father was abducted and murdered by Idi Amin's men," Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka said. Much like the rest of Uganda, her life was severely affected by the regime, which destroyed institutions, communities, and wildlife.

"I wanted to continue my father's dream of a prosperous Uganda, and conservation felt like a way of putting things right."

Her career began at a time when conservation in the country had been fractured by years of political violence. The wildlife suffered catastrophic losses in the 1970s and 1980s. Elephants were slaughtered for ivory and protected areas were encroached. Conservation infrastructure nearly collapsed. Evidence from April 1980 suggests Uganda's elephant population may have collapsed to as few as 1,200 animals. Fuelled by rising ivory prices, from \$6 per kg in 1963 to about \$50 in 1977, poaching operated openly across large areas. Soldiers sometimes hunted elephants with automatic weapons.

The mountain gorillas were already restricted to a handful of forest fragments. Hunting alone caused the Virunga gorilla population to drop from 400-500 individuals in 1960 to 260-290 during Amin's regime.

When Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka returned to Uganda after studying in the UK and the US, gorilla conservation was neither glamorous nor well-funded. "I had to teach myself a lot," she recalled.

She was the country's first wildlife veterinarian, and faced scepticism as a woman in a male-dominated field and as someone insisting that veterinary care mattered to conservation outcomes.

One of her earliest cases involved an ageing silverback gorilla named Mugarusi, meaning "old man" in a Bantu language spoken in southwestern Uganda. The gorilla was lagging behind his group, moving slowly, visibly unwell. Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka examined him but he died shortly afterwards.

A postmortem revealed chronic heart and kidney failure. When the findings were published in Ugandan newspapers, the public reaction was unexpected.

"People were amazed that gorillas die of the same things as humans," she said. "It created excitement and empathy."

That moment was a turning point in Uganda's broader conservation narrative.

## Gorillas and nation-building

As the political situation in Uganda started to stabilise, gorillas played a central role in its economic recovery.



A female mountain gorilla with cub in a rainforest in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda, in 2016. OKSANA VASHCHUK (CC BY-SA)

Gorilla tourism helped rebuild conservation institutions and provided livelihoods for communities living around protected areas.

"Gorillas helped bring tourism back to Uganda," Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka said, "just like tigers did in India."

Yet tourism alone couldn't protect the great apes. Increasing human-gorilla contact in Bwindi raised the risk of respiratory infections. Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka responded by co-founding CTPH.

Many villagers near gorilla habitats once depended on small-scale farming, bushmeat, firewood, poaching, and cattle grazing that brought them into frequent contact with wildlife while increasing their disease risk. The intervention aimed to provide them with better healthcare, sanitation, and alternative livelihoods. The results were tangible: since 2007, it reduced disease transmission and human-wildlife conflict and strengthened local support for conservation.

## Women, leadership, resistance

"Exciting, but very challenging," Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka said of becoming Uganda's first wildlife veterinarian. She encountered scepticism at every turn, including disbelief that a woman could handle large mammals such as elephants.

One defining moment came during Uganda's first elephant translocation in the late 1990s.

Farmers had complained about crop raids, and the then First Lady of Uganda, Janet Museveni, intervened. While then Uganda Wildlife Authority executive director Eric Edroma supported Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka, others questioned her insistence on humane handling.

Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka assessed the situation on site, coordinated with local rangers, darted and collared the elephants, and oversaw their safe translocation, all while managing community interactions and logistical challenges.

"Later, I realised you cannot just be a vet," Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka said. "You need diplomacy, logistics, and patience."

Her experience shaped her commitment to mentoring women in conservation. Through the Women for the Environment Africa Leadership Council, she still works to address the stark gender gap in conservation leadership across the continent.

She noted that women in conservation in India enjoy more leadership opportunities and visibility whereas women in Uganda struggle for recognition.

"People like to put you in boxes, either veterinary or community or public health," Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka added. "But you don't have to be in only one. Each

## In Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka's view, conservation is less about imposing solutions and more about creating conditions where humans and wildlife can thrive together

one builds on the other."

Above all, she insisted, conservation must begin with people. In her view, conservation is less about imposing solutions and more about creating conditions where humans and wildlife can thrive together.

## Cultural crossings

Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka's worldview was also shaped by cultural experiences beyond conservation. She grew up in Uganda in the 1970s, when Idi Amin was expelling Indians, many of whom later returned. She recalled maintaining close family ties with Indian friends and business partners.

"My dad had Indian friends. My mom had a very close Indian friend; she even wrote about her in her book. I was too young to notice cultural differences," she said. "What I noticed was friendship."

She studied in the U.K. and later in the U.S. In her 2023 book *Walking with Gorillas: The Journey of an African Wildlife Vet*, she recalled a classmate using a racial slur, a rude awakening after her sheltered upbringing in Uganda. When she returned to the country after time in Britain, she was struck by how warm and open people were, only later realising this wasn't exceptional behaviour so much as the Ugandan way.

Food, however, offered clearer distinctions and comforts. She grew up in central Uganda and she savoured simple, traditional dishes, from mashed matoke – the country's national dish of steamed, mashed green bananas – to luwombo, a rich stew of meat, chicken or groundnuts steamed in banana leaves. Her personal favourite, she said, was plantain, a humble staple that connected her to home and heritage.

## Lessons from Jane

One of the most formative influences on Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka's career was Jane Goodall, who wrote the foreword to her book. Meeting Goodall for the first time left a lasting impression, not because of celebrity but because of humility: "She gave everyone equal attention, from a forest tracker to a head of State," Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka recalled.

She added that Goodall's greatest lesson was collaboration: in a field often marked by competition, Goodall demonstrated the power of quiet influence from persuading institutions,

shaping policy, and advancing conservation without also stealing the spotlight. "She was powerful without being loud," Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka put it.

She had considered other figures to write the foreword. David Attenborough was approached but he declined endorsements to avoid a flood of requests. Her agent also suggested someone like Michelle Obama, whose public profile could bring conservation to a wider audience. Coincidentally, Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka's sister had been at Princeton at the same time as Michelle Obama and Jeff Bezos, though she was unable to contact them.

## Gorillas and humans

When asked what humans can learn from gorillas, Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka turned philosopher: "They say chimps are what we are, but gorillas are what we want to be."

A striking example of gorillas' gentleness is birth spacing. Gorilla mothers give birth roughly every four and a half years, ensuring their older offspring are emotionally independent before a new baby arrives.

"Animals think about consequences," Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka said. "Many humans don't."

(Aside: asked who would win in a hypothetical fight between 100 men and one gorilla, she laughed. "A gorilla would beat 100 men. After one or two are taken down, the rest will run away.")

## Faith and AI

Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka is a believer and said she turns to prayer in moments of disappointment. She swims for a hobby, which she said offers solace and reminds her of her fisherman grandfather from the Ssesse Islands, as does time with her children.

As for the future: the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics may one day aid conservation, particularly by reducing human-wildlife interactions and limiting disease transmission, but Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka insisted that such tools must respect the intelligence of the animals themselves.

"Gorillas are very intelligent creatures, so any technology applied should be thoughtfully designed," she said.

As Uganda continues to rebuild its ecological heritage, Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka's career is a reminder that conservation is as much about saving species as about rebuilding trust and reimagining what coexistence can look like.

(Dr. Nobinraja M. is a postdoctoral researcher at the Conservation Genetics Lab in ATREE, Bengaluru. He won the 2025 Hasmukh Shah Memorial Award for Ecological Studies (research). nobin.raja@atree.org)



This artwork imagines the event GW250114 which produced the clearest gravitational wave signal yet. AURORE SIMONNET (SSU/EDEON)/LVK/URI

## General relativity survives its hardest test yet

Vasudevan Mukunth

On January 14, 2025, the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatories (LIGOs) recorded a cosmic tremor unlike any before. Named GW250114, the signal was the 'loudest' gravitational wave scientists had ever detected.

In a study published in *Physical Review Letters* on January 29, an international team of researchers reported that it had used this powerful signal to conduct the most rigorous test of Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity and the nature of black holes to date.

For more than a century, the theory, also called general relativity, has been the gold standard for understanding gravity. It predicts that when two black holes merge, they will form a single, distorted survivor that settles down by 'ringing', much like a bell that has been struck, emitting gravitational waves in a process called ringdown.

## The researchers wanted to use the exceptional clarity of GW250114 to check whether black holes truly are as simple as Einstein predicted or if they hide more complex features

According to the no-hair theorem, a black hole in vacuum can be characterised only by its mass and spin. This means its 'ringing' should follow a specific, predictable pattern, which is called the Kerr metric. The researchers wanted to use the exceptional clarity of GW250114 to check whether black holes truly are as simple as Einstein predicted or if they hide more complex features that might point to new physics.

To analyse the signal, the researchers used a technique called black hole spectroscopy. Gravitational-wave scientists look for specific frequencies and decay times in the 'sound' of a black hole's ringdown.

The team also used several advanced mathematical tools. Software packages called RINGDOWN and pyRING were used to fit specific models to the post-merger data to identify individual notes in the signal. A method called pSEOBNR analysed the entire signal to check if its beginning and end told a consistent story.

The researchers also compared the real-world data against supercomputer simulations of black hole mergers to see how well they matched, a technique called numerical relativity.

The study's results were a resounding victory for general relativity. The team successfully identified at least three distinct 'notes' in the black hole's ringing, the dominant tone, its first overtone, and a mode at a higher pitch.

The frequencies and damping times of these modes matched the predictions for a Kerr black hole within just a few percent. Because the signal was so loud, the single event also allowed the team to run other tests that were 2-3 times more stringent than previous studies that combined dozens of weaker events.

The data also confirmed Hawking's area theorem – which states that a black hole's surface area can't decrease – at a high statistical significance of 4.8 sigma.

"In summary, the single, loud event GW250114 has yielded the scientific return of dozens of previous detections, offering a preview of the unprecedented science that upcoming LIGO-Virgo-KAGRA observing runs will unlock," the researchers wrote in their paper.

A new LIGO observatory, the third after the two in the U.S., is coming up in Maharashtra. Once it's online it's expected to improve the precision with which the network of observatories can identify the source of gravitational waves by an order of magnitude.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to [science@thehindu.co.in](mailto:science@thehindu.co.in) with the subject 'Daily page'

# Text & Context

THE HINDU

**NEWS IN NUMBERS**

**Number of foreign visitors to Indonesia last year**

**15.4** In million. Indonesia recorded 15.4 million foreign visitors in 2025, up 10.8% from 2024, marking the highest number of arrivals since the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, before the pandemic, Southeast Asia's largest economy saw 16.1 million foreign visitors. REUTERS

**Number of manuscripts digitised under Gyan Bharatam**

**7.5** In lakh. Over 7.5 lakh manuscripts have been digitised under the Gyan Bharatam initiative, with 1.29 lakh out of these available on its dedicated portal. Gyan Bharatam is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture, aimed at preserving India's vast manuscript heritage. PTI

**Number of tourist visits to Jammu and Kashmir in 2025**

**1.78** crore. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that tourism continues to be a vital pillar of Jammu and Kashmir's economy, with the Union Territory recording 1.78 crore tourist visits in 2025 despite security-related incidents and natural calamities. PTI

**Number of tiger deaths in Madhya Pradesh this year**

**9** A tiger and a tigress died of electrocution in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol district, taking the death toll of big cats in the State this year to nine. The two carcasses were found less than 100 metres apart in agricultural land in the north Shahdol forest division, some 75 kms from the district headquarters. PTI

**Number of underage Snapchat accounts blocked in Australia**

**4.15** In lakh. Snapchat has blocked 4,15,000 accounts under Australia's social media ban for under-16s, the company said on Monday, but warned some youngsters may be bypassing the age verification technology. AFP  
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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

## Why are tribals protesting in Maharashtra?

Why did thousands of tribals hit the streets in the State? What are the reasons behind the protests? What are concerns about the implementation of the Forest Rights Act? Why are land rights, which are at the heart of the protest, a long-pending demand?

**EXPLAINER**

**Vinaya Deshpande Pandit**

**The story so far:**

Over the last few days, thousands of tribal farmers from the Palghar and Nashik districts embarked on two separate long marches in Maharashtra. The marches were organised by the All India Kisan Sabha and the Communist Party of India (M) (CPI-M) over pending land rights of the tribals. The Palghar long march started on January 19, and was partially suspended on January 22 after local demands related to administrative intervention were accepted by the district administration. But protests continued for the policy-level demands of the tribals, and on January 25, a long march started from Nashik. It was declared successful and withdrawn on January 29. Both the Nashik and Palghar districts have a dominant tribal population.

**What are their demands?**

The primary demands of the tribals are about their land rights, employment, irrigation and education. They demand that as per the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, the forest land which they have been tilling for generations, should be made in their name. They have raised concerns over the current format in which land ownership titles have been issued. They claim that the current format in which the government has listed their names on the titles, excluded them from benefiting from any government schemes or institutional loans.

The other demands include the construction of small dams and river-linking projects for irrigation requirements. They state that west-flowing rivers should be arrested with small dams and be diverted to east-flowing rivers to help irrigate regions which have been facing water scarcity. This act, say the tribals, will enable them to take crops throughout the year. They



**The road ahead:** Tribal residents take part in the All India Kisan Sabha march from Nashik to Mumbai demanding land rights, and implementation of forest rights, in Kasara, Maharashtra, on January 27. PTI

currently take only one seasonal crop of paddy. Additionally, they want agricultural produce apart from paddy, which includes corn, soybean, onion, strawberry, mangoes, ragi, jowar, bajra, etc. to be sold at the Minimum Support Price (MSP).

They have also demanded the completion of pending recruitments under the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996, which will give employment opportunities to educated tribal youth. PESA empowers tribal communities in 'Scheduled Areas' with self-governance. The other demands include the filling up of vacant teacher posts and other staff members in Zilla Parishad schools; more education opportunities for tribal children; and

24-hour supply of electricity.

**What are the concerns?**

The biggest demand at the heart of all the long marches has been the proper implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Tribals have claimed that their individual claim rights are rejected; that they are allotted only a minuscule proportion of the land they actually till, thereby making them ineligible for government schemes. Tribals groups state that at present the record of land ownership is in the name of the entire village, and that their individual names are only mentioned in the village ownership document. They want the ownership record to reflect their individual names. The demands related to

irrigation and the implementation of the Forest Rights Act have been constant since 2018. Government sources said that concerns about the allotment of just a fraction of land the tribals tilled were taken cognisance of. They also said that they were looking into the possibility of the digitisation of governance records leading to incongruences and denials in a few cases.

**What does the government say?**

As per data accessed by *The Hindu*, over 45% of claims under the Forest Rights Act have been rejected so far. Recently, the Government of Maharashtra held a round of talks with a 15-member delegation of the protestors, consisting of the leaders of the All India Kisan Sabha and the CPI(M). Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said that the government is positive about resolving the issues. As per 2025 data about the claims under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (presented in the Lok Sabha in July, 2025), Maharashtra has disposed off 3,80,966 of the 4,09,156 claims filed so far. Of the 3,80,966 claims, 2,08,335 titles were distributed, while, 1,72,631 claims were rejected. The pendency in the State is of 28,190 claims.

Government sources indicated that the work on the Act was going on incrementally, while admitting that there was a difference in the interpretation of the Act. Renowned ecologist Madhav Gadgil, who recently passed away, observed in his article published this year that the misinterpretation of the provisions of the Forest Rights Act has led to anomalies. "There is a constant ideological tension between a traditional conservation approach, which resists human presence in forests, and the perspective of the Forest Rights Act, which integrates forest dwellers into conservation and management. This tension reflects a deeper mindset framed as 'conservation versus forest rights'." he said in an article published in *The India Forum* titled 'Making Forest Conservation Work for Forest Communities' co-authored with Vijay Edlabadkar.

**THE GIST**

The primary demands of the tribals are about their land rights, employment, irrigation and education. They demand that as per the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, the forest land which they have been tilling for generations, should be made in their name.

They have also demanded the completion of pending recruitments under the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996, which will give employment opportunities to educated tribal youth.

As per data accessed by *The Hindu*, over 45% of claims under the Forest Rights Act have been rejected so far.

## How can adaptive testing be adopted in India?

Why has the IIT Council recommended adaptive tests over linear examinations?

**O.R.S. Rao**

**The story so far:**

The IIT Council has recommended that an expert committee evaluate the possibility of making the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Advanced adaptive in order to create a "a better and less stressful assessment".

**What is adaptive testing?**

In a traditional competitive test, every candidate answers the same set of questions. Test scores are based largely on the number of correct answers. Most coaching centres therefore prioritise test-cracking tactics over conceptual understanding, or critical thinking.

Adaptive testing is a dynamic form of assessment which uses the Item Response Theory (IRT). This means that the questions in the test are not the same for all students. A question bank is prepared

with questions of varying difficulty covering all the items in the syllabus. The test normally begins with a question of medium difficulty. If it is answered correctly, the computer selects a more difficult question from the question bank using the scientifically established psychometric models. If incorrect, an easier question is presented. After each answer, the computer recalculates the candidate's estimated ability. The test ends when a pre-defined level of assessment is reached or the set number of items as per syllabus are tested. The goal is to assess the ability of the candidate more precisely by asking fewer but better-targeted questions. The result is that two candidates may see different questions but are assessed on the same underlying scale.

Adaptive testing builds fairness into the test design itself rather than correcting for variations subsequently. Since the next question depends on the previous

answer, a student who is not conceptually sound cannot answer the progressively high-difficulty questions, which have higher weightage. Global testing agencies have been using computerised adaptive testing for admissions to premier institutions for over 25 years.

**Are there potential legal challenges?**

In the Indian constitutional context, 'equality of opportunity' is often interpreted as everyone getting the same question paper. Therefore, a move towards adaptive testing may face Article 14 challenges (Right to Equality) in Indian courts, if the normalisation process is not transparent. Algorithm opacity could invite bias suits under equity mandates. However, this can be mitigated through disclosures and equity audits.

In India, where a single rank can make or mar a rewarding career, it may be difficult to convince a parent how a student who solved 20 difficult questions

correctly has scored higher than another student who solved 50 easy ones. Ensuring lag-free technical infrastructure in tier-3 cities is key, as any technical glitch during the test could be seen as maladministration in a court of law. Without clear documentation and grievance mechanisms, litigation risks rise. Data centre reliability, proctoring invigilation systems, and incident handling must be far stronger than today's baseline.

**How can it be eased in?**

Transitioning from the traditional linear test to adaptive tests requires building large, calibrated item question banks, pretesting questions without the possibility of leakage, and ensuring strict syllabus coverage. There are also trust challenges: candidates must believe that different questions can still be fair, and testing agencies must be prepared to defend this scientifically and legally. International experience from GRE and GMAT shows that transparency, technical documentation, and phased rollouts are essential for acceptance.

The IIT Council has proposed a two-year transition from 2026 to 2028. It includes the launch of free and optional adaptive mock tests in 2026 to calibrate the item bank and familiarise students with the interface.

*Prof O.R.S. Rao is Chancellor of ICAFI University, Sikkim. Views are personal.*

**THE GIST**

The goal of adaptive testing is to assess the ability of the candidate more precisely by asking fewer but better-targeted questions. The result is that two candidates may see different questions but are assessed on the same underlying scale.

In the Indian context, 'equality of opportunity' is often interpreted as everyone getting the same question paper. Therefore, a move towards adaptive testing may face Article 14 challenges.

Transitioning from the traditional linear test to adaptive tests requires building large, calibrated item question banks.

## FULL CONTEXT



The next step: A Kudumbashree kiosk at Ranni- Perunad that markets and sells forest produce harvested by the Malaipandaram tribal community in Kerala in 2025. FILE PHOTO

# What is the next phase for rural women entrepreneurship?

The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihoods Mission has been enhancing rural women's entrepreneurship and political power in India by empowering over 10 crore households through self-help groups

Charanjit Singh

The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY NRLM), an understated program of the Ministry of Rural Development has unleashed a silent revolution in rural India. Around 10 crore households have been mobilised into 91 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs) which have been further federated into 5.35 lakh Village Organisations (VOs) and 33,558 Cluster-Level Federations (CLFs). These SHGs have mobilised credit of more than ₹11 lakh crore from banks with Non-Performing Assets (NPA) of around 1.7% only.

The number of *Lakhpati didis* (SHG members who earn more than ₹1 lakh per annum) has also crossed two crore.

### On strengthening CLFs

Along with economic and social empowerment, this program has also led to the political empowerment of women. A majority of State governments, understanding their importance, are now focussing on unattached Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes such as the Ladli Laxmi Yojana in Madhya Pradesh, the Maiya Samman Yojana in Jharkhand, the Ladki Bahin Yojana in Maharashtra etc. In the latest such initiative, ₹10,000 each was transferred to more than one crore women in Bihar under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rozgar Yojana.

These developments could boost livelihoods and entrepreneurship for women under the next phase of the DAY NRLM programme.

As per government directions, the DAY NRLM scheme is going to be appraised again for the next financial cycle, that is from 2026-27 to 2030-31. Therefore, this is an appropriate time to think about the strategy for the next five years of this critical program for women empowerment. One must begin with the lynchpin of the SHG ecosystem – the CLFs, which are sub-block level groups

organised under the program. As it is a formally registered body, various activities of the program are anchored here. However, there have been concerns in various quarters that it has become subservient to government functionaries, and that leaders of these groups are not able to take independent decisions. Therefore, going forward, strengthening/revitalising the CLFs needs to be the main focus area, as per the original vision of the program. In fact, the CLFs need to become community owned institutes in the real sense, free from government interference. There are already successful models of CLFs, for example, the Kudumbashree in Kerala and Jeevika in Bihar, which could be emulated by other States.

The other cause of concern is the large amount of funds lying idle with the CLFs which are prone to misuse. Around ₹56.69 lakh crore have been given to community institutions as capitalisation support. Then there are other funds given to them by the Centre and the States along with the interest earned on them. These funds have to be accounted for by putting in place a robust institutional system of community monitoring through social audits along with statutory audits of CLFs.

Further, work needs to be done on saving and loan products by the CLFs. Considering the varied status of members and the activities proposed, a uniform rate and time period for all loans may not be a good idea. The community should be empowered to take a call on this. The ultimate aim has to be the judicious use of these funds, so that CLFs can ensure equitable development as well as earn a good amount of revenue to undertake various activities.

Moreover, a large amount of credit has been leveraged by the SHGs from the banks. However, it has been observed that many SHG members are not happy with the limited amount of loans made available through the SHG bank linkage program. As their enterprises stabilise,

they would want to scale-up through higher dosages of credit. For this, they need to go for individual credit programmes; but the difficulty here is that SHG members don't have individual credit history. Therefore, efforts need to be intensified to ensure CIBIL scores are generated for individual SHG members. Further, a model needs to be developed for the CLFs to play a proactive role in these bank loans and their repayments, as it does for the SHGs. This will give further confidence to the banks for extending individual loans.

### The need for coordination

The Indian economy has diversified a lot in the last decade. The program needs then to move from debt financing to other models of innovative financing such as equity, venture capital, and blended financing. Partnerships with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and other financial institutions, including with Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and neo-banks etc., need to be explored to ensure funding for individual entrepreneurs. In fact, customised financial products suited to rural women entrepreneurs need to be developed as their needs are different.

The DAY NRLM strives for enhancing the livelihoods of SHG members through its various sub-schemes but these usually work in silos with their impact being limited. Considering the rising aspirations of the members, these interventions now need to work in a synchronised manner, so as to reach every village and SHG member. For this, livelihood action plans need to be prepared every year for each State/Union Territory (UT). The data generated by the Village Prosperity and Resilience Plan (VPRP) can provide the basis for this ground-up comprehensive approach. In fact, to give impetus to livelihoods/entrepreneurship, CLFs need to be developed as business clinics/hubs where all services related to livelihoods/enterprise development are housed.

Moreover, a large number of departments are implementing various schemes related to livelihoods/entrepreneurship for rural beneficiaries. The involvement of the NRLM in the implementation of some schemes of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Ministry of Food Processing Industries and the Department of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare has shown good results. However, such convergences are usually officer-based and are prone to disruption. The institutionalisation of the convergence through the creation of a 'Convergence Cell' at the NITI Aayog will not only ensure efficient utilisation of resources but will also avoid duplication of efforts.

### Spreading the word

The biggest hurdle in boosting the livelihoods of SHG members is the lack of marketing of their products. This needs to be tackled head-on by creating a separate vertical, at the National Mission level, dedicated to only marketing in the program. The vertical should focus on proper packaging, branding, quality, designs, pricing and logistics etc. for various products. Select CLFs can become logistic hubs for specific products. Further, a professional market facing independent organisations needs to be put in place at the State/UT level for SHG products. This may help in direct interaction with private market entities.

As delineated above, there are huge expectations from community-based organisations. Accordingly, to guide and support them, sufficient professionals from various fields need to be placed with them. However, one should not forget that these organisations are at various stages of development, and have their own pace to move ahead. This should be respected.

With the above interventions, women empowerment at the rural level will definitely move to the next phase.

Charanjit Singh is a retired IFS officer.



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

# Know your English

S. Upendran

"How do you pronounce h.o.o.o.p.l.a?"  
"The 'oo' in the first syllable is pronounced like the 'oo' in words like 'pool', 'cool' and 'fool'. The 'a' in the second syllable is ..."

"...pronounced like the 'a' in 'China'?"  
"No, it isn't. The 'a' is like the 'a' in 'calm', 'balm' and 'palm'. The stress is on the first syllable 'hoop'. Do you know what 'hoopla' means?"

"Doesn't it mean excitement or something like that?"

"Yes, that's right. Hoopla is the excitement which surrounds an event."

"Like the premiere of a movie?"

"Yes. Here's an example. There was a lot of hoopla when Sonia Gandhi withdrew her resignation."

"I still don't understand what the hoopla was all about, though."

"That's true."

"A lot of hoopla surrounded the departure of the Indian team to England. Does that sound O.K.?"

"It does. The funny thing is that in spite of the public hoopla, the Indian players themselves showed very little interest in the World Cup. For some strange reason they themselves didn't get caught up in all the hoopla."

"Our boys played very well. It was the points system which ruined ..."

"...not you too! I wish people would stop whining about the points system."

"Wine? What are you talking about? You know that I don't drink."

"...no, no! The word that I am referring to is spelt w.h.i.n.e. It's pronounced the same way as w.i.n.e."

"And what does w.h.i.n.e mean?"

"When somebody whines about something, they start complaining about it in a manner that annoys other people. Ever since our lousy performance in the World Cup, everyone has been whining about the points system."

"Sujatha whines about her job."

"The day she stops whining, the world will come to an end."

"That's true. Her father is very different. He is not one to whine when things don't go his way."

"You have a point. By the way, have you picked up your shirt from the tailor?"

"I went yesterday, but he asked me to come back later."

"Still not ready, eh? He's been giving you the runaround for quite some time, hasn't he?"

"Has been giving me the runaround? What do you mean?"

"When someone gives you the runaround, they give you a series of excuses for not doing something. They ..."

"...just like the people in government offices!"

"You do get the runaround in most government offices. When you walk into a government office, the only thing that the people there do is send you from one department to another."

"Or they tell you to come back later because they haven't completed your job. Nothing ever gets done!"

"That's right! When I asked for the Manager, I was given the runaround."

"I hate it when people give me the runaround."

"So do I. Maybe I should start giving some of my friends the runaround."

"If you start doing that you won't have a friend left."

Published in *The Hindu* on June 22, 1999.

## THE DAILY QUIZ

### With everyone online reminiscing on the heydays of 2016, a look at some of the artefacts of the bygone era. A quiz on 2016 and nostalgia

Mohammed Hidhayat

**QUESTION 1**  
Which smartphone game led to mass public gatherings in 2016?

**QUESTION 2**  
Which photo filter became the defining trend of 2016, dominating Snapchat selfies and group photos worldwide?

**QUESTION 3**  
Which actor received his first Oscar in 2016, cementing a long-running pop culture moment?

**QUESTION 4**  
2016 marked 10 years since: a) the launch of which microblogging service? and b) the acquiring of which media-sharing platform by Google?

**QUESTION 5**  
Groups froze in stylised poses for viral videos. What was this 2016 trend called?

**QUESTION 6**  
The year also reshaped global politics. Who was elected President of the United States in 2016? The U.K. voted to leave the European Union. What was the referendum called?

**QUESTION 7**  
India too saw several headline-making developments in 2016. a) which telecom launch changed market dynamics? b) which economic move faced backlash for its flawed execution? and c) which sitting woman Chief Minister died after prolonged hospitalisation in December?



**Visual question:**  
This very popular social media platform, the logo of which is seen above, was launched to the public in 2016. Name it. AFP

**Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:** 1. The convention was signed on February 2, 1971 in this city. **Ans: Ramsar**  
2. The theme for World Wetlands Day 2026. **Ans: 'Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage'**  
3. The three types of wetlands as per the convention. **Ans: Inland wetlands, Coastal wetlands, and Human-made wetlands**  
4. This country has the highest number of sites designated under the Ramsar Convention. **Ans: U.K.**  
5. Number of sites India has. **Ans: 98 sites**  
6. Name the first two Indians sites to join the convention in October 1981. **Ans: Chilika Lake (Odisha) and Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan)**  
**Visual:** Name this site in India. **Ans: Patna Bird Sanctuary**  
**Early Birds:** Piyali Tuli| Sukdev Shet| Tom Alan Faith| Arun Kumar Singh| Tito Shiladitya

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

## Word of the day

**Apathetic:**  
showing little or no emotion or animation; marked by a lack of interest

**Synonym:** indifferent

**Usage:** He performed for an apathetic audience.

**Pronunciation:** newsth.live/apatheticpro

**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /æpəˈθetɪk/, /æpəˈθerɪk/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) with the subject 'Text & Context'