FRIDAY
February 6, 2026
HYDERABAD
CITY EDITION
22 Pages ₹ 8.00

# THE HINDU

www.thehindu.com
INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

Vol. 51 • No. 31
RNI No. TELENG/1976/49963

To subscribe,
give a missed call at
9828331787
or scan QR code

Printed at » Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna

EQ 17 Years Celebration
ORGANIZER & MEDIA PARTNER

You Are Invited - Free of Cost

C2Z
SOLAR & DECARBONISATION MARKETPLACE

# Global Solar Expo

## Telangana

Date: 06 - 07 Feb, 2026 ( Fri-Sat )

Time : 09:30 AM - 06:30 PM



REGISTRATION QR

WEBSITE QR

## Hitex Exhibition Center, Hall -3, Hyderabad

HIGH PERFORMANCE PARTNER
SOVA SOLAR

PLATINUM MODULE PARTNER
navitassolar
conserve | sustain | flourish

PLATINUM MODULE PARTNER
IVA SOLAR
TOGETHER WE SHINE

LAYNYARD PARTNER
SAMBHV STEEL PIPES & TUBES
सब संभव है

ENERGY STORAGE PARTNER
FIMER

GOLD INVERTER PARTNER
Deye

STRING INVERTER PARTNER
SINENG

PREMIUM MODULE PARTNER
NOVA SYS
Every day is a SUN day

SILVER PARTNER
COLORSHINE
AN ABHAY ISPAT ENTERPRISE

# PM Kusum Meet, # PM Surya Ghar Yojana Meet,
# Zero Investment Solar For Business & Homes, # Solar Buyer-Seller Meet
+ Corporate & MSME Green Energy Meet, # Telangana Awards On Solar, RE,
Sustainability, # DeCarbonisation, Carbon Neutrality & Net Zero Summit

www.GlobalSolarExpo.com

96300 22255

EQ 17 Years Celebration
ORGANIZER & MEDIA PARTNER

You Are Invited - Free of Cost

C2Z
SOLAR & DECARBONISATION MARKETPLACE

# Global Solar Expo
## Telangana

Date: 06 - 07 Feb, 2026 ( Fri-Sat )

Time : 09:30 AM - 06:30 PM



REGISTRATION QR

WEBSITE QR

## Hitex Exhibition Center, Hall -3, Hyderabad

HIGH PERFORMANCE PARTNER: SOVA SOLAR

PLATINUM MODULE PARTNER: navitassolar conserve | sustain | flourish

PLATINUM MODULE PARTNER: INA SOLAR TOGETHER WE SHINE

LAYNYARD PARTNER: SAMBHV STEEL PIPES & TUBES सब संभव है

ENERGY STORAGE PARTNER: FIMER

GOLD INVERTER PARTNER: Deye

STRING INVERTER PARTNER: SINENG

PREMIUM MODULE PARTNER: NOVA SYS Every day is a SUN day

SILVER PARTNER: COLORSHINE AN ABHAY ISPAT ENTERPRISE

# PM Kusum Meet, # PM Surya Ghar Yojana Meet,
# Zero Investment Solar For Business & Homes, # Solar Buyer-Seller Meet
+ Corporate & MSME Green Energy Meet, # Telangana Awards On Solar, RE,
Sustainability, # DeCarbonisation, Carbon Neutrality & Net Zero Summit

www.GlobalSolarExpo.com

96300 22255

FRIDAY
February 6, 2026

HYDERABAD
CITY EDITION
22 Pages ₹ 8.00

# THE HINDU

www.thehindu.com

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

Vol. 51 • No. 31

RNI No. TELENG/1976/49963

To subscribe, give a missed call at 9828331787 or scan QR code

Printed at » Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna



'AD-HOC' APPOINTMENTS

**SC slams States for not posting regular DGPs**

NEWS » PAGE 16



TIES TO CRIMINAL OUTFIT

**U.S. shuts down 200 online drug stores**

NEWS » PAGE 14



SC REPRIEVE

**'Anurag Thakur free to involve in BCCI affairs'**

NEWS » PAGE 14

PARLEY

***Governor's Address: should it be scrapped?***

*Stand-off in Assemblies has become a constant*

OPINION » PAGE 13



FLIGHT BOOKED

**India will travel to Colombo: Suryakumar**

SPORT » PAGE 19

# 18 killed in blast at illegal coal mine in Meghalaya

The explosion, likely caused by dynamite, had trapped several persons at an unspecified depth, say police; CM promises action after one of the worst mining tragedies in the State since 2012

**Rahul Karmakar**
GUWAHATI

An explosion in an illegally operated rat-hole coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district killed 18 miners on Thursday, officials said.

This is one of the biggest mining-related tragedies since July 2012, when 15 miners died in a flooded mine in the State's South Garo Hills district. Two years later, in 2014, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned the hazardous mining method.

Vikash Kumar, East Jaintia Hills district's Superintendent of Police, said the police received information about an explosion at an illegal coal mine at Mynsyngat in the Thangsko area around 11 a.m. A team rushed to the spot and confirmed that an explosion, suspected to have been caused by dynamite, had trapped several persons at an unspecified depth. "We recovered 18 bodies. An injured person, initially rushed to a community health centre, was referred to a higher medical centre for treatment," he said.



**Blast site:** A videograb of the mine where the explosion occurred in East Jaintia Hills on Thursday. PTI

## Deep death traps

Many workers have died in Meghalaya's rat-hole coal mines before and after the NGT banned the practice in April in 2014. Some of the major mishaps:

- **July 2012:** Underground stream flooded a mine in South Garo Hills district, killing at least 15 miners
- **Dec. 2013:** Five fell to death after a cable of a carriage mechanism breaks in East Jaintia Hills district
- **Dec. 13, 2018:** At least 15 drowned in a flooded 370-foot-deep mine in East Jaintia Hills
- **Jan. 21, 2021:** Six killed after a crane snaps in East Jaintia Hills district
- **May 30, 2021:** Five miners died after a dynamite blast caused flooding of a mine in East Jaintia Hills district
- **Jan. 7, 2025:** At least three killed on Assam-Meghalaya border as a mine wall collapsed
- **Feb. 5, 2026:** At least 16 died after a suspected dynamite blast trapped them

District officials said teams from the National Disaster Response Force and the State Disaster Response Force have been engaged at the site to continue with the rescue and recovery efforts. Officials said they were trying to identify the victims, although locals said most of the deceased were from Assam.

**Inquiry ordered**

Expressing sympathies to the families of those killed, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma said the government has ordered an inquiry. "Accountability will be fixed, and those responsible will face strict legal action," he said. The Chief Minister also announced an ex gratia of ₹3 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased worker.

"We have started an investigation," Mr. Kumar said, adding the police were gathering information about the mine owner.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 14

## NEARBY

### BRS, BJP forged secret pact: CM

KARIMNAGAR
CM Revanth Reddy accused BRS and BJP of having a secret pact for municipal elections on the lines of that 'forged' during 2024 Lok Sabha polls. » Page 6

### Higher budget for education sought

HYDERABAD
The conference organised by Venkatarangaiya Foundation saw educationists and social activists making a case for increasing the budget spending on education from 7.5% to 20%. » Page 2

METROPLUS » PAGE 9

### Kuki-Zo groups boycott tribal MLAs in Manipur govt.

**Rahul Karmakar**
GUWAHATI

Kuki-Zo tribal groups declared a social boycott on Thursday of Kuki-Zo legislators who have joined the newly formed Manipur government of Yumnam Khemchand Singh.

The boycott and a "total shutdown" across the hills inhabited by the Kuki-Zo, to protest "betrayal" by these MLAs, were enforced hours before the seventh session of the 12th Manipur Assembly began with an address by Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 14

# Opposition has defiled the temple of democracy: Modi

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday that successive defeats inflicted by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) were proving indigestible to the Opposition, but he had the support of the poor and any plan to "dig his grave" would not be successful.

Replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President for her Address to the joint sitting of Parliament, he referred to the absence of a reply by him in the Lok Sabha on the same debate as a "defilement of the temple of democracy" and an insult to not just President Droupadi Murmu, her position, and her tribal identity, but also the Constitution.

**Congress retorts**

The Opposition benches staged a walkout as Mr. Modi began his speech. The Prime Minister deplored Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's "traitor" comment on Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, and termed it an insult to the entire Sikh community

The Congress, on the other hand, accused the Prime Minister of "hiding behind" Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

After Mr. Birla claimed that Opposition members were planning to hurt Mr. Modi, speaking outside the House, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra dismissed the claim as "absolute lie".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 14



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. SANSAD TV/ANI

# Told PM to avoid LS as Cong. MPs planned an 'unexpected act': Birla

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**
NEW DELHI



Om Birla

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said on Thursday that he had asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to come to the Lower House to deliver his response to the Motion of Thanks to the President since he had "concrete information" that many Congress MPs could carry out an "unexpected act" of protest at the PM's seat.

The House had earlier passed the Motion of Thanks by a voice vote, without Prime Minister's customary reply, amid protests by the Opposition over the India-U.S. trade deal as well as the Chair "not allowing" Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi to make a speech.

After repeated disruptions since morning, the Speaker took up the Motion of Thanks and put the amendments moved by the Opposition to vote. They were rejected. Mr. Birla then read out the Motion of Thanks to the President for her address to both Houses of Parliament on January 28, which was passed by a voice vote, even as the Opposition sloganeering continued.

PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY » PAGE 15



## INBRIEF




### Resonance Colleges host career conclave at JNTU

Resonance Colleges organised Career Clarity Conclave and Expo, a focused career guidance and awareness initiative for students and parents on career options after Class 12, at the JNTU Auditorium on Thursday. The day-long conclave featured five structured expert sessions with interactive student-parent questions and answers. The conclave brought together leading voices from premier institutions and industry to provide practical guidance on career pathways, course selection, competitive exam direction, admissions awareness, and emerging opportunities across Engineering, Medicine, Science, Technology, and allied domains. Each session included one keynote speaker and two panel members, enabling students to gain multi-perspective clarity and real-world insights. Resonance Educational Institutions also hosted the Mega ResoFAST Winners' Felicitation during the event. The winners were given tablets by the distinguished guest speakers, as promised.



### Sreenidhi University reaffirms ties with South Korean varsity

Sreenidhi University hosted a senior delegation from the globally reputed Woosong University, South Korea, reaffirming its commitment to strong international partnerships. The delegation was led by Sang Han Kim, Board Member, and Mayank Vig, Senior Regional Manager India, Sri Lanka and Middle East, Woosong University. The delegation engaged in high-level deliberations with Pro-Chancellor Narasimha Reddy and Vice Chancellor Ananth Padmanabhan, along with senior University officials. Both universities focused on the possibility for Indian students across disciplines to gain exposure to technology and business landscape in South Korea.

### Odisha food and crafts mela at Shilparamam from today

The Odisha Food and Crafts Mela 2026 will be held at Shilparamam from February 6 to 8, offering a platform to showcase the State's traditions, art, crafts, cuisine and performing arts. The event aims to bring together artistes, artisans and visitors under one roof. The mela will feature over 30 craft stalls displaying Odisha handlooms, handicrafts and traditional artworks, and 20 food stalls serving a range of authentic Odia dishes. Cultural programmes will be a key attraction, with performances featuring Odissi, Kathak, Sambalpuri and tribal folk dance. Singers Amrita Nayak and Iswari Behera will perform.

**Timings**
**HYDERABAD**

| | |
|---|---|
| **FRIDAY, FEB. 06** | |
| RISE 06:47 | SET 18:14 |
| RISE 22:17 | SET 09:34 |
| **SATURDAY, FEB. 07** | |
| RISE 06:46 | SET 18:14 |
| RISE 23:07 | SET 10:09 |
| **SUNDAY, FEB. 08** | |
| RISE 06:46 | SET 18:15 |
| RISE 23:58 | SET 10:44 |

| Hyderabad Weather | max | min |
|---|---|---|
| Sangareddy | 29 | 19 |
| Warangal | 30 | 18 |
| Hyderabad City | 29 | 19 |

**Hyderabad City Today**
**29°C** Morning will be slight cool with mist and haze. Day will be slight warm. Night also will be slight cool. Dry weather to prevail.

**Hyderabad City Tomorrow**
**30°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. THG 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/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

# AI-driven tools to strengthen cyber policing, tackle cybercrime launched

Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao holds discussions on robust measures to prevent online frauds and scams, says even the tech-savvy individuals are falling victim to cyber crime

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD



DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy, CS K. Ramakrishna Rao, Hyderabad Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar and TCSB Director Shikha Goel at the SHIELD 2026 conclave in Hyderabad on Thursday. NAGARA GOPAL

The inaugural session of the SHIELD 2026 conclave on Thursday was marked by the launch of multiple indigenous, technology-driven initiatives aimed at tackling the fast-evolving nature of cybercrime.

Speaking at the opening session in Hyderabad, Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao said that policing had traditionally been rooted in the physical world but had now decisively shifted to the digital domain. "The frontline today is virtual – a phishing attack, a suspicious link," he said, underlining the urgent need for robust measures to prevent online frauds and scams.

He noted that cybercrimes were no longer limited to the unaware, with even tech-savvy individuals falling victim.

"Greed is a common human trait. The nature of crime may change, but nature of duty does not. We must continue to protect our citizens," he said.

Key digital initiatives developed by Telangana Cyber Security Bureau, were also introduced.

**Robot dogs, humanoids**

A major attraction at the conclave was the Tech Experience Zone, which showcased advanced cybersecurity and public safety technologies, including robotic dogs, humanoid robots, flight simulators, and drone and counter-drone systems.

The conclave brought together law enforcement officers from 20 States. TGCSB Director Shikha Goel pointed to the formation of the Child Protection Unit as a key milestone.

Meanwhile, officials said that Telangana recorded a 6% drop in cybercrime complaints in 2025 compared to 2024.

## Stress on joint efforts to tackle online child exploitation

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

The fight against online child exploitation cannot be dependent on technology alone and must be anchored in strong policy, capable policing and sustained human engagement with victims, speakers said at the Shield conclave in Hyderabad on Thursday.

Bhuwan Ribhu of the India Child Protection urged policy-makers and law enforcement agencies to look beyond statistics and recognise the human cost behind every tipline. "When we talk about tiplines, we are not talking about numbers. We are talking about children being raped," he said, adding that the boundary between offline and online crime had now largely disappeared.

He called for a prevention-first approach that embeds safety into systems by design. Legal and policy frameworks must be agile enough to respond quickly when new forms of exploitation emerge, rather than lagging behind evolving criminal methods. Simplifying policies and procedures is critical to ensure victims are not failed by bureaucratic delays, he said, and made a strong case for tighter online safeguards for children, including an uncompromising ban on social media use by young children and mandatory age verification for platforms offering age-inappropriate content.

At a separate panel discussion on use of technology to deter online child exploitation, Sai Manohar, Additional Director General (Cyber), MP, outlined the practical challenges faced by law enforcement agencies. He said the first and most critical hurdle was the lack of specialised technical resources.

Ravi Kant, national convener of Just Rights for Children, drew attention to the long-term impact of online sexual abuse.

# Only ₹1.40 per ₹1 lakh lost to digital fraud: RBI official

**Lavpreet Kaur**
HYDERABAD

As India records some of the highest volumes of digital payments in the world, there is one fraudulent transaction for every 1,01,242 transactions and ₹1.40 lost for every ₹1 lakh, a senior Reserve Bank of India official said at the Shield 2026 conclave.

Addressing the gathering, P. Vasudevan, RBI Executive Director, said the figures reflected a decline in fraud rate and how technology, regulation and user awareness had come together to strengthen the country's digital payment ecosystem. "India is now among the world's largest markets for digital transactions, with an average of 81 crore transactions processed every day as of January 31, 2026, amounting to nearly ₹9 lakh crore in value daily."

"More than 90% of banking business today is handled through apps. Very few functions are still being carried out at physical bank branches," he said, pointing to the rapid shift from traditional banking to mobile-led services.



Executive Director of RBI P. Vasudevan speaking at the SHIELD conclave.

Tracing the evolution of safeguards, he recalled the introduction of two-factor authentication through OTPs for transactions in 2008. "There was a lot of concern then that transactions would drop, but we did not stop because the idea was to be customer-centric," he said. This was followed by mandatory transaction alerts through SMS and email for every debit and credit, measures that are now ensure smooth transactions for users and work as strong financial fraud prevention strategies.

Speaking about the card tokenisation initiative that allows replacing the 16-digit- card numbers with a unique randomly generated code called token for online and offline transactions, Mr. Vasudevan said in the past four years, 115 crore payment tokens have been created.

"There has not been a single reported data breach or misuse of card data during this period. In the same four years, about 500 crore card transactions were carried out, involving a total value of ₹15 lakh crore," he said.

Highlighting newer tools to tackle organised fraud, he said that RBI's Mule Hunter system is now functional in 26 banks. The system tracks post-transaction activity using 19 different parameters to identify mule accounts and prevent the opening of fresh accounts using the same credentials. The steady decline in fraud rates was a sign that education and awareness were improving.

He cautioned citizens to remain alert, reiterating that all legitimate bank calls would come only from numbers starting with the 1600 prefix and official emails would be sent exclusively from the '.bank.in' domain.

## BioAsia 2026 to have special session on TG Rising Vision

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is set to inaugurate BioAsia 2026, the next edition of Asia's leading life sciences and health-tech forum, on February 17.

The 23rd in the annual series, the edition with "TechBio Unleashed: AI, Automation and the Biology Revolution" as the theme, will bring together policy-makers, global biotech and pharma leaders, including from Amgen, Sanofi and Eli Lilly.

Union Ministers Piyush Goyal and Ashwini Vaishnaw, and IT and Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu will be participating along with some of the most influential voices across biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, medtech, AI, and advanced manufacturing at the two-day event, the organisers said on Thursday.

A dedicated session on Telangana Rising Vision 2047 will outline the State's roadmap for innovation-led growth across advanced modalities, AI-enabled R and D and next-generation biomanufacturing, the organisers said.



A. Revanth Reddy

Bruce L. Levine, Professor of Cancer Gene Therapy, University of Pennsylvania; Howard Y. Chang, Chief Scientific Officer and SVP Global Research of Amgen, Stefan Miltenyi, founder and president of Miltenyi Biotec & Madeliene Roach, EVP - Global Business Services of Sanofi will deliver keynote addresses. Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser to the government of India and Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi, Drug Controller General of India are also scheduled to address.

Also, the members of the leadership team of Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Zydus, Biocon and Cipla will take part in a CEO Conclave on 'Future of Pharma and Biotech.

## Call to allocate 20% budget outlay for education sector

**Serish Nanisetti**
HYDERABAD

In 153 schools in eight mandals of Gadwal, Rangareddy, Hyderabad and Medchal, 73 schools don't have kitchen sheds for cooking midday meals, 69 don't have separate toilets for boys and girls, and 92 do not provide midday meal.

These and other startling facts were disclosed by G. Bhagyalakshmi of Mothers' Association, making a case for a higher budgetary outlay for school education at a round table conference on the issue.

"We are not asking for money out of thin air. We are laying out statistics based on a study we carried out in these districts to show how bad the situation is with schools lacking fencing, classrooms, toilets, and drinking water facility," she said, calling for allocating 20% of TG Budget for education sector.

The meet organised by MV Foundation at Press Club on Thursday, saw educationists and activists making a case for increasing budget spend on education from 7.5% to 20%.

"Government schools bring in equality in society. Government schools are accessible to all where social or economic rank does not matter. There is a need to strengthen the education system and this can happen only with mass involvement," said M. Kodandaram, MLC. "Social change is possible only with government schools," he said. "Schools are there but there are no children. Toilets are built but they don't function. Some schools are surrounded by toilets but not one of them can be used. We need functioning toilets," said former MLC Narsi Reddy highlighting how cuts have impacted school infrastructure.

"CURE, PURE and RARE show how Telangana government is focussed on urbanisation. There are more children in urban areas than in rural areas in Telangana. If there are more children, naturally, the number of schools should increase and match the urbanisation. This has not happened. If these schools have to be built there has to be higher budget," he said.

"Education sector has been wrecked from the time of formation of separate Telangana. Our hopes have been belied. It is not Telangana Rising. It is Telangana falling," said K. Laxminarayana.

"GDP in Telangana is rising but why is the outlay for education not increasing. At the time of formation of Telangana, it was 11%, and now 7.5%. This drop shows the destruction wrecked by the rulers who don't care about people. This is a meeting in the city, but soon, it will take the shape of protests in villages," the former UoH professor said.



A speaker addressing a round-table on Budget allocations for education, at Press Club in Hyderabad on Thursday. NAGARA GOPAL

## 'Use art as a means of expression'

**The Hindu Bureau**
WARANGAL

CEO of Indfame and a multifaceted artist Geetha Bhaskar encouraged students to use art as a means of free expression while building leadership and communication abilities at a workshop, 'Creative Leap - Entrepreneurship in Arts', organised at the Kakatiya Institute of Technology & Science (KITS) in Warangal on Thursday.

She explained visual art creation, creative thinking methods, and business prospects in arts, and artistic expression that can lead to entrepreneurial opportunities. Principal K. Ashoka Reddy said 180 students from nine departments participated, reflecting rising interest in creative skills. He urged students to convert creative ideas into entrepreneurial ventures.

## Telangana Global Solar Expo at HITEX today

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

The Telangana Global Solar Expo 2026 will be inaugurated at the HITEX Exhibition Centre on February 6, bringing together senior government officials, regulators, power utility leadership and key players from the renewable energy sector to discuss the State's expanding solar energy landscape.

The event will open at 10 a.m. and is expected to draw participation from policy-makers, Discom officials, developers, financiers and technology providers from across India.

It aims to serve as a platform to accelerate Telangana's solar growth while addressing policy, regulatory and market challenges facing the sector.

The inaugural session will be led by Navin Mittal, Special Chief Secretary to the Telangana Government's Energy Department, who will attend as the chief guest.

The expo at HITEX centre in the city on Friday will host leading solar manufacturers, EPC companies, developers and technology providers.

Published by Nirmala Lakshman and Printed by Durga Tirumaleswara Rao Sunkara at THG PUBLISHING PRIVATE LIMITED., Z-6 to 8, Survey No. 1, Uppal kalan, IDA, Uppal, Hyderabad, Telangana - 500007. on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD. Editor: Suresh Nambath Chandrasekar (Responsible for selection of news under the PRP Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

# Road widening finally begins on Hitec City Road; relief in sight for IT commuters

The heavily congested stretch between Lemon Tree and Trident Hotel in Madhapur is a critical link for Cyberabad's IT belt, carrying daily traffic from major technology hubs

**Lavpreet Kaur**
HYDERABAD



Road widening work begins on the heavily congested stretch between Lemon Tree Premier and Trident in Madhapur on the Hitec City Road.

After years of gridlock and months of uncertainty, road widening works have finally begun on the heavily congested stretch between Lemon Tree and Trident Hotel in Madhapur on the Hitec City Road, following a recent coordination meeting between the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIC), the electricity department and the traffic police.

The kilometre-long corridor is a critical link for Cyberabad's IT belt, carrying daily traffic from major technology hubs such as Raheja Mindspace, Knowledge City and CapitaLand as well West Hyderabad residential hubs, including Madhapur, Kondapur, Gachibowli, Manikonda and Kukatpally. An estimated 5 lakh employees depend on the road for their daily commute, with vehicle volumes touching 1.5 lakh every day, making it one of the busiest stretches in the city.

Although the widening proposal had received approval last year, work on the ground only began at the end of January. The project was initially expected to begin by the end of August 2025, but progress stalled due to the presence of major underground electrical infrastructure and the need for inter-departmental clearances. Construction activity began around two weeks ago and is currently focused on relocating two major power cables of 11 kV and 133 kV capacity, along with other electrical wiring. The project involves adding a third lane to the existing two-lane stretch, which is expected to reduce commute times by up to 30 minutes during peak office hours.

**Alternative routes such as Parvath Nagar road underbridge and Tech Mahindra link road towards the Hitex signal are being used to ease traffic pressure**

According to Madhapur Traffic Inspector Sridhar Kumar, the next stage of the project will involve controlled blasting of a stone outcrop near the Trident Hotel to create space for the new lane. He said these activities would be carried out during night hours to minimise inconvenience to commuters. During certain phases of construction, one of the existing lanes may be temporarily closed, for which alternative routes will be planned and communicated to commuters in advance.

Officials estimate the road widening works could take anywhere between five months and a year to be completed.

The stretch near the Trident Hotel has long been a major pinch point. Here, six incoming lanes converge abruptly into just two, including three lanes from the Raidurgam underpass, two from Deloitte Drive and one wide lane from the Mindspace rotary. This sudden narrowing routinely brings traffic to a standstill, with vehicle speeds dropping to as low as 10 kmph and waiting times stretching beyond 30 minutes during peak periods.

In the interim, alternative routes such as the Parvath Nagar road underbridge and the Tech Mahindra link road towards the Hitex signal are being used to ease traffic pressure. While commuters have welcomed the start of the works, many say the real test will be timely execution.

# SCR to run 160 Holi special trains

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

SCR announced it will be operating a record number of 160 Holi special trains covering key routes such as Visakhapatnam, Patna, Rajkot, Solapur, Bilaspur, Danapur, Raxaul, Naharlagun, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Shalimar, Hisar, Lucknow, Santragachi, Malda Town, Chhapra and various other important destinations in March. The return services from all these destinations have also been planned.

**MUSIC DANCE DRAMA**

**KANNADA NATYA** RANGA Presents "Sandhya Raaga" Hindustani Classical Music with Devarnama by Pt.Raghvendra Gudi from Dharwad. Felicitation to Sri. Lingappa Gonal, Dean, Arts College, Osmania University and Sri.Subhramanya Achar, Senior Artist, KNR on Sunday, the 8th Feb at Sundarrayya Kala Nilayam,Bagh lingampalli, 6p.m All are invited CT: 98660 96809.

# Four arrested for murdering advocate in Moinabad

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

The Moinabad police arrested four persons in connection with the murder of a practising advocate at Kethireddypally village in Moinabad.

The victim, G. Swapna, was a practising advocate at the Chevella court. Police said she was allegedly murdered by her elder brother Gotike Raju and three others identified as Errolla Sandeep, Vadde Veeresh and Kavali Shivalingam.

According to Chevella DCP Yogesh Gautam, the incident took place on February 4 when Swapna and her mother went to their agricultural land at Kethireddypally village to conduct a survey. " When they were returning the accused allegedly arrived in a car and rammed into Swapna, causing her to fall into a pit," explained the DCP. They then allegedly attacked her with sticks and stones, held her down and slit her throat with a knife, even as her mother raised an alarm and rushed to her aid. "The motive behind the crime was a long standing dispute over four acres of ancestral land between the deceased and the prime accused," added the officer.

credaihyd.org
CREDAI HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD'S BIGGEST & MOST TRUSTED PROPERTY SHOW
CREDAI HYDERABAD PROPERTY SHOW
TRANSPARENT. TRUSTWORTHY. TRANSFORMING.
CHIEF GUESTS
Sri Anumula Revanth Reddy Garu
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Telangana
Sri Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu Garu
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Finance & Planning, Energy,Telangana
Sri N Uttam Kumar Reddy Garu
Hon'ble Minister Irrigation & CAD;
Food & Civil Supplies,Telangana
Inauguration Time : 10:30 AM
6th, 7th, 8th FEB | HITEX, HITECH CITY
PRESENTED BY: बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda India's International Bank
Title Sponsor: MY HOME GROUP
Powered Sponsor: CSR ESTATES, ANVITA
Palladium Plus Sponsor: AURO REALTY, ASBL, RAMKY
Lounge 1: NAMISHREE
Palladium Sponsor: BRIGADE, MAKUTA
Industry Partner: Jai Raj Steel ATOOT Fe 550 D TMT BARS
Platinum Sponsor: Vertex, RADHEY GROUP, THE TRILIGHT, urbanrise, bonsai housing, RAJAPUSHPA, SWARGASEEMA, Janapriya UPSCALE, JAIN CONSTRUCTIONS, GREENMARK, TERMINUS, CASCADES, SUMADHURA, Lanco Hills, SATTVA, TRIDASA, RELIANCE BUILDERS, ankura HOMES, CYBERCITY
Diamond Sponsor: RAGHURAM, ALEKHYA HOMES, APARNA, NSL INFRATECH, PRANAVA GROUP, Union Bank of India
Goldplus Sponsor: KEERTHI, DEEVYASHAKTI, RV NIRMAAN, AKSHITA INFRA, DEV, SPEED, KURA, OORJITA, CASAGRAND
Silver Sponsor: SBI, giridhari Homes, MAGNA, PAVANI GROUP, केनरा बैंक Canara Bank
Lounge 2: SSI
Topaz Sponsor: organo, ICICI Bank, SUNDARAM HOME, Brihaspathi, adani Cement, pnb, PROPTURTLE
Supporting Partners
Internet Partner: ACT FIBERNET

On the Occasion of Wedding Season Presenting
New Crafts Silk India® 2026
Exhibition & Sale
An opulent show of Ethnic & Traditional Silk, Cotton Handloom Products made by master 100 Weavers from all over India
Silk Saree I Suits I Dress Material I Stoles | Dupattas | Kurtas
Kurties I Pure & Probable Silk | Tussar Silk I Shanthipur Silk
SRI SATHYA SAI NIGAMAGAMAM
Srinagar Colony, Hyderabad
From : 29th Jan. to 08th Feb. 2026
Full A/C
Products on Display - Orissa : Sambhalpuri Ikkat Silk Saree, Bihar : Oragnic Tassar Silk Sarees, Suit & Stoles, Assam : Muga & Eri Silk Sarees, Karnataka : Creap Silk, Georgette Silk, Arini Silk & Printed Sarees, Tamilnadu : Kanjeevaram Silk Sarees & Designer Fancy Sarees, Andra Pradesh : Dharmavara, Uppada, Gadwal, Mangalagiri & Pochampalli Sarees, Uttar Pradesh : Mulbari Silk, Jamdani, Jamawar Silk Sarees & Chiffon Silk, Maharashtra : Designer Dress materials, Chhatisgarh : Exclusive Raw Silk Sarees, Kosa Silk, Tassar Suit & Duppatta, Madhya Pradesh : Maheswari, Chanderi Silk Sarees & Suit, West Bengal : Baluchari, Dhaka Masli, Gicha Sarees, Boutique Sarees, Kantha Sarees, Zordoshi, Jammu & Kashmir : Chinon Silk, Tady Silk Printed Sarees, Pashmina Shawls & Suit, Rajasthan : Kota Silk, Hand Block Print Dress & Sarees, Punjab : Fulkari Dress and many more...
3 DAYS ONLY
Visit Today Don't Miss..
Time : 10.30 am - 8.30 pm Call: 08850902824
All Credit & Debit Cards Accepted
Entry & Parking Free

# GHMC likely to share town planning revenue with HMDA

A proposal, reportedly mooted by Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority Commissioner Sarfaraz Ahmed, seeks to retain HMDA as the sanctioning authority for structures with more than 10 floors in the expanded area of the civic body

**Swathi Vadlamudi**
HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation has added several high premium areas to its purview thanks to its recent expansion, but going forward, it may have to share income from these areas with the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA).

It is reliably learnt that a proposal has been approved by the State government for retaining part of the town planning services in the expanded GHMC area with HMDA.

In the last council meeting of the GHMC, corporator Sravan Vurapalli spoke in opposition of the proposal, and demanded that every paisa generated within GHMC's purview should belong to the corporation.

The proposal, reportedly mooted by HMDA Commissioner Sarfaraz Ahmed, sought to retain HMDA as the sanctioning authority for structures with more than 10 floors in the entire expanded area of GHMC.

As a result, GHMC cannot expect town planning revenue from high value real estate hot spots such as Kokapet, Narsingi, Budvel, Tellapur, and several other localities, where skyscrapers with 40-60 floors are the norm. Even on the Eastern part of the city, high rise towers are on a rapid rise, exemplified by a 72-floor residential tower coming up in Ghatkesar.

With skyrocketing real estate prices, builders as well as home owners are leaning towards skyscrapers across the city, which works in favour of HMDA.

Before the expansion, GHMC power to sanction building permissions was vested with the municipalities or corporations only for structures up to 15 metres in height. HMDA was the sanctioning authority for multi-storeyed buildings that are more than 15 metres (five floors) high. In erstwhile GHMC area, the corporation was the sole authority for all building permissions.

However, the latest proposal transfers powers to sanction building permissions for structures with over 10 floors, even within the erstwhile GHMC purview, to HMDA.

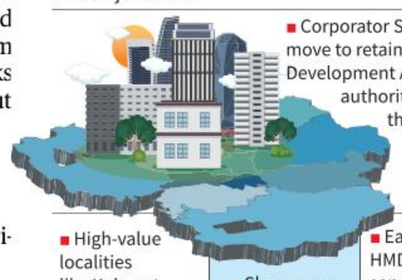
Officials said the proposal was mooted with a view to sustain HMDA's revenues, as all the newly developing clusters which earlier had been under various ULBs have come into GHMC's fold with the recent merger.

"HMDA needs funds for several ongoing infrastructure projects. It will take some time before new growth areas develop outside the periphery of the expanded GHMC, yielding revenues for HMDA. Hence the need for this revenue sharing arrangement," said an official under the condition of anonymity.

Sources, however, attribute this to the government's motive to have centralised control over the high premium projects, after the allegedly impending move to divide GHMC into three separate corporations.

## Jurisdiction shift

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation's (GHMC) recent expansion has brought several high-premium real estate zones into its jurisdiction



- Corporator Sravan Vurapalli opposed the move to retain Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority as the sanctioning authority for structures with more than 10 floors, insisting all revenue within GHMC limits should go to the corporation
- High-value localities like Kokapet, Narsingi, Budvel and Tellapur would remain major revenue sources for HMDA
- Skyscraper construction is accelerating citywide, including a 72-floor tower in Ghatkesar
- Earlier, HMDA sanctioned buildings over 15 metres, while GHMC had full powers within its old limits
- The new proposal extends HMDA's authority even into the erstwhile GHMC area for high-rise projects

Officials cite HMDA's need to fund infrastructure projects, while sources see a push for centralised control

## Actor booked for threatening journalist

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

The Madhapur police registered a case against actor Chandrahas following a complaint lodged by a journalist over a threat issued on social media.

The case relates to an incident linked to the pre-release event of Chandrahas' upcoming film where the actor allegedly sang a song on stage during the event that contained obscene lyrics, drawing criticism from sections of the media and the public.

Ashok Kumar, a journalist with a vernacular news channel, later posted a video on his social media account criticising the use of objectionable language at public events. In the video, he reportedly stated that such conduct was unacceptable, particularly on a public forum and in the presence of audience of all ages. The complaint alleged that Chandrahas subsequently responded by posting a video on his Instagram account in which he threatened the journalist for speaking out against the incident.

## INBRIEF



### Three arrested, over 16 kg ganja seized in separate raids

Three individuals were arrested and over 16 kilograms of ganja was seized by the excise department officials during separate operations in and around Hyderabad on Thursday. In the first case, a duo was arrested while transporting ganja during vehicle checks near the RTA office in Bhadrachalam, Khammam district and seized 15 kgs of ganja. In the second case, Rangareddy excise department officials arrested Mohammed Zaheer while trying to sell ganja in Saroornagar and seized 1.110 kgs of ganja. Further probe is underway in both the cases. Officials urged the public to share information related to sale of ganjathrough toll-free number 1800 425 2523.

**Text & Context and Health**

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (February 6, Friday), the following explainers are available:

- DISCOMs and the road ahead **newsth.live/discoms**
- Infertility in India: bringing mental health to the forefront **newsth.live/fertilityhealth**

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

## *Wrapped in winter haze*



**Veil of fog:** Motorists navigate the road with their lights on amid foggy conditions at Bodhan, early on Thursday. RAMAKRISHNA G

## Two end life in separate cases in Kukatpally

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

Two persons ended their lives in separate cases in Kukatpally on Wednesday.

In the first incident, a 23-year-old woman died after jumping from the third floor of her workplace in the KPHB area. The deceased was identified as Punnagu Anitha, an employee of a private company in CBCID Colony, KPHB.

According to the police, the incident was reported around noon on Wednesday. Anitha sustained severe injuries and was rushed to a private hospital in Nizampet for treatment, where she later succumbed to her injuries.

Her mother, P Radha, a farmer from Chittoor district in AP, lodged a complaint stating that her daughter was suffering from health issues due to low blood levels and may have been mentally distressed over her condition. She told the police that Anitha was married in 2021 to Dara Srinivasulu, a resident of Bachupally, and the couple has a daughter.

In another incident, a 40-year-old man was found dead at his residence in Prashanth Nagar. The deceased was identified as P. Srinivas, a native of Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh, who had been living alone in Kukatpally. Police said Srinivas was working at a local skin care hospital and was special needs individual. A note was recovered from the house in which he reportedly stated that he was taking the extreme step as he was fed up with his life.

*(Roshini suicide prevention helpline number are: 8142020033/44 and 040 66202000/2001.)*

## DGP reviews preparations for police football tournament

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) B. Shivadhar Reddy on Wednesday reviewed the arrangements for the 74th B.N. Mallik Memorial All India Police Football Championship, which is set to be hosted by the Telangana Police Department in Hyderabad.

During a meeting, the DGP took stock of the preparations being made for the national-level tournament in a befitting manner. He said the championship would be held in the city from March 23 to April 5 and see participation from 53 teams from various States and Central Armed Police Forces. All participating teams will arrive in Hyderabad on March 23, while the opening ceremony will be held on March 25 at the GMC Balayogi Stadium.

He informed officials that grounds across the city have been earmarked for matches and practice sessions. Matches will be hosted at venues including the Gachibowli Stadium and the Telangana Police Academy grounds, the DGP added.



Dundigal police officials presenting the accused before the media on Thursday.

## House help arrested for murdering elderly woman in Dundigal

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

A 36-year-old woman was arrested by the Dundigal police in connection with the murder of an 85-year-old woman at her residence in Church Gagillapur near Dundigal.

According to the police, the accused, identified as P. Kavitha, had earlier worked at the victim's house for about 15 days and killed the victim to steal gold ornaments. She gained the victim's trust by supplying toddy.

The case pertains to the murder of Chinnabattini Susheelamma, a resident of Church Gagillapur near Dundigal in Medchal-Malkajgiri district.

The incident was reported on February 2 at around 2.30 p.m. when the elderly woman was alone at her residence. The accused attacked her on the head with a stone, leading to her death. She later fled the scene with a pair of gold earrings and a gold ring, which were subsequently sold at a local jewellery shop. Based on CCTV footage collected from the crime scene and the jewellery shop, teams involving personnel from Dundigal police, Central Crime Station and Special Operations Team, traced the movements of the accused and arrested her on the night of February 3.

Investigators said CCTV cameras installed by a local resident, Srikar Reddy of Church Gagillapur, played a crucial role in the swift detection of the crime. A pair of gold earrings, a ring and a mobile phone were seized from the accused. She was produced before a court and remanded to custody. Police appealed to residents and commercial establishments to install CCTV camerasto prevent crimes.

## Prostitution racket busted in Kondapur, two arrested

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

Two persons were arrested by the Gachibowli police after busting a prostitution racket operating from an apartment in Kondapur. Following a tip-off, personnel from the Gachibowli police and Anti-Human Trafficking Unit raided a flat in Sai Balaji Cubicle Apartment in Raghavendra Colony, Kondapur.

The organisers were identified as Shaik Anwar alias Vijay, 32, a native of Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, and Sairigapu Gayatri, 26, both residents of the same apartment where the illegal activity was being conducted. Investigation revealed that the duo was involved in organising and facilitating prostitution from the premises.

Among the others detained were two customers, Pallapu Vamshi Krishna, 25, a system hardware technician working in Ameerpet and residing in Yousufguda, and Ponnapati Raja Reddy, 24, a private employee living in Kukatpally. A 24-year-old woman from Lingampally was identified as the victim. The two organisers were produced before a court and remanded to judicial custody on Thursday.

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**
**ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT**
**ROAD DIVISION, DUMKA**
**3RD CORRIGENDUM DETAILS of NIT**

**TENDER REFERENCE No.- RCD/DUMKA/25**
**PR 371803 Road(25-26).D**

**NAME OF THE WORK -** Strengthening/IRQP Work of Tongra to Maheshbathan via Bilkandi, Jaytara Road (Total Length-21.619 Km) under Road Division Dumka for the year 2025-26.

**CORRIGENDUM DETAIL of NIT**

| | |
|---|---|
| 4 | Date of Publication of Tender on Website – 10.02.2026 10:30 AM **in place of** 04.02.2026 10:30 AM |
| 5 | Last date/Time for receipt of bids05.03.2026 Up to 12.00 Noon **in place of** 26.02.2026 Up to 12.00 Noon |
| 6 | Date of opening of Tender – 06.03.2026 at 12.30 PM **in place of** 27.02.2026 at 12.30 PM |

Other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

**Executive Engineer**
**Road Construction Department,**
**Road Division, Dumka**

**PR.NO.372311 Road(25-26):D**

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL**
**# 31-31-21, Sri Narayana Bhavanam,**
**Saibaba Street, Dabagardens, VISAKHAPATNAM-20**

**I.A.271/2025 in S.A.88/2025**

Between:
**Sk. Wahab Fresh Fisher and Pran Merchant** and 3 others. ...Applicants
And
**The Authorized Officer, M/s. SMFG India Credit Co. Ltd.,** (Formerly Fullerton India Credit Co. Ltd), Telangana-500016 & another ...Respondents

**NOTICE**

To,
**R-1: Authorized Officer, SMFG India Credit Co. Ltd.,** (Formerly Fullerton India Credit Co. Ltd), 4th Floor, Brij Tarang, D.No.6-3-1192/1-6, Kundan Bagh, Begumpet, Telangana- 500016.
**R-2: Branch Manager, SMFG India Credit Co. Ltd.,** 3rd Floor, D.No.16-1433 (old),16-3-235, New Sunshine Plaza, Ramalinga Puram, Nellore-524003, Andhra Pradesh

**NOTICE/SUMMONS BY PAPER PUBLICATION FOR SHOWING CAUSE AS TO WHY THE REPLY PRAYED SHOULD NOT BE GRANTED.**

Whereas the applicants have instituted an application being I.A.271/2025 in S.A.88/2025 for set-asiding the actions of the 1st and 2nd respondents in the above I.A. in Securitization Application proceedings, in pursuance of the measures taken under the SARFAESI Act 2002. You are hereby summoned to appear and file your counter before this Tribunal at **10.30 A.M** or such time immediately thereafter according to the convenience of Tribunal on **26-02-2026** to answer the same.

You are directed to collect the annexure on your appearance before the Tribunal. If you intend to file any documents, you may file the same with a list along with the counter.

You should file your registered address and a memo of appearance when you enter appearance before the Tribunal either in person or by a pleader/Advocate duly instructed to show as to why the relief sought for, should not be granted.

Take notice that, in default of your appearance on the day mentioned herein before, the proceedings will be heard and determined in your absence.

**Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this 31-01-2026**

Signature of the Officer
Authorized to issue Notice/Summons

**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**

Scan the QR code to register your feedback

THE HINDU · thehindu businessline · FRONTLINE · SPORTSTAR · The Hindu Young World · THE HINDU

**BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II,**
**At: Triveni Complex, 1st Floor, Abids, Hyderabad.**

**O.A No. 1055 OF 2025**

Between:
**KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD** ...Applicant
And
**Mr. Kore Kumar & Anr** ...Defendants

**SUMMONS BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION**

To,
1. **Mr. Kore Kumar, S/o. K Ramulu,** Aged about 33 years, Occ : Business, R/o. H No.10-121, M P U P S, Amangal Mandal Amangal, Mahabubnagar - 509321.
2. **Mrs. Kore Kistamma, W/o. K Laxmaiah,** Aged about 50 years, Occ : House Wife, R/o. H No. 10-121, M P U P S, Amangal Mandal, Amangal, Mahabubnagar - 509321. **... Defendants**

Please take the Summons in the above **O.A. No.1055/2025** filed by the applicant for recovery of money of **Rs.20,52,490.85/- against you. The Hon'ble Tribunal ordered summons to you by way of paper publication and posted the matter to 13-03-2026.** In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under.

i) To show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted.
ii) To disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application.
iii) You are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties.
iv) You shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest in created and /or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal.
v) You shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets.

You are hereby required to show cause on **13-03-2026 at 10.30 a.m.** at Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, 1st floor, Triveni Complex, Abids, Hyderabad - 500001, in person or by an Advocate duly instructed as to why the reliefs prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

**Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 03rd Day of February, 2026.**

**(BY ORDER OF THE COURT)**

**Sd/- (REGISTRAR)**
**Debts Recovery Tribunal-II,**
**Hyderabad**

**OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE**

**DEATH ANNIVERSARIES**

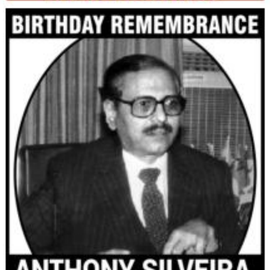
**20th Death Anniversary**



**Late Ahmed Hussain**
D.O.D. : 06-02-2006
Family Members
Cell: 9849094688, 9247592527

**BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE**

**BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE**



**ANTHONY SILVEIRA**
**DGM (Retd) - IOB**
06.02.1928 - 10.04.2008

*"Your cherished memories will always remain in our hearts guiding and blessing us."*

Remembered by :
**GEETA P SHETTI**
**GM (Retd), Indian Overseas Bank**
Flat H/103, Satt Adhars
Basilio Complex, St. Inez,
Panaji, Goa - 403001
**Mobile : 07715043211**



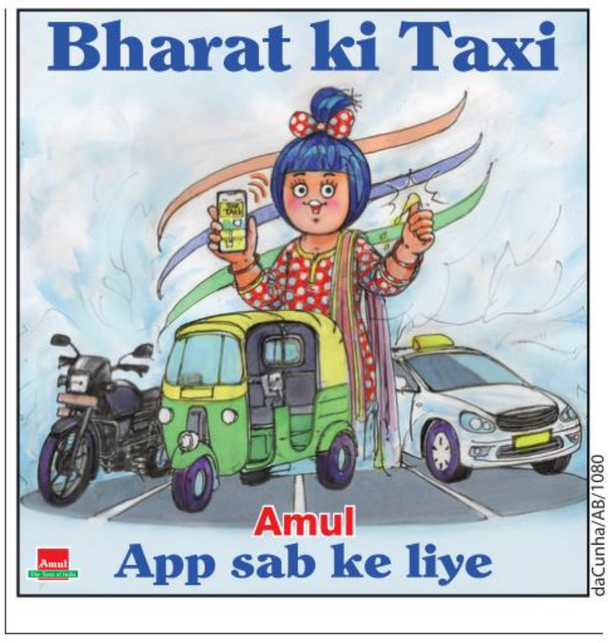

# Two killed in rail related incidents

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

Two persons lost their lives in separate incidents reported on Wednesday night, within the jurisdiction of the Secunderabad Government Railway Police Station.

In the first incident, a 39-year-old labourer was killed after getting crushed between the train and the platform while deboarding Lokmanya Tilak Terminus train at Charlapalli Railway Station. In another case, a man died after falling from a moving train between Charlapalli and Ghatkesar railway stations.

Meanwhile, one Mudraboyina Subbarao, collapsed and died at Secunderabad Railway Station.




# Police rescue 1,202 children under Operation Smile-XII

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

Cyberabad Police rescued 1,202 children during Operation Smile-XII, a special month-long drive conducted in January to trace missing children and identify minors engaged in child labour, begging and other vulnerable situations across the commissionerate limits.

The operation, carried out from January 1 to January 31, focused on rescuing children from exploitative conditions such as child labour, rag-picking and street begging, while also tracing missing children. A total of 11 teams were formed division-wise, each comprising a Sub-Inspector, three police constables and a woman police constable, along with personnel from the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit.

The teams conducted inspections at industries, companies, shops and other establishments, in addition to special drives targeting children forced into begging. Details of rescued children were uploaded on the Darpan App for documentation and follow-up.

**Of the 1,202 children rescued, 1,161 are boys and 41 girls. As many as 1,192 children were found working in various establishments, police said**

Police said that of the 1,202 children rescued, 1,161 were boys and 41 were girls. A majority of cases involved child labour, with 1,192 children found working in various establishments. Five children were rescued from begging, four were identified as street children and one case of illegal adoption was detected during the operation.

**850 children from TG**

Of the total rescued, 850 children were from within Telangana, while 352 belonged to other states. Children from Bihar formed the largest group among those from outside the state with 227 children, followed by Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan, Karnataka and West Bengal.

Nineteen children were identified as being from Nepal. After verification and counselling, 1,179 children were handed over to their parents or guardians, while 23 were sent to shelter homes for care and rehabilitation.

**356 cases booked**

During the month-long operation, the police registered 356 cases under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016.

In 115 missing children cases, photographs were uploaded on the Darpan App to aid tracing and reunification efforts.

# 695 pilgrims to get free stay at Nizam's Rubath in Makkah

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

As many as 695 pilgrims from the erstwhile Hyderabad State were selected for free accommodation at the Nizam's Rubath in Makkah during Hajj 2026; this follows the draw of lots held on Thursday at the Chowmahalla Palace.

The Qurrah (draw of lots) was conducted digitally by the Awqaf Committee H.E.H. The Nizam in coordination with the Telangana State Haj Committee. The Awqaf Committee conducts the draw annually to allot accommodation at the Rubaths established by the Nizams of Hyderabad as a charitable endowment for pilgrims from the former Hyderabad State. The facility provides free and secure accommodation in Makkah during Hajj. In 2025, 710 pilgrims availed the Rubath facility.



## INBRIEF

### CEO asks political parties to appoint BLAs at the earliest

Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudarshan Reddy has asked the recognised political parties to appoint booth level agents ahead of the commencement of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Strong booth level coordination will be central to the SIR and the political parties are therefore requested to appoint BLAs. The CEO held a meeting with the representatives of recognised political parties on Thursday. He said BLAs should preferably be drawn from the local area of the polling station and they should work in close coordination with Booth Level Officers (BLOs). Each polling booth must have at least one appointed BLA to help ensure accuracy, transparency and timely resolution of issues during the revision of electoral rolls. He informed the parties that SIR was currently underway in 12 States and that the schedule for the remaining States, including Telangana, was expected to be announced during April-May 2026.

### Ponnam flays move to rope in Pawan Kalyan for campaign

Minister for Transport and Backward Classes Welfare Ponnam Prabhakar has termed the BJP's reported decision to rope in the Jana Sena Party president and A.P. Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan for the civic poll campaign in Telangana as an "opportunistic" move. "Voters should think over the BJP's move to rope in Mr Pawan Kalyan, who made disrespectful remarks against people of Telangana recently," he said while addressing a public meeting at Gumlapur in Choppadandi on Thursday. He alleged that the BJP-led government at the Centre showed discrimination against Telangana in the Union Budget-2026. This is for the second time in a row that the State had been meted out a raw deal in budgetary allocations, he charged.

# BRS, BJP forged secret pact for municipal elections: Revanth

BJP leaders are receiving protection money from the tainted BRS leaders to shield them from various scams committed by the latter during their 10-year-rule, charges Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at a public meeting at Gumlapur in Karimnagar

**The Hindu Bureau**
KARIMNAGAR

Launching a dual attack on the BRS and the BJP, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy accused the two parties of having a secret pact for the municipal elections on the lines of that 'forged' by them during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

The BJP leaders are receiving 'protection money' from the tainted BRS leaders to shield them from various scams committed by the latter during the BRS's 10-year-rule, he charged.

These two parties share a Fevicol-like bond, Mr. Reddy alleged, daring the Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay to ensure the arrest of the then BRS rulers 'involved' in the 'Kaleshwaram project scam' and the Formula-E car race case.



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy handing over a cheque for ₹110 crore to the members of women SHGs at a public meeting held at Gumlapur in Karimnagar district on Thursday.

**Public meeting**

He was addressing a public meeting at Gumlapur in the poll-bound Choppadandi on Thursday.

Earlier in the day, he laid the foundation stone for the ₹45.15 crore Advanced Technology Centre, Ramadugu.

The Chief Minister said, "The BJP-led Central government meted out a raw deal to Telangana in the Union Budget by neglecting the ambitious projects - Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase-II expansion, the Musi River rejuvenation project, and the Regional Ring Road." He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself acknowledged corruption in Kaleshwaram project by saying it became an ATM for 'KCR's family'.

**Kaleshwaram scam**

"The BJP leaders are 'hand-in-glove' with the BRS leaders.

This is evident from the way they are trying to save the BRS leaders involved in the Kaleshwaram scam," he charged. The BJP leaders should seek votes only after ensuring the arrest of those involved in Kaleshwaram and other scams, he added.

He said, "The previous BRS rulers ruined Telangana pushing the State into a debt of ₹8.11 lakh crore. Having played havoc with the State, the BRS leaders are now trying to obstruct Telangana's development by spearheading a false propaganda against the Congress government jealous of its pathbreaking welfare schemes."

**₹17,442 crore spent**

The Chief Minister said the Congress government had spent ₹17,442 crore for the development of 116 municipalities and seven corporations in the last two years.

An amount of ₹2,778 crore had been released for the 15 urban local bodies in the combined Karimnagar district.

He appealed to the electors to vote for the Congress in the February 11 civic polls, saying it will herald accelerated development of the urban local bodies.

Karimnagar and Warangal cities would be developed as 'twin cities' by implementing a master plan encompassing ORRs and other development initiatives fostering connectivity, he added.

Ministers D. Sridhar Babu, Tummala Nageswara Rao, Ponnam Prabhakar and A Laxman Kumar also spoke on the occasion.

## Harish slams CM for 'vulgar language'



T. Harish Rao

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

Former Minister and BRS MLA T. Harish Rao has taken strong exception to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's language, calling it vulgar and an attempt to divert attention from his government's failures during the last two-and-a-half years.

Mr. Rao contested the Chief Minister's claims of implementing loan waivers and issuing ₹25,000 crore in interest-free loans. He challenged the Chief Minister to publicly present evidence, saying the current government had only continued the earlier BRS scheme of ₹5 lakh interest-free loans.

Speaking at a press conference at Telangana Bhavan on Thursday, Mr. Rao levelled a series of allegations against the Congress government, asserting that it had neglected farmers, abandoned key welfare schemes, and pushed the State backward.

Expressing strong displeasure over Revanth Reddy's comments during a public meeting, he called them distressing and unbecoming of a Chief Minister. He alleged that civil society was also enraged by the tone and choice of words used by the Chief Minister. "Political criticism is common, but a person holding the position of Chief Minister should uphold values. But Mr. Reddy is resorting to crude language to cover up his incompetence," he claimed.

Defending former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, Mr. Rao said Telangana's development and aspirations were realised under KCR's leadership.

In response to Revanth's criticism of the SLBC tunnel works, Mr. Rao said the BRS government had completed 11.5 km of the tunnel between 2014 and 2023, excluding the pandemic years. He claimed that the present government had not completed even 100 metres.

# High Court quashes order on Group-1 reconduct; relief to 563 appointees

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD



Group-I aspirants outside an examination centre in Hyderabad. FILE PHOTO

The Telangana High Court set aside a single judge's verdict that had cancelled the general ranking list of Group-1 posts and ordered re-evaluation or reconduct of the mains examination conducted by the Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC), thus removing all the obstacles for the continuation of the appointed officers.

The Division Bench rejected the single bench order and allowed the appeals filed by the selected candidates for their continuation in the long-pending recruitment process for 563 Group-1 posts in the State.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy described the judgement as a "victory of justice."

In a statement, he said that despite repeated attempts and alleged conspiracies to stall government recruitments, the State had succeeded in the legal battle. Congratulating the 563 successful candidates, the Chief Minister noted that they would be the first batch of Group-1 officers to be appointed after the formation of Telangana.

He called upon the selected candidates to dedicate themselves to rebuilding and strengthening the State now.

The TGPSC had conducted the Group-1 mains exams from October 21 to 27, 2024, to fill 563 vacancies.

Of the 31,383 candidates who applied, around 30,000 had appeared for the examination. The results were announced in March 2025.

It was pushed into legal battle after some aspirants approached the High Court alleging discrepancies in the evaluation of answer scripts.

On September 9, 2025, a single judge of the High Court had ordered re-evaluation of the answer scripts or reconduct if revaluation was not feasible.

# MIM urges Adilabad voters to fight communalism

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen president Asaduddin Owaisi urged people in Adilabad to put an end to communalism, asking them to use their right to vote decisively, and for his party, in the forthcoming civic polls.

Mr Owaisi was addressing a public meeting in Adilabad where the AIMIM has fielded 19 candidates. Mr Owaisi said silence in a democracy tantamount to an acceptance of politics driven by intimidation and "bulldozer" symbolism.

Appealing to voters to exercise their right, he said that the use of the vote was essential to resist what he described as coercive governance. Mr Owaisi promised to raise infrastructure demands of Adilabad, including the construction of a railway underbridge and an overbridge, in Parliament. He said that if the Bharatiya Janata Party were to act on these demands before him, it would only be because it feared public pressure.



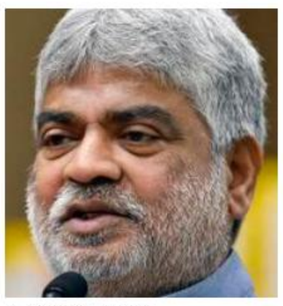
Asaduddin Owaisi

Touching upon the issue of livelihoods, Mr Owaisi addressed members of the Qureshi community, assuring them that if AIMIM corporators were elected, a slaughterhouse would be constructed at a location closer to Adilabad. Referring to the community's traditional occupation, he said that the Qureshis were engaged in meat trade for two centuries. He added that this was protected under Article 19 of the Constitution as a fundamental right to livelihood.

Over the past 11 years he alleged that the country had received suspicion instead of trust, lies instead of truth, and fear instead of hope. "The poor got only poverty and misery," he said.

# All eyes on Speaker's decision on Danam, Kadiyam petitions

**M. Rajeev**
HYDERABAD



G. Prasad Kumar

All eyes are on the office of Legislative Assembly Speaker G. Prasad Kumar's verdict on the charges against two BRS legislators Danam Nagender and Kadiyam Srihari for allegedly defecting to the ruling Congress after winning on the BRS ticket.

The Speaker, acting as chairman of the tribunal dealing with anti-defection law constituted under Schedule X of the Constitution, has dismissed another petition of defection against Jagtial MLA M. Sanjay Kumar on Wednesday on the ground that the petitioners from the BRS did not submit sufficient proof substantiating their charges.

The tribunal has earlier dismissed the disqualification petitions filed against seven of the 10 MLAs claiming there was no truth in the claim that these MLAs shifted allegiance to Congress and the petitioners did not submit necessary proofs to substantiate their charge that the MLAs switched sides.

Mr. Prasad Kumar, who kept the decision on the petition against Dr. Sanjay Kumar pending for quite some time, announced his verdict following the Supreme Court's directive to expedite the matter before February 6. This leaves verdict on Mr. Danam Nagender and Mr. Kadiyam Srihari pending and it is likely to take some time as the arguments and cross examination of the petitioners and respondents should be conducted before the tribunal takes a decision. Interestingly, notices were not served on Mr. Danam Nagender and Mr. Kadiyam Srihari till the court intervened in the matter following a petition filed by the BRS leadership.

Accordingly, notices were served on the two MLAs subsequently asking them to appear for hearing. But the hearing has been postponed to February 18 and 19 respectively following requests from the petitioners and respondents on the ground that they are busy with the ongoing elections to urban local bodies.

All the MLAs who are relieved of the defection charges claimed that the reports of their voluntarily giving up the membership and joining the ruling Congress were wrong and that they had met Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for "development purposes". These MLAs corroborated their argument citing that they continue to pay ₹5,000 as contribution to the BRS legislative wing.

# Centre releases ₹259.36 crore to gram panchayats

**P. Laxma Reddy**
HYDERABAD

The Centre has released ₹259.36 crore as the first tranche of 15th Finance Commission Rural Local Bodies (RLB) grants to gram panchayats (GPs) in Telangana, offering relief to GPs that have been facing financial constraints for nearly two years under the present regime. The funds were released following orders issued by the Union Finance Ministry.

According to the 15th Finance Commission recommendations, Telangana is entitled to around ₹3,000 crore. The ₹259.36 crore released now is the first instalment, with the remaining funds expected to be released in phases.

The release comes after a prolonged delay caused primarily by the deferment of gram panchayat elections in the State. Although funds for the financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26 were due, they remained stalled owing to the delay in elections. The Centre maintained that the pending grants would be released only after the completion of the gram panchayat elections, resulting in severe financial stress at the grassroots level.

Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister, Dhanasari Anasuya Seethakka, had repeatedly taken up the issue with the Union Government.

After the completion of the elections, the Minister initiated special efforts to expedite the release, particularly as there was a risk of the funds lapsing if not disbursed before March 31.

Meanwhile, Ms. Seethakka urged the Centre to release the remaining pending grants without further delay, stressing that timely financial support is crucial for strengthening village self-governance.

# BJP alleges ₹8,600-crore debt crisis in urban bodies

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD




Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, BJP State president N. Ramchander Rao, Maharastra Minister Ashish Shelar at the launch of the 'Save Telangana' campaign in Hyderabad on Thursday. NAGARA GOPAL

State BJP president N. Ramchander Rao claimed that the GHMC and 123 municipalities in the State have accumulated a total debt of ₹8,600 crore due to 'commissions, corruption, and mismanagement' under both the previous BRS and the current Congress governments.

He said GHMC alone has liabilities amounting to ₹5,000 crore and alleged that the anti-corruption systems have collapsed, pointing out that although 1,500 officials were caught by the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB), no action had been taken against them.

Presenting a PowerPoint report '12 Years of erosion of Urban Telangana (BRS & INC legacy)' in Hyderabad on Thursday, the BJP president sharply criticised the governments for 'mounting debts and lack of visible development.

New scams have surfaced under the current government, including ₹6.3 lakh crore worth of land misuse under GO 27, misuse of funds in the name of Musi River beautification, and high commissions in land dealings and government contracts, he alleged.

The Congress government failed to deliver even one of its 'six guarantees and over 420 commitments', but had borrowed ₹80,000 crore, worsening the State's financial situation. He also highlighted the CM's own statements about the government lacking funds even to pay salaries and claimed that 40 employees had died by suicide due to pending retirement benefits.

Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy said the government is letting the real perpetrators behind the phone-tapping case go scot-free by taking action only against a police officer and demoting him, despite being aware of the gravity of the crime. He alleged that this was happening because of a political understanding between the BRS and Congress.

Party MPs, MLCs, Maharashtra Minister and Telangana municipal election incharge Ashish Shelar, and others were present.

GFTN



**Shri Narendra Modi**
Prime Minister



**Shri Mohan Charan Majhi**
Chief Minister, Odisha



**Smt. Droupadi Murmu**
Hon'ble President of India



**Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati**
Governor of Odisha

# AI. FinTech. InsurTech.
# India's Next Growth & Employment Engine

## BLACK SWAN SUMMIT | 5 – 6 FEB 2026

BHUBANESWAR, INDIA
INDIA EDITION

**Chief Guest**

## Smt. Droupadi Murmu
Hon'ble President of India

**In august presence of**

**Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati**
Governor of Odisha

**Shri Mohan Charan Majhi**
Chief Minister of Odisha

**Smt. Pravati Parida**
Deputy Chief Minister,
Odisha

**Dr. Mukesh Mahaling**
Minister, Health and Family Welfare,
Parliamentary Affairs,
Electronics & Information Technology, Odisha

**Shri Suryabanshi Suraj**
Minister, Higher Education,
Sports & Youth Services,
Odia Language, Literature & Culture, Odisha

## Odisha Driving FinTech Future

- Establishes Odisha as an emerging global FinTech & InsurTech hub
- Unlocks large-scale employment opportunities at Global Capacity Centres and global Fintech firms
- Delivers certified FinTech talent pool of industry-ready professionals
- Integrates local talent into global financial value chains
- Bhubaneswar on the global FinTech innovation and investment map



GFTN · MUFG · BHARATNETRA One Vision · One Finance · One Future · NUS National University of Singapore | Asian Institute of Digital Finance

**Electronics & Information Technology Department, Government of Odisha**

16001/11/2526

OIPR-16001/16003/2/25-26/0011



Phulender Thakur, who moved to Telangana 25 years ago as a farm hand, supervises a group of youth from his native village, Madhepura, at a grape farm at Muduchinthalapally in Medchal Malkajgiri; (below) a worker with broccoli harvest at a farm in Muduchinthalapally. NAGARA GOPAL

# Migrant hands rooted across Telangana's farms

From grape farms on Hyderabad's fringes to paddy fields deep in the countryside, Telangana's agriculture is being sustained by workers from other States. Farmers, activists and government officials say the migrants have become indispensable to farm operations here even as local youth step away from fieldwork. **K. Shiva Shanker** traces the forces reshaping farm labour in the State

Phulender Thakur arrived in Telangana with no certainty. In his mid 40s now, he left Madhepura in Bihar for a grape farm in Medchal Malkajgiri district, drawn south by an elder brother already working there. The vines were heavy then, grape cultivation was spread across large tracts and labour was plentiful. Phulender learnt fast, and the farm soon became familiar ground.

The scene, however, changed gradually. Acreage under grapes shrank, fields thinned out and many growers exited. But Thakur stood firm, his skills outlasting the crop's declining demand. Today, he heads a group of workers at a grape farm in Muduchinthalapally, with three of his brothers employed alongside him. Word has travelled back home too; youngsters from Bihar now call him for work references, hoping for a foothold in Telangana's farms.

He spends most part of the year here, returning to his family in Madhepura once or twice annually. "I don't get to go home even for Chhath Puja, one of Bihar's biggest festivals, because that is when we have to cut the grape stems," Thakur says, as a group of youngsters standing beside him nod in agreement. These youth, all from his native village, arrived in Telangana three years ago and learnt the ropes of grape cultivation under his guidance.

Thakur's story reflects a pattern increasingly visible across the State. Farmers, farmer welfare organisations and others associated with the sector point to a steady rise in the number of agricultural workers arriving from other States.

The scale of this dependence is shaped by the sheer size of the agricultural landscape here. Telangana is the 11th largest State in the country, with a geographical area of over 276.95 lakh acres (112.08 lakh hectares). In 2022-23, as much as 52.61% of that was under Net Sown area, according to Telangana Socio Economic Outlook 2024.

For farm owners and tenant farmers managing large tracts of land, finding local labour for sowing, pruning, harvesting and post-harvest work has become increasingly challenging. Workers from Bihar, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and elsewhere have stepped in to fill this gap, arriving with families or in groups, staying on farms and keeping the fields running.

The migrant agricultural workers are usually provided shelter, food and electricity at the farms where they are employed. In addition, they are paid wages that vary with the nature of work and the skills required.

Their monthly remuneration typically ranges from ₹9,000 to ₹11,000 per person. In other cases, payment is linked to the crop or task – ₹16 to ₹25 per sack of paddy filled, around ₹10,000 per acre for berry picking, or lump-sum amounts for labour-intensive work such as plucking red chilli and other crops.

> If it is a small farmer owning two to four acres, the family itself gets involved in tilling, sowing and other works. But a tenant farmer who has taken 20-30 acres on lease cannot manage all the work alone and has to hire labour.
>
> **DONTHU RAMBABU,** Joint Secretary of Telangana Rythu Sangham

Toiling at a papaya farm in Keesara of Rangareddy district on an afternoon, Dulkar Chand, also from Bihar, says workers are each paid around ₹9,000 a month besides being provided accommodation, food and basic amenities. While men at the site are engaged in lifting manure and spreading it across the fields or tending to the papaya crop, women work in an adjoining ivy gourd farm.

Caretakers and owners of farms say migrant workers usually reach them through a reference-based network. Those who have worked on a farm earlier generally connect them with people seeking employment.

## Declining interest of local youth

Farmers, farmer welfare organisations and government officials note that the presence of workers from other States in Telangana's agricultural fields has been observed for several years. And at the same time, there has been a decline in the number of local youth opting for farm work. Those tracking the trend say no single factor is responsible. Among the multiple reasons are the availability of alternative livelihood options, greater access to education supported by the Telangana government, people choosing to work on their own small landholdings and a growing preference for gig work.

Farmers also say that an increase in irrigation resources in recent years has increased the area under cultivation, pushing up demand for agricultural labour even as many workers remain engaged on their own farms.

According to the recently released Economic Survey 2025-26, major initiatives such as the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project and Mission Kakatiya in Telangana, contributed to an increase in cultivation area from 1.31 crore acres in 2014 to 2.21 crore acres by financial year 2023.

Ravi Kanneganti, State committee member of Rythu Swarajya Vedika, says a combination of factors such as monocropping, mechanisation, use of chemical inputs and rapid urbanisation has steadily reduced the number of workdays for agricultural labourers. Availability of migrant workers from other States, who are willing to work for lower wages, has also contributed to this shift.

"This made people look for alternative and reliable sources of income, even if the earnings were lower. Many are left without work altogether. The government needs to address this issue. People have to be equipped with skills relevant to other sectors such as services and MSMEs to generate local employment. And this requires focused attention," says Kanneganti.

He points out that crops such as cotton and paddy are harvested at the same time, leading to a spike in demand for labour. "When sufficient workers are not available locally, there is a clear dependency on labour from other States. Shifting from monocropping to multiple cropping every month can ensure a regular income for farmers and increase the availability of workdays. Other crops such as pulses, millets, vegetables and oilseeds need to be supported through incentives," he asserts.

Echoing some of the observations, Y. Sreenivasulu, associate professor at the Centre for Economic and Social Studies in Hyderabad, says his team has also found that most youth show little interest in taking up agriculture or allied activities. A study is currently under way, he adds, to better understand their aspirations and the factors driving this disengagement.

> People with small extents of land now prefer to cultivate vegetables than work on others' farms. Vegetables ensure regular income.
>
> **Y. BALAIAH,** A farmer

Donthu Rambabu, joint secretary of Telangana Rythu Sangham, says migrant labourers from Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh are commonly employed on red chilli farms. Each acre requires nearly 400 workdays. "Most people engaged for paddy sowing here come from West Bengal and Bihar," he explains.

## Levelling up

Rambabu adds that some farm labourers from Telangana have transitioned into tenant farmers by leasing large tracts of land. At the same time, children of landowners who once held extensive acreage have migrated to other States or countries, leaving none behind to continue farming. Those lands are increasingly being leased out.

"If it is a small farmer owning two to four acres, the family itself gets involved in tilling, sowing and other works. But a tenant farmer who has taken 20-30 acres on lease cannot manage all the work alone and has to hire labour," he says.

In some pockets, small farmers still practise a barter system, working on each other's fields in exchange for labour on their own land.

Y. Balaiah, who owns three acres in Adraspalli village of Muduchinthalapally mandal, says even farmers with very small landholdings – an acre or less – are now relying on cultivation, a shift he says was uncommon earlier. He moved from paddy to vegetable cultivation, as the former requires higher investment and offers comparatively lower returns. "Vegetables ensure regular income. We can sell directly to customers in vegetable markets and avoid paying commission to agents. People with small extents of land now prefer to cultivate vegetables than work on others' farms," he adds.

To keep costs down, Balaiah and his wife harvest the vegetables themselves, as hiring labour would leave little scope for profit. "I cannot expect anyone to work for ₹300 or ₹400 a day. The cost of essential goods has shot up," he explains.

The trend reflects the structure of landholdings in the State. According to the 11th Agriculture Census (2021-22), the total number of operational holdings (farm units) in Telangana stood at 70.60 lakh, covering an area of 63.12 lakh hectares.

Marginal and small farmers, who hold less than two acres, account for 91.4% of landholdings and operate 68.2% of the total area, or about 43 lakh hectares.

Semi-medium farmers (two to less than four acres), medium farmers (four to less than 10 acres) and large farmers (10 acres and above) together make up a small share of holdings, accounting for 7.1%, 1.4% and 0.1% respectively, while operating 20.5%, 8.7% and 2.6% of the cultivated area.

## From the other side

Veteran farmers, however, point to tflhe ip side. Some families that have practised agriculture for decades have gradually developed specialised skills and now travel across Telangana and even to other States in search of work.

K. Chandra Mohan Reddy, among the early practitioners of grape farming in the region, says several workers who were once employed on his farm went on to master tasks such as setting up trellis systems. "Some people who worked at our farm earlier learnt trellis work. The same happened with workers from other farms. Today, there are teams in Muduchinthalapally that are in constant demand for setting up trellis," he says. It is at his farm that Thakur continues to work.

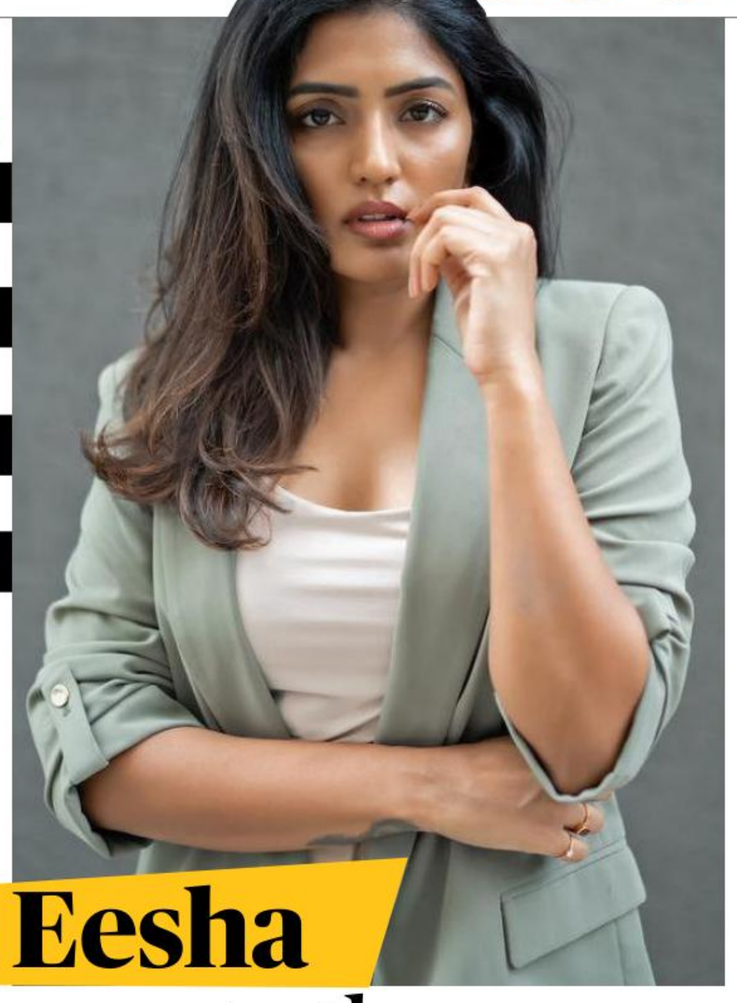
Digital media platforms are increasingly enabling such skilled teams to expand their reach and get work orders. Chinna, from Pedapur village in Sangareddy district, began pruning mango, guava, pomegranate and other fruit trees at the age of 19 after learning the skill from another worker. Soon, he started working independently. Today, the 28-year-old leads a team that travels across districts and even to other States on work.

He says farmers from various districts and States began contacting him after a video interview carrying his phone number was widely circulated among farming communities. The team has since taken up work in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh as well. "We are involved in pruning, grafting and plantation work for mango, guava, sitaphal and other crops," he shares.

Similar pruning teams from Andhra Pradesh also travel to Telangana for seasonal work. As different fruit trees require pruning at different times of the year, such teams are able to find work across regions for much of the year.

Even as skill-based agricultural labour becomes more mobile and in demand, concerns remain over the absence of basic social security. B.Kondal Reddy, State committee member of Rythu Swarajya Vedika, says landless workers, including agricultural labourers, continue to remain outside formal safety nets such as insurance. "Currently, migrant workers have no social security. If someone dies while working, workers pool money among themselves to take the body back to their native place," he says.





# Eesha Rebba opens up about her performance in *Om Shanti Shanti Shantihi*, industry biases and what she wants next

# Eesha courts the spotlight

**Sangeetha Devi Dundoo**
sangeethadevi.k@thehindu.co.in

Eesha Rebba is soaking in the warm response to her performance in *Om Shanti Shanti Shantihi* (OSSS). "There were days when I felt emotionally drained after the shoot," she recalls.

The Telugu remake of the Malayalam film *Jaya Jaya Jaya Hey*, which released on January 30, may have had a slow start at the box office, but Eesha is encouraged by the appreciation coming her way – for both her performance and Tharun Bhascker's. A voracious script reader, she admits that well-written roles for women are still rare. "When something this interesting comes along, I give it everything I have."

Speaking about her portrayal of Prashanti, a woman navigating everyday patriarchy, Eesha says restraint was key. "Prashanti isn't overtly expressive. For most of the film, she stays silent even as she has to fight for every aspect of her life – from daily choices to education. I related to that silence, to holding in aggression. It meant internalising her struggles and letting them show subtly."

Eesha made her debut in 2012 with Sekhar Kammula's *Life Is Beautiful* and landed her first lead role the following year in Mohanakrishna Indraganti's *Anthaka Mundu Aa Tarvatha*. "I am grateful for the good work that has come my way. From the beginning, my performances have been appreciated," she says.

The journey, however, has not been without its challenges. Telugu-speaking women are often overlooked for lead roles in star-driven films. Eesha chooses not to dwell on it. "At this stage, I don't feel the need to prove myself. My focus is on choosing films that truly interest me – even if that means waiting a little longer."

Between *OSSS* and her previous film, there was a gap of two years. It was a conscious move. Season two of the Telugu web series *3 Roses* kept her busy, but she wanted to evaluate her approach to films. "I watched films and reached out to a few filmmakers to let them know that I'd be game to work with them. Watching good films also helped me assess scripts that were pitched to me, better," she reckons.

**Looking ahead** Eesha Rebba. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

An MBA graduate who briefly explored modelling, Eesha says she entered the film industry without a plan. "I auditioned, got selected and came in with many dreams. Over time, I discovered how deeply I love acting. It's a tough field, but every morning I wake up wanting to do better work. I don't think I could have done anything else," she says.

She speaks warmly of her mentor, writer-director Mohanakrishna Indraganti. "During *Anthaka Mundu...*, there were people who doubted whether I could pull off such an emotionally layered role. He was confident I could. As the film progressed and we watched the footage, the producers and others were happy with my work."

**Possibilities and limitations**

Eesha notes that the digital boom during the pandemic opened up new possibilities. She was part of the anthology *Pitta Kathalu* and went on to appear in web series such as *3 Roses*, *Dayaa* and *Maya Bazaar For Sale*.

Even so, she acknowledges that opportunities for female actors to truly perform remain limited. She is particularly uncomfortable with how the industry frames women-led stories. "We never call a mainstream film hero-centric, so why should it be any different for women?" she asks.

To bridge the gap created by the lack of strong roles, Eesha even considered writing. "That's easier said than done. Writing is a lonely process and I'm not cut out for it," she admits. "But I'm open to collaborating with writers to develop ideas. Maybe someday I'll direct a film. I'm eager to learn the craft."



**Good spirits** The team behind the cocktails; (below) Murgi Ko Dry Masala. SPECIAL ARRANGEMEMT

# Rooftop razzmatazz

## Kadamba is a space built for lingering evenings

**Prabalika M Borah**
prabalika.m@thehindu.co.in

Long before bars came to dominate India's social drinking culture, gatherings unfolded at home – in a friend's living room, an uncle's house, or on a lawn. Chakna (snacks) meant whatever was at hand: a homemade chicken or mutton fry, a spicy mixture, boiled or roasted peanuts, or salted potato chips.

Kadamba, a new rooftop resto-bar overlooking Durgam Cheruvu, nudges you back to those simpler *daaru pe charcha* days. As a space, it positions itself as the city's third space. It slips easily between identities: a local bar, a rooftop hangout for long conversations, a venue for music and cultural programmes, or simply a corner to sit quietly with a drink.

Think of village squares with a spot under a tree. Kadamba has three – carefully nurtured – and a section where you can sit cross-legged with your group, snack alongside your drinks, and chat until your legs give up. I chose table seating instead, settling in to eat, drink and watch the lights come alive on the Durgam Cheruvu bridge.

Founder Vikas Passary says the idea is comfort over spectacle. "The focus is on connection and ease rather than excess. Kadamba is an *apna adda* at heart – an analogue space where experience comes first and evenings unfold without pressure. We wanted it to feel familiar, comforting and open to everyone." The bar is divided into three sections: the bar counter, a family area and the open rooftop.

The bar is designed like a communal kitchen island. The mixologist works in front of you, chatting, explaining, asking how you would like your drink.

When I told Sharan, the mixologist wanted something without ice, he poured Kya Toh Bhi – a pre-batched cocktail with vodka, tomato, dill, raspberry and black garlic. One sip and the name makes sense.



The beverage programme leans on fresh ingredients, house infusions and ferments; no syrups or preservatives.

Food is non-negotiable here. Chef Jyoti Singh describes Kadamba's menu as chakna in its truest Indian sense – inspired by street corners, bars, homes and flavours that linger. The tandoor chicken, for instance, skips heavy marinades and lands closer to a dhaba-style dry fry. Apna Seekh Kebab was a hit, while the fish with pani puri dressing – a compound ceviche – did not land for us.

*A meal for two costs ₹3000 upwards.*

# Finding her voice

## Ahead of her Home Grown 2026 performance, Priyanka Nath reflects on conviction, heartbreak and growth

**Neeraja Murthy**
neeraja.b@thehindu.co.in

When indie musician Priyanka Nath quit her desk job at a startup to pursue music, she did so without expectations. "I had a deep conviction that the career I stepped away from was a big no for me. I also trusted that I would make it – whatever that meant to me at that age," says the artiste, who transitioned fully into music in 2020.

She is set to perform new material – a mix of originals and covers – with her ensemble at Home Grown 2026, the National Centre for the Performing Arts' (NCPA) annual celebration of original voices and independent music, on February 8 in Mumbai. Joining Priyanka on vocals and acoustic guitar are Baidurjya Banerjee on guitars, Sunny Anantarapu on bass, Akshay Athreya on drums, Christopher Francis on keys, and Tarun Krishna as sound engineer.

Though she currently lives in Hyderabad with her parents, being labelled a 'Hyderabad-based singer' leaves her unsettled. "I have an identity crisis," she says, a feeling shaped by a childhood spent moving cities. A native of Assam, Priyanka went to school in Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi before relocating to Hyderabad in 2011. "I could move somewhere else next and then be called that. So where am I really from?"

Priyanka grew up in a home steeped in music. Her mother was a professional singer with All India Radio, Assam, while her father sings and plays the guitar as a hobby. Although she initially hoped to revisit interests in acting, dance and modelling, singing took centre stage – almost organically – about five and a half years ago. She resists being boxed into a genre, though her current sound leans towards pop.

Singing and songwriting come organically to Priyanka, with themes rooted in personal experience. Heartbreak, introspection and the struggle with inner demons run through her album Falling from Grace, released in May 2025. "It may seem like a heartbreak album, but it's about how those experiences changed me."

While she is consciously moving away from writing



**Themes from life** Priyanka Nath. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

overtly melancholic material, even her heavier themes are often paired with upbeat, electronic-driven compositions. Red Flag, one of her favourites, is a case in point, taking on a rock avatar in her live performances. Describing her songwriting process, she says, "Sometimes a melody comes first and I save it on my phone, and sometimes the lyric comes first and I build a melody around it. The best is when both arrive together."

"Music is constantly evolving," she says. "I want to give myself the time to write and find new ways to present my music."






# SC upholds Telangana HC decision against free land to IAMC

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has refused to intervene in a Telangana High Court judgment which set aside the free-of-cost allotment of land to the International Arbitration & Mediation Centre (IAMC), an institution whose deed was authored by then Chief Justice of India in 2021.

A Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta agreed with the High Court that gratuitous distribution of natural resources was both "unsustainable and contrary to the procedure".

Dismissing the special leave petitions filed by the IAMC against the High Court decision of June 2025, the Supreme Court simply said in a short order "we are not inclined to interfere with the impugned judgment(s) and order(s) of the High Court".

The Telangana government had argued in the High Court that the IAMC was a public charitable trust created to promote institutional arbitration in India.

**Public trust**

"Matters involving allotment and distribution of state largesse cannot be done free of cost. Governments shall ensure that they are adequately compensated for parting with natural resources vested in them and held by them in public trust," a Division Bench of the High Court had concluded.

# Kerala Assembly resolution seeks MGNREGS restoration

The resolution states that the rights-based approach of the MGNREGS has vanished under the new VB-G RAM G; the State will also have to incur an additional burden of ₹3,500 crore

**The Hindu Bureau**
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Assembly on Thursday passed a resolution demanding that the Union government restore the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) framework by withdrawing the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G).

"VB-G RAM G entails severe financial burden on the States. With its introduction, the rights-based approach that was the essence of the existing (MGNREG) scheme has vanished," said the resolution presented by Minister for Local Self-Government M.B. Rajesh. Under the new system, it falls upon the States to provide unemployment wages and compensation for delayed payment of wages, it said.


The resolution passed by Kerala Assembly on Thursday says that the VB–G RAM G places a major financial burden on the States.

While the Centre retains the power to decide the share of the States, the latter are held fully responsible for the additional burdens arising from the scheme, the resolution said. Under VB-G RAM G, the Centre would set a 'normative allocation,' 40% of which would be borne by the States. The complete responsibility of all working days beyond this allocation has to be borne by the States. It is estimated that Kerala would incur an additional burden of ₹3,500 crore on account of this new condition, the resolution said.

The resolution was passed amid Opposition protests in the House over the Sabarimala gold theft issue.

In Kerala, 40.45 lakh families are part of the MGNREGS, the resolution said.

# Kerala leaves two posts of non-Muslims vacant on Waqf Board

**K.S. Sudhi**
KOCHI

The State government reconstituted the Kerala Waqf Board on Wednesday leaving the two posts reserved for non-Muslims vacant and bringing on board representatives of politically significant Muslim sects.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Democratic Front government also retained its confidant, M.K. Sakkeer, as the chairperson of the committee, which was reconstituted after the recent enactment of the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act.

The non-Muslims are to be brought on board in the category reserved for a person who has professional experience in business management, social work, finance or revenue, agriculture and development activities and a person who is a member of the Bar Council. The government has indicated in the notification that nominations to the the posts will be made shortly.

The State government reportedly chose to leave the posts reserved for non-Muslims vacant to signal that it is not in a hurry to implement the provisions of the Act that was stiffly opposed by Muslim organisations. The decision is being viewed as an attempt by the government to keep the minority communities in good humour, ahead of the Assembly polls.

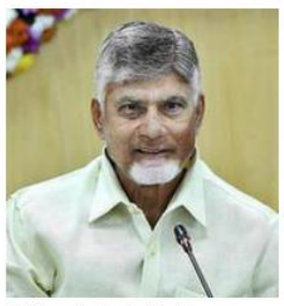
# Laddu 'adulteration' case: A.P. govt. sets up one-man panel to 'fix accountability'

**G.V.R. Subba Rao**
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has launched a sharp political and moral offensive against the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) over the alleged adulteration of the Tirumala laddu prasadam, terming it a "grave betrayal of devotees' faith" and asserting that no investigative agency has given a clean chit to the previous regime.

Declaring zero tolerance on matters linked to religious sanctity, the Chief Minister warned that intimidation, misinformation, or political pressure would not deter the government from fixing accountability.

Addressing the media after a meeting of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) leaders on Thursday, Mr. Naidu announced the constitution of a one-man committee to examine the findings of the investigative agencies, and fix accountability.


N. Chandrababu Naidu

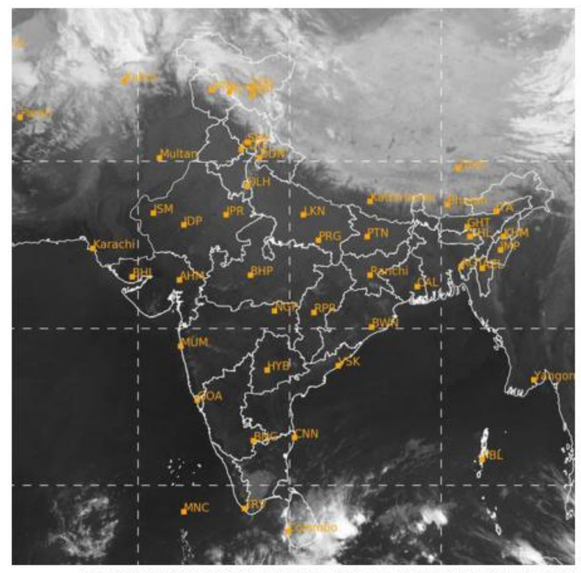
The sanctity of the prasadam was compromised during the YSRCP's tenure, he said.

Mr. Naidu alleged that a 2022 warning by the Central Food Technological Research Institute regarding possible adulteration of ghee used in laddu preparation was deliberately suppressed by the previous government, allowing the malpractice to continue unchecked.

"The State government has decided to constitute a one-man committee to examine all reports, identify lapses, fix responsibility, and recommend further action, including legal follow-up if required," he said.

## 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 Friday:** Dense fog likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh

| CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN | CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agartala | — | 28.4 | 13.2 | Kozhikode | — | 34.2 | 24.0 |
| Ahmedabad | — | 30.2 | 18.6 | Kurnool | — | 33.6 | 19.4 |
| Aizawl | — | 28.0 | 11.4 | Lucknow | — | 23.9 | 9.5 |
| Allahabad | — | 24.0 | 10.4 | Madurai | — | 32.0 | 23.1 |
| Bengaluru | — | 29.8 | 15.7 | Mangaluru | — | 34.0 | 21.3 |
| Bhopal | — | 25.4 | 13.0 | Mumbai | — | 35.1 | 20.5 |
| Bhubaneswar | — | 31.7 | 14.5 | Mysuru | — | 31.4 | 16.0 |
| Chandigarh | — | 23.1 | 7.2 | New Delhi | — | 23.9 | 10.2 |
| Chennai | — | 31.1 | 21.0 | Patna | — | 24.8 | 14.1 |
| Coimbatore | — | 31.2 | 20.0 | Port Blair | — | 31.0 | 25.8 |
| Dehradun | — | 25.9 | 9.0 | Puducherry | — | 29.7 | 20.6 |
| Gangtok | — | 18.6 | 7.5 | Pune | — | 32.2 | 18.5 |
| Goa | — | 35.4 | 22.5 | Raipur | — | 30.7 | 18.4 |
| Guwahati | — | 28.5 | 14.5 | Ranchi | — | 26.2 | 13.0 |
| Hubballi | — | 31.0 | 16.0 | Shillong | — | 18.4 | 8.0 |
| Hyderabad | — | 29.0 | 18.6 | Shimla | — | 17.4 | 6.0 |
| Imphal | — | 24.9 | 8.6 | Srinagar | — | 11.2 | -0.4 |
| Jaipur | — | 25.1 | 12.2 | Thiruvananthapuram | — | 34.7 | 23.2 |
| Kochi | — | 31.4 | 24.2 | Tiruchi | — | 29.1 | 21.4 |
| Kohima | — | 18.7 | 8.8 | Vijayawada | — | 30.6 | 19.7 |
| Kolkata | — | 28.0 | 15.8 | Visakhapatnam | — | 31.0 | 20.7 |

*(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)*

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

| CITIES | $SO_2$ | $NO_2$ | CO | PM2.5 | PM10 | CODE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ahmedabad | .81 | ..70 | 34 | ..... 72 | ...160 | |
| Bengaluru | ...6 | ..31 | 17 | ... 150 | ...122 | |
| Chennai | ...9 | ..13 | 51 | ..... 75 | .....96 | |
| Delhi | .11 | 220 | 47 | ... 278 | ...208 | |
| Hyderabad | ...5 | ..10 | 61 | ... 134 | ...137 | |
| Kolkata | .10 | 138 | 40 | ... 205 | ...184 | |
| Lucknow | ...9 | ..52 | 70 | ... 114 | ...155 | |
| Mumbai | .28 | ..84 | 19 | ... 112 | ...155 | |
| Pune | ..— | ..73 | 38 | ... 251 | ...184 | |
| Visakhapatnam | ...6 | ..52 | 19 | ... 160 | ...143 | |

**Yesterday**

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Ballabgarh, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 302 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 26

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

**$SO_2$:** 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.

**$NO_2$:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

## INBRIEF



### Unnikrishnan Potti granted bail, released from prison

A local court on Thursday granted statutory bail to Unnikrishnan Potti, prime accused in the Sabarimala gold theft case, following which he was released from prison. Mr. Potti secured the relief in the second case pertaining to the theft of gold from the door frames of the sanctum sanctorum. The bail was granted as the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case failed to file a chargesheet within 90 days of his arrest, making him eligible for statutory bail. He had earlier been granted bail in the case related to the theft of gold from the *Dwarapalaka* idols. PTI

### Kerala Police seize large cache of explosives from a lorry

The Kerala Police on Wednesday night seized a large cache of explosives from a lorry on National Highway 544 near the Government Medical College in Palakkad. Around 4,000 gelatin sticks and 17 detonators were recovered from the vehicle, which was intercepted on the service road at 10 p.m. following a tip-off. The explosives were found concealed in cardboard boxes hidden beneath a large consignment of watermelons loaded in the lorry. The driver, Senthil Kumar, 47, a native of Dharmapuri district in Tamil Nadu, was taken into custody.

### PG medico dies in A.P. under 'mysterious circumstances'

A doctor in her final-year post-graduation in anaesthesiology at the Government Medical College, Vijayawada, died under mysterious circumstances. She collapsed in her room in the early hours of Thursday and died while undergoing treatment at the Government General Hospital, according to the police. Machavaram Circle Inspector D.V. Ramana said the doctor had complained of stomach pain around 1 a.m. and her colleagues gave her medicine for pain relief. A probe is under way.

## *Hazy morning*


**Serene sight:** People kayaking in a misty lake during sunrise at Mugabala on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Thursday. J. ALLEN EGENUSE

# Cong. deceiving ryots on Rythu Bandhu: KTR

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao questioned Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy over the delay in implementing the Rythu Bandhu farm investment scheme, asking how many crop seasons had passed and how many times farmers had actually received assistance.

He wondered why municipal elections should stand in the way of depositing funds directly into farmers' accounts, alleging that the promises were being repeated only to mislead voters.

Campaigning for the upcoming municipal elections in Sircilla, he accused the government of abandoning welfare initiatives such as Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak after coming to power. He warned voters that trusting the Congress party again in municipal polls would lead to another round of "betrayal."

Mr. Rao also questioned why the Chief Minister continued to criticise former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao despite having full authority to govern. "Instead of attacking the past, the government should focus on doing good for the people and implementing its promises," he said.

He alleged that the present administration was conspiring to dismantle the smaller districts created earlier and urged voters to carefully consider statements about scrapping district headquarters while casting their ballots.

# Draft Licence aimed at safeguarding Open Source AI released

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

Viswam.AI, a ioint initiative of Swecha and IIIT Hyderabad, and SFLC.in released the new Draft Licence for consultation aimed to address critical gaps in current open source licences, regarding data usage, attribution, and the definition of openness in the age of AI.

The Licence Draft release was announced at a stakeholder consultation held at IIIT. A series of online and in-person public consultations to gain feedback on the draft of the licence will be conducted soon. "We are releasing the draft licence for consultation to ensure proprietary models cannot simply appropriate our work without attribution. This paves the way for the release of community-contributed, crowdsourced datasets under a framework that guarantees community ownership and verifiability," centre head and chief technologist of VISWAM.AI, and founder of Swecha Kiran Chandra Yarlagadda explained.

"We need a licence to ensure that the rights of creators are protected," said Prasanth Sugathan, legal director of SFLC.in

# Lamakaan celebrates 16th anniversary with innovative cultural programes

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

**Telugu literature will form another strand of the celebrations, with discussions on how liberalisation has shaped its themes and concerns.**

Lamakaan, Hyderabad's open cultural space, is set to mark its 16th anniversary with a four-day programme from February 5 to February 8. The celebrations will open with a reading by veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah, who will present excerpts from the works of noted dramatist Imtiaz Ali Taj. His is known for Anarkali, a play that was later adapted into the classic Hindi film Mughal-e-Azam.

Ashhar Farhan, one of Lamakaan's founders, said the anniversary programme marked a shift in the space's programming approach. "This year is a move from being reflective to being progressive," he said, adding that the programming would be more exploratory and experimental.

Mr. Farhan said Lamakaan was consciously trying to discover new formats. "We are highlighting Urdu dramatists this year, beginning with Imtiaz Ali Taj," he said.

Telugu literature will form another strand of the celebrations, with discussions on how liberalisation has shaped its themes and concerns. Among the more unusual offerings is a Bharatanatyam adaptation of Utho Ab Maati Se, a poem by Faiz Ahmed Faiz on Palestine. Mr. Farhan said the idea was to place political and literary texts in new performative contexts.

Lamakaan's focus on poetry, he explained had also evolved. "Earlier, we explored the lives of poets. Now we want to get into the thick of things, to examine the evolution of poetics and how it has changed over time."

Political engagement at Lamakaan is also being revised. While earlier discussions featured what Mr. Farhan described as 'hard talks' with politicians, the emphasis is now on broader political processes. He cited an upcoming session by Biju Mathew, who worked for two years on Zohran Mamdani's campaign in New York, offering an insider's view of how a minority candidate can win in one of the world's most capitalist cities.

The programme will also include reinterpretations of established narratives. "Du Saraswati is retelling episodes from the epics through a Dalit woman's perspective," Mr. Farhan said.

**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

## CENTRAL RAILWAY
**SOLAPUR DIVISION**
**Electrical Works**

The Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), Central Railway, Solapur, for and on behalf of the President of India invites online e-tenders on Railways e-procurement website **www.ireps.gov.in** from reputed, experienced & Licensed Electrical contractors for the following works. **Tender No. SUR/TD/T/2025/26R**, **Name of work:** Electrical TRD portion of work in connection with Proposed coaching maintenance depot at Tikekarwadi (Phase-1) (Re-invitation) **Estimated cost:** ₹ 5,62,96,465.20. **Bid Security:** ₹ 4,31,500/-, **Completion period:** 12 months. **Validity of offer:** 60 Days. **Date & time of tenders closing on website:** 02.03.2026 at 15.00 hrs. EXP-06

**Download UTS App for Tickets**

## BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, At: Triveni Complex, 1st Floor, Abids, Hyderabad.

**O.A No. 1054 OF 2025**

Between:
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD ...Applicant
And
Mrs. Daravat Sali & Ors ...Defendants

**SUMMONS BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION**

To,
1. **Mrs. Daravat Sali, D/o. Bhukya Chakru,** Aged about 73 years, Occ : House Wife, R/o. H No. 6-27, Vattikhammam Pahad, Chivvemla Suryapet, Nalgonda - 508213.
2. **Mrs. Daravat Vijaya, Wo. D Srinu,** Aged about 37 years, Occ : House Wife R/o. H.No. 6-27 , Vattikhammam Pahad, Chivvemla, Suryapet, Nalgonda - 508213.
3. **Mr. Daravat Sreenu, S/o. D Badru,** Aged about 40 years, Occ : Business R/o. H No. 6-27 , Vattikhammam Pahad, Chivvemla, Suryapet, Nalgonda - 508213.

... Defendants

Please take the Summons in the above **O.A. No.1054/2025** filed by the applicant for recovery of money of **Rs.40,76,130.84/- against you. The Hon'ble Tribunal ordered summons to you by way of paper publication and posted the matter to 13-03-2026.** In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under.

i) To show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted.
ii) To disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application.
iii) You are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties.
iv) You shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest in created and /or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal.
v) You shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets.

You are hereby required to show cause on **13-03-2026 at 10.30 a.m.** at Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, 1st floor, Triveni Complex, Abids, Hyderabad - 500001, in person or by an Advocate duly instructed as to why the reliefs prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 03rd Day of February, 2026.

(BY ORDER OF THE COURT)
Sd/- (REGISTRAR)
Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, Hyderabad

## SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
OPERATION, CENTRAL CIRCLE, GR. HYDERABAD.

**T.S Nos. 11 & 12/2025-26 of Mehdipatnam Division & T.S No. 05/2025-26 of Azamabad Division.**

Tenders are invited from eligible agencies for **T.S No.11/25-26** Erection of 1 No. 100KVA Addl. DTR at Nearby J.P. Function Hall DTR in Golconda Section & **TS.No.12/25-26** Laying of 70 Mtrs. 11KV 3x185 Sqmm UG Cable in place of damaged UG Cable on 11KV OU Colony Feeder at Gangaputra Sangam Building Shaikpet in Mehdipatnam Division and **T.S No. 05/25-26** Enhancement of existing transformers to 500 KVA DTR in Ramalayam Section of Azamabad Division Under T&D. Sale of tender specifications from: **06-02-2026 (Friday) to 12-02-2026 (Thursday) up to 5 PM.** Last date for receipt of sealed tenders: **13-02-2026 (Friday) up to 3 PM.** Date of opening of tender: **13-02-2026 (Friday) at 3:30 PM.** Tenders Schedule to be collected from respective division offices. All information can be had from **www.tgsouthernpower.com** or the undersigned. Phone: 8712469969 & 8712469928.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer,
DIPR R.O.No.15003-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2025-26 Dt. 05.02.2026 Operation, Central Circle, Hyderabad.

## GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
**MALKAJGIRI ZONE**

**NIT. No.:** 06/EE-I/MKJZ/GHMC/2025-26; **Name of the work:** Maintenance works: Others-14; **Estimate Amount (Rs. in Lakhs):** Rs.176.80; **Bid Submission Start Date & Time/Bid Submission of Closing Date & Time:** 06-02-2026 @1.30 PM/10-02-2026 @ 1:30 PM; **Name & Address Officer Cell No.:** Executive Engineer, 9154796465, 7995009098. For further details can be seen at e-procurement @ **http://www.tender.telangana.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer-I
DIPR R.O.No.15018-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2025-26 Dt. 05.02.2026 Malkajgiri Zone, GHMC.

## GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
**MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS**
**Indian Railways Institute of Signal Engineering and Telecommunications, Secunderabad**

PUB/1885

**Tender Notice no. CoE-IRISET-01-26 dated: 03.02.2026**

Centre of Excellence (COE)/IRISET working under Ministry of Railways seeks response from Prospective associate(s), for

**Tender Notice no. CoE-IRISET-01-26 dated: 03.02.2026:** "Provision of Kavach FAT setup at IRISET".

Interested parties are advised to see & keep watching all the updates on the following websites in connection with aforesaid Tender notice.

**Websites: https://iriset.railnet.gov.in, https://www.ireps.gov.in, and https://iriset.indianrailways.gov.in**

A2387 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/TD/CoE/IRISET

## Telugu and Sanskrit Akademi
**Tummalagunta, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh - 517502**

**e-Procurement Tender Notice**

**Tender No: 01/APTA/2026,** **Dt: 04-02-2026**
**Tender ID: 895069**

Online tenders are invited in 2 bid systems from interested publishers/ printers for printing of Akademi Text Books and other reading material for the academic year 2026-27. The publishers have procure the paper and print the books as per Akademi specifications and supply the same to Akademi. The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly through **www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in** from **05-02-2026** onwards. Last date for submission of Online Tenders is **19-02-2026** at **02.00 PM.**

Sd/- Dr Narayana Bharath Gupta,IAS
DIPR 4796PP/CL, Dt: 05/02/2026 Director,Telugu and Sanskrit Akademi

## JHARIA REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, DHANBAD
**e-Procurement Notice**
**Tender Reference No:** JRDA/CIVIL/25-26/45/156
**Date:** 03.02.2026

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Name of Work | Providing and Laying PCC in back and middle side of blocks at phase – 1, Belgaria, T/s Dhanbad |
| 2. | Estimated Cost | Rs. 3,50,81,120.00 |
| 3. | EMD | Rs. 3,50,900.00 |
| 4. | Tender Document Cost | Rs. 10,000.00 |
| 5. | Time of Completion | 06 months |
| 6. | Date/Time from which bid is available for online bidding | 07.02.2026 at 03:00 PM |
| 7. | Last Date/Time for on-line submission of bids | 28.02.2026 at 05:00 PM |
| 8. | Date and Time of Bid Opening | 02.03.2026 at 11:30 AM |
| 9. | Name and Address of Officer inviting tender | Head of Department (Civil), JRDA, Dhanbad Hatia More, Golf Ground Road, Hirapur, Dhanbad - 826001 Jharkhand, India Email: infojrda.dhn@gmail.com |

Note : 1. Only e-tenders will be accepted.
2. Further details can be seen on website – https://jharkhandtenders.gov.in

Sd/-
PR 372359 Rural Development (25-26)D Head of Department (Civil), JRDA, Dhanbad

## GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND
## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R.C.D. , ROAD DIVISION, SAHIBGANJ
**e- Procurement Notice**
**(VERY SHORT TENDER)**
**(3rd Call)**
**e-Tender Reference no.- RCD/SAHIBGANJ/76/2025-26**
**Dated : 05.02.2026**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Name of Work | **IRQP/Strengthening work of Lalbandh (MDR-210) to Mohanpur (NH-80) Road via Babupur and Jonka Link Road (Total length-14.305 KM) under Road Division, Sahibganj for the year 2024-25** |
| 2 | Estimated Cost (Rs) | **Rs. 9,09,08,833.00** (Rupees Nine Crores Nine Lacs Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty Three and Zero Paise) Only. |
| 3 | Time of Completion | 05 (Five) Months |
| 4 | Last date / Time for receipt of bids | 23.02.2026 upto 12.00 Noon |
| 5 | Date of Publication of Tender on website | 09.02.2026 from 10.30 A.M. |
| 6 | Name & address of office Inviting tender | Executive Engineer, R.C.D. Road Division, Sahibganj |
| 7 | Contact no. of Procurement officer | 8271102250 |
| 8 | Helpline number of e- Procurement cell | 0651 - 2401010 |

Further details can be seen on website http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT
PR 372374 Road(25-26).D ROAD DIVISION, SAHIBGANJ

## KARNATAKA STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
**Traffic-Commercial (AWATAR) Section Ground Floor, K.H. Road, Shanthinagara, Bengaluru-560 027.**

No.KSRTC/TRF/AWATAR/03/2025-26 Date:04-02-2026.

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Tender is invited through e-portal for the Selection of "Payment Gateway Service Provider (PGSP) for e-ticketing, POS and Kiosk" for KSRTC.

**1. Calendar of events:**

| Description | Date | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Last date for submission of queries | 17.02.2026 | 17:00 hours |
| Pre-Bid meeting | 18.02.2026 | 11:00 hours |
| Last date of Submission of Bids | 02.03.2026 | 17:00 hours |
| Opening of Technical Bid | 04.03.2026 | 11:00 hours |
| Opening of Financial Bid | 11.03.2026 | 11:00 hours |

2. The Financial Bids of the Bidders, those who have qualified in Technical Bid will only be opened.
3. The RFP Documents along with Terms & Conditions, Eligibility Criteria and other Technical detail can be downloaded from the e-portal website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
4. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) **Rs.5,00,000/-** : Bidder has to pay **Rs.500/-** through e-portal by e-payment and **Rs.4,99,500/-** through DD in favour of CAO-FA, KSRTC, Bengaluru-560027.
5. KSRTC reserves the right to accept or reject tender without assigning any reason thereof.

**Sd/-Chief Traffic Manager (Com), Central Offices, Shanthinagara, Bengaluru-27**

DIPR/DD-C.P/5414/KSMCA/2025-26

## BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
**INVITATION FOR TENDERS (Through KPP Portal Only)**

BWSSB invites tenders in Two Stage Tender System from eligible Contractors for the following Works.

| Sl. No. | Name of the Works | Amount Put to Tender / EMD Amount |
|---|---|---|
| **Office of the Chief Engineer (UWP), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.** | | |
| **IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(UWP)/ACE(WWM-VV-W)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-2/562/2025-26** | | **Date: 05-02-2026** |
| 1 | Work of Providing and Laying of 400 - 1400 mm Dia Sewer Lines at Missing Bits of S4C in Various Locations of Kathriguppe Valley. **(2nd Call)** | **Rs. 202.64 Lakhs** / **Rs. 3.04 Lakhs** |
| For above works, Last Date for Receipt of Tenders: **16-02-2026 upto 17.00 Hours.** Technical Bids will be Opened on: **17-02-2026 at 17.30 Hours.** | | |
| **IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(UWP)/ACE(WWM-VV-W)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-2/565/2025-26** | | **Date: 05-02-2026** |
| 2 | Work of Providing and Laying 600 mm Diameter DWC and 1000 mm Diameter RCC NP3 Sewer Pipeline from Gokula Apartment (Surrounding Areas of Nandini Layout) to Ramakrishna Nagar. | **Rs. 715.79 Lakhs** / **Rs. 10.74 Lakhs** |
| **IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(UWP)/ACE(WWM-VV-W)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-2/567/2025-26** | | **Date: 05-02-2026** |
| 3 | Work of Providing and Laying 1200 mm RCC NP3 Trunk Sewer Pipeline from 9th Main Road to 35th Main, Jai Maruthi Nagar further Linking to Mailasandra STP. | **Rs. 725.67 Lakhs** / **Rs. 10.89 Lakhs** |
| For above works, Last Date for Receipt of Tenders: **07-03-2026 upto 17.30 Hours.** Technical Bids will be Opened on: **09-03-2026 at 11.00 Hours.** Sd/- Chief Engineer (UWP) | | |
| **Office of the Chief Engineer (Central), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.** | | |
| **IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(Central)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-1/106/2025-26** | | **Date: 05-02-2026** |
| 4 | Work of Road Restoration for the Tender Work of RCC NP-3 Class Sewer Pipeline UGD Work from 1st 'A' Cross to 2nd Main D'mart Koramangala. | **Rs. 150.53 Lakhs** / **Rs. 2.25 Lakhs** |
| **IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(Central)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-1/108/2025-26** | | **Date: 05-02-2026** |
| 5 | Work of Providing Services to De-silt Sewer Sub-Main / Main Lines through 02 Nos. of Truck Mounted High Capacity Suction and Jetting Machines with Sewage Water Re-cycling System Mounted on 25T GVW BS-IV Truck Chassis for a period of 12 months under EE (WWM)-T Valley Division. | **Rs. 255.31 Lakhs** / **Rs. 5.11 Lakhs** |
| For above works, Last Date for Receipt of Tenders: **20-02-2026 upto 16.00 Hours.** Bids will be Opened on: **21-02-2026 at 17.00 Hours.** Sd/- Chief Engineer (Central) | | |

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-Procurement Process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/Adverto/5453/2025-26

**EXTRAORDINARY**
**PART- II - Section 3 - Sub-Section (ii)**
## MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
**(SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY)**

PUB/1891

**NOTIFICATION**

**Secunderabad, the 2nd February, 2026**

**S.O. 484(E).—** Whereas, by the notification of the Government of India, in the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board), number, S.O. 5950(E), dated the 22nd December, 2025 published in Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-Section (ii), dated the 22nd December, 2025 and issued under sub-section (1) of section 20A of the Railways Act, 1989 (24 of 1989) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government, declared its intention to acquire the land specified in the Schedule annexed to the said notification for the Purpose of execution, maintenance, management and operation of the Special Railway Project namely, Up-gradation work of Electric Traction System from 1x25KV to 2x25 KV traction system to meet 3000MT loading target - Construction of Bonakalu TSS in Khammam - Kondapalli section in Bonakal Village & Mandal in Khammam District in the state of Telangana.

And, whereas, the substance of the said notification was published in the daily newspapers namely the "Nava Telangana" (Telugu),"Sakshi (Khammam Main)" (Telugu), "The Hans India" (English), "The Hindu" (English), & "Swathantra Vaartha" (Hindi) dated 26th December, 2025 with the approval of Suneel Kumar Varma, Chief Engineer, Construction-IV, South Central Railway, Secunderabad.

And, whereas, NO objections were received and same have been considered and disallowed by the Competent Authority and accordingly orders have been passed And, whereas, in pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 20E of the said Act, the competent authority has submitted its report to the Central Government;

Now, therefore, upon receipt of the said report of the competent authority, and in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 20E of the Said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that the lands specified in the Schedule annexed hereto shall be acquired for the aforesaid purpose;

And, further, in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 20E of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that on publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, the land specified in the Schedule annexed hereto shall vest absolutely in the Central Government free from all encumbrances.

**SCHEDULE**

**Description of lands in Acquisition:** Purpose of Up-gradation work of Electric Traction System from 1x25KV to 2x25 KV traction system to meet 3000MT loading target- Construction of Bonakalu TSS in Khammam - Kondapalli section in Bonakal Village and Mandal in Khammam District in the state of Telangana jurisdiction for passenger and freight facility. Brief description of land to be acquired with or without structures in a particular railway project.

| Village : Bonakal | | | | Mandal : Bonakal | | | | District :: Khammam | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S. No. | Sy. No As per SDR | Sy.No. As per Bhu Bharathi | Area under Acquisition in Acs. Gts | Type of Title | Type of land | Name of the Pattadar & Enjoyer | Extent in Ac. Gts. | Trees etc., if any | Structures | Boundaries |
| 1 | 36/1/2 | 36-37/ A2/1/2 | 1.28 | Patta | Dry | Chinthalapati Prasad S/o Veeraiah (P&E) | 0.05 | Nil | Nil | E:Sy.No.36 W: Sy.No.36 N: Sy.No.36 S: Railway Line |
| 2 | 36/1/2 | 36-37/ A2/1/1/2 | | Patta | Dry | Chinthalapati Ramadevi W/o Prasad (P&E) | 1.23 | Nil | Nil | E:Sy.No.36 W: Sy.No.36 N: Sy.No.36 S: Railway Line |
| TOTAL | | | 1.28 | | | TOTAL | 1.28 | | | |

A2394

[F. No. W.Con/182/SRP/TSS/BKL/20E]
SUNIL KUMAR VERMA, Chief Engineer/Con-IV

## SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
Follow us on X @SCRailwayindia
Details of the Tender Notices of S.C Railway can be seen on our website: www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

PUB/1881

**e-TENDER NOTICE**

Tenders are invited in IREPS by the undersigned for the following works.

**Open Tender Notice No.** B-E29-TRD-TNDR-41-2025-26 dt: 02.02.2026. **Tender No.** B-E29-TRD-TNDR-41-2025-26 **Name of Work:-** Vijayawada Division -Replacement of age-old PSI equipment in view of reliability over BZA division. **Approx. Value (Rs.):** Rs. 1,27,15,630.00 **Completion period:** 12 Months **Bid Security (EMD) (Rs.) :** Rs.2,13,600/- **Date of closing:** 05.03.2026 at 15.00 Hrs.

S.No. 1 - Cost of Tender form (Rs.): Nil

For full detailed and conditions "Visit our site at **www.ireps.gov.in**"

NB: If the date of opening day happens to be holiday, the tender will be opened on next working day.

**Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/ TrD/Vijayawada**

PUB/1882

**E-TENDER NOTICE No: GNT/E.27, 28 & 29/TrD/2025-26**

E-Tenders from the Contractors for the following works are invited by the undersigned up to 15.30 hrs on **25-02-2026.**

**Sl. No:** 01 **Tender Title:** GNT-NDKD: Construction of 2-lane ROB in lieu of LC No.27 at KM 29/13-14 in Pedakurapadu station yard and Construction of 2-lane ROB in lieu of LC No.81 at KM 93/16-17 between Tummalacheruvu-Nadikudi stations - 25Kv OHE modification works. **Tender Ref No::** GNT/E.27/TrD/2025-26, Dt: 03-02-2026 **Approx. value in Rs.:** 36,04,274.75/- **Earnest money deposit in Rs.:** 72,100/- **Cost of tender form (non-refundable) in Rs.:** NIL

**Sl. No:** 02 **Tender Title:** GNT-KCC section: Construction of 4-lane ROB in lieu of LC No. 03 at Km 3/25-27 between Guntur-Nambur stations - 25Kv OHE modification works. **Tender Ref No::** GNT/E.28/TrD/2025-26, Dt: 03-02-2026 **Approx. value in Rs.:** 44,67,842.56/- **Earnest money deposit in Rs.:** 89,400/- **Cost of tender form (non-refundable) in Rs.:** NIL

**Sl. No:** 03 **Tender Title:** GNT Division Improvement of reliability for OHE infrastructure in division. PSI **Tender Ref No::** GNT/E.29/TrD/2025-26, Dt: 03-02-2026 **Approx. value in Rs.:** 2,40,27,761.21/-(Incl. GST) **Earnest money deposit in Rs.:** 2,70,200/- **Cost of tender form (non-refundable) in Rs.:** NIL

**Last Date and time for online submission of E-bids**
25-02-2026 up to 15.30 hours.

If the due date of tender opening is declared as holiday at a later date the tenders will be opened on the next working day.

For any detailed information log on to website www.ireps.gov.in on or after 03-02-2026 up to15-30 hrs on **25-02-2026.** Any further Communication/Corrigendum shall only be intimated through E-portal **www.ireps.gov.in.**

**Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD/Guntur**

PUB/1883

**E-TENDER NOTICE No: GEM/2026/B/7172502**

E-Tenders from the Contractors for the following works are invited by the undersigned up to 10.00 hrs on **23-02-2026.**

**Sl. No:** 01 **Tender Title:** GNT Division: Hiring of 2 no. of heavy duty lorries with carrier of minimum capacity 6.0 Ton with dimensions of carrier not less than 19L x 7W x 7H feet for TRD Depot GNT & GID TRD Depot to carryout regular maintenance and breakdown attention of TRD assets for a period of two years. **Tender Ref No:** GEM/2026/B/7172502 Dt.30-01-2026 **Approx. value in Rs.:** 49,74,068.16/- **Earnest money deposit in Rs.:** Rs.99,500/- **Cost of tender form (non-refundable) in Rs.:** NIL

**Last Date and time for online submission of E-bids**
23-02-2026 up to 10.00 hours.

For any detailed information log on to website **www.GeM.gov.in** on or after 30-01-2026 up to10-00 hrs on 23-02-2026. Any further Communication /Corrigendum shall only be intimated through E-portal **www.ireps.gov.in.**

**Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TrD/Guntur**
A2383

**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**

## SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
Follow us on X @SCRailwayindia
Details of the Tender Notices of S.C Railway can be seen on our website: www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

PUB/1878

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

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

**SNo:** 1 **NIT No:** EPC-01-CAO- C-SC-2026 Date: 30/01/2026 **Name of work:** South Central Railway (Construction Organization) - Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract for "Doubling of Track between Mudkhed (MUE) and Basar (BSX) stations including Electrification and Signalling & Telecommunication works in Hyderabad Division of South-Central Railway in connection with Mudkhed-Medchal Doubling Project in the State of Maharashtra and Telangana". **Details: Estimated Cost: Rs. 696,05,06,048.20 EMD: Rs. 2,00,00,000.00 Completion Period: 30 (Thirty) Months. Date of Opening: 19/03/2026 15:00hrs.**

i) For bid document and other details, please login to website **https://ireps.gov.in**. ii)Tenderers can submit their offers online during tender submission period which is the Fifteen days period prior to closing of tender. iii)Tenderers should watch for any corrigenda (issued online only) up to the date of commencement of the tender submission period.

**Chief Admn.Officer/Const./ Secunderabad**

PUB/1879

**Open e-Tender Notice No. Dy.CE/GS/SC/01 to 05&06/2026/OT. Dt: 28-01-2026**

**For and on behalf of President of India, the undersigned invites e-tender for the following works:**

**Sl.No:** 1 **e-Tender No.:** 05_GS_SC_26_OT **Name of the work:** Consultancy for Preparation of Detailed Project Report and allied services for Mega Freight Maintenance Depot in Secunderabad Division, South Central Railway (Detailed Scope and payment schedule as per TOR) (Rate is including 18% GST) **Approx. Tender Value in Rs.:** 71,08,136/- **EMD [Rs.]:** 1,42,200/- **Completion period in days:** 08 Months **Works considered similar in nature towards Standard eligibility criteria.:** Reconnaissance Survey/ Preliminary Survey/ Final Location Survey for Railways/ National Highway Projects/ State Highway Projects/ Irrigation Projects. **Bid closing date:** 27-02-2026

**Sl.No:** 2 **e-Tender No.:** 06_GS_SC_26_OT **Name of the work:** Outsourcing sanctioned traffic facility works for finalization of land requirement survey number wise, preparation of ESPs for station yards, GAD's for minor and major bridges, project sheets and soil investigation for i) Proposed New crossing station between MTV and Bidar stations ii) Proposed Loop line at PDPL Byepass line iii) Asbestos Lines to be made full length lines at Sanath Nagar Station iv) Provision of Longer Loop at Up and Down directions in Gundratimadugu station and v) Provision of 7 stabling lines at Moula ali station, adjacent to down main line between Moula-ali station and C cabin in SC-KZJ Section. **Approx. Tender Value in Rs.:** 27,93,641/- **EMD [Rs.]:** 55,900/- **Completion period in days:** 09 Months **Works considered similar in nature towards Standard eligibility criteria.:** Reconnaissance Survey/ Preliminary Survey/ Final Location Survey for Railways/ National Highway Projects/ State Highway Projects/ Irrigation Projects. **Bid closing date:** 27-02-2026

1. Tenderers should participate through e-tendering only and no manual offers may be considered. 2. Tender conditions/other particulars are available in the Tender documents on IREPS website at **ireps.gov.in** which can be downloaded, can be participated and can view any modifications if any. 3. All the prospective tenderers are requested to remit EMD through online payments only. 4. The tender notice is also displayed in the Notice Board located in the office of CPM/GS/SC, Secunderabad Division, South Central Railway, Secunderabad which can be seen on all working days. 5. The Railway reserves the right to cancel the tender without assigning any reason thereto. 6. All the prospective tenderers are advised to get GSTIN identification Nos. and submit along with their offer.

**Visit our site at "www.ireps.gov.in"**

**Dy.CE/Gati Shakti/ Secunderabad**

## CAUTION NOTICE

General public are hereby informed that my client State Bank of India (Formerly State Bank of Hyderabad), Rep. by its Manager, Thumkunta Branch, Shameerpet Mandal, Medchal Malkajgiri District, Telangana-500 078, has lost original Title Deed No. 289145, Pattadar Passbook No. 53076 and Sale Deed dated 30-11-1991, registered as Doc. No. 7902 of 1991 at SRO-Medchal, belongs to its customer Sri. Thota Balvanth Reddy, S/o. Late Chandra Reddy, in respect of his property of Agriculture dry land admeasuring Ac. 5-30 Gts., in Sy. No. 415 part, situated at Pudoor Village, Medchal Mandal, Medchal Malkajgiri District, while internal audit and vetting of loan documents at Thumkunta Branch, Shameerpet Mandal, Medchal Malkajgiri District. Therefore, the general public are hereby cautioned not to deal with the above said property with any other party. The finder of the above said document may handover the same either to my client or to the undersigned.

Hyderabad (PAVAN KUMAR B)
Date: 05-02-2026 Advocate
H. No. 12-10-590/105/1,
Near Johnson Grammar School,
Warasiguda, Secunderabad-500 061,
Phone No. +91 7075773527,
Roll No. TS/618/2015

## CENTRAL RAILWAY
**SOLAPUR DIVISION**
**MISCELLANEOUS WORKS**

Divisional Railway Manager (Works), Central Railway, Solapur on behalf of President of India, invites e-tender from the reputed firms/contractor for the following works. **Tender Notice No. 01-2026-SrDENC, Name of work:** (1) Provision of widening of width of PF-02 at Latur Station. (2) Provision of approach road in railway colonies under ADEN/PVR sub-division. **Approximate Cost of the work :** ₹ 75413262.26. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 527100.00, **Completion period of the work:** 6 Months. **Maintenance Period:** 12 Months. **Last date & Time of uploading quoted tender on www.ireps.gov.in website:** 23.02.2026 upto 15.00 hrs. **Date & Time of Opening of tender on www.ireps.gov.in :** 23.02.2026 at 15.30 hrs. The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website frequently before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender. Website: **www.ireps.gov.in** EXP-05

**Download UTS App for Tickets**

PUB/1880

**Open e-Tender Notice Nos. C/E.29/Elec/M/SC/39/OEW/OT/ 2025-26 Dt.03.02.2026**

For and on behalf of President of India, the undersigned invites e-tender for the given below work up to 15.00 hours on **24.02.2026**

**S.No:** 1. **e-Tender No.:** etender No. C/E.29/Elec/M/SC/39/OEW/OT/2025-26 etender No.E-M-SC-39-OT-2025-26 **Name of work:** Secunderabad Division Electrical Maintenance Department : Schedule -A - Provision of rooftop solar plants of different capacities along with cleaning accessories on Station buildings, Cover over platforms, Service buildings, residential buildings over SC division. Schedule – B - Provision of Solar geyser, solar street lights, Solar pumps, and Occupancy sensors, energy saver for welding transformer to meet HQ action plan targets for the year of 2025-26 – Electrical arrangements. **Tender Value [Rs]:** 7,55,05,752.50 **EMD [Rs]:** 5,27,500.00 **CTF [Rs]:** 0.00 **Completion period:** 6 Months

1.Tender conditions/other particulars are available in the Tender documents on IREPS website at **"www.ireps.gov.in"** which can be downloaded, can be participated and can view any modifications if any. 2.The tender notice is also displayed in the Notice Board located in the office of Sr.DEE(Maintenance), Secunderabad Division, South Central Railway, Secunderabad which can be seen on all working days. 3.The Railway reserves the right to cancel the tender without assigning any reason thereto.

**Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (Maintenance)/Secunderabad**
A2377

**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**

## CLASSIFIEDS MART
**TO ADVERTISE VISIT**
**www.thehinduads.com**
CALL: 040-27155005 • 98497 93373
• 97040 74747 • 95023 25317 • 98852 80564
or Contact your nearest Authorised space sellers

## LEGAL NOTICE

### NOTICE

M/s. CJ Darcl Logistics Limited, Plot No. 81, 2nd Main Road, Thillai Nagar, Kolathur, Chennai - 600099 ..PLAINTIFF
Vs
1. **M/s.Poddar Granites, Represented by Proprietor Mr. Anil Kumar Poddar, Plot No.19, SY No.137, Nagole Village, L.B. Nagar, Hyderabad - 500035.**
2. Mr. Anil Kumar Poddar, Proprietor M/s.Poddar Granites, Plot No.19, Sy.No.137, Nagole Village, L.B.Nagar, Hyderabad - 500 003 ...DEFENDANTS

**NOTICE**

This is to inform the defendants that:

1. A Commercial Suit No: C.O. S No.533 of 2025 has been filed before Addl.Commercial Court, Egmore, Chennai - 600008 in the above-mentioned court by the Plaintiff against the Defendants concerning "recovery of dues'
2. The Defendants have not been served notice through conventional means.
3. As per the court order dated 08.01.2026 this notice is being published for substituted service.
4. The Defendants are hereby directed to appear in person or through your counsel before this Hon'ble Court on 27th February 2026 at, 10:15 A.M. to "file your written statement, and attend proceedings.
5. Failure to appear may lead to the case proceeding ex parte (in your absence).
6. For details contact the undersigned.

Issued By:
**A. ARASU Advocate for Plaintiff**
R.No 302, No-13/7, Kondy Chetty Street, Parrys CHENNAI - 600 001.
**Mob: 9790926339**

## PERSONAL

### CHANGE OF NAME

**I, IC** No.42081M Colonel (Retd) CHAVALI BADARI NARAYANA MURTY, Resident of Flat No.102, Green Gates, Road No.9,Opp:Community Hall, Vivekanandapuram, Sainikpuri, Hyderabad, Telangana-500094 hereby declare that my Spouse Name is to be Changed from C LALITHA to CHAVALI LALITHA vide Affidavit dated:04-02-2026 before X Spl Judicial Magistrate, Hyderabad.

## EDUCATIONAL

### VACANCIES

**Sri Satya** Sai Vidya Vihar High school, Bagh Amberpet, 5yrs Expe for all postions, B.E.d Must. Vice Principal, Teachers - High School Social Studies, Primary-All subjects. Music-vocal,Band & Spoken English. Send resume to email.principal@sssvv.edu.in, Phone/ W.app-9676880919.Last dt: 14-02-26

## LEGAL NOTICE

**(U/o 5 Rule 20 CPC)**
**In the Court of Kanchan Mahi District and Sessions Judge Ambala**

Smriti Products Pvt. Ltd. 55, Milestone, NH-73, Panchkula Road Saha, Distt. Ambala through its Authorized Signatory Shri Aman Goel...**Appellant/ Plaintiff**

**Vs.**

Andhra Pradesh Dairy Development Co-Operative Federation Limited, Hyderabad-17, through its Managing Director...**Respondent/ Defendant**

CNR No: HRAM01-001172-2022
**Next Date: 19-02-2026**

Appeal against the judgement and decree dated 24.12.2021 passed by the court of Shri Mukesh Kumar, Civil Judge (Jr. Div) Ambala vide which the suit of the plaintiff/ appellant has been wrongly and erroneously dismissed.

Publication issued to: Andhra Pradesh Dairy Development Co-Operative Federation Limited, Hyderabad-17, through its Managing Director

In above titled case, the defendant/ respondent could not be served. It is ordered that defendant/respondent should appear in person or through counsel on **19-02-2026 at 10:00 a.m**

For details logon to https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=Ambala

**Sd/-District and Sessions Judge, Ambala**

Dated, this day of 20-12-2025

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to all the General Public that my Clients:

**(1) M/S. RSECURED FINANCE & CAPITAL PVT LTD (CIN No: U65999TS2020PTC184660)**

**(2) EAMANI PRATHAP REDDY** S/o Eamani Venkata Raja Reddy are intending to purchase the below delineated Schedule Property from its absolute, lawful owner and possessor **M/s PRATYUSHA DEVELOPERS** represented by it's Sole Proprietor Sri Vangala Ravinder Reddy.

If anybody is having any objection, claim, interest, dispute for the above intended sale transaction, he/she/they may contact the undersigned with the documentary proof substantiating his/her/their objections/claims details of dispute/s within Seven (7) days from the date of this publication, failing which, my client will proceed to complete the sale transaction with the above owner as if there are no third party claims/objections/disputes in respect of the Schedule Property and thereafter no claims/objections/disputes will be entertained.

**SCHEDULE PROPERTY**

All that Land in Sy.No.276/ω to an extent of 10769 Sq.Yards (Ac.2-09 Gts.) situated ate Kollur Village and G.P., Ramachandrapuram Mandal, Sanga Reddy District, Telangana State and bounded on:

**NORTH BY :** Land in Sy.No.277
**SOUTH BY :** Land in Sy. No.272
**EAST BY :** Land in Sy.No.277 and Sy.No.272
**WEST BY :** Land in Sy.No.275

Hence, this public notice.

**K.R.PRUTHVISH**
**Advocate**
**Flat No.103, Sree Ramakrishna Towers, Nagarjuna Nagar, Yellareddyguda, Ameerpet, Hyderabad – 500073**
**E-mail: kanumury.pruthvish@gmail.com, Ph: +91-9618153577**

M HY-HYE

## Intent and outcome

### India must match its climate ambitions with higher allocations

Union Budgets began reflecting greater climate concerns from 2021, in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a modest ₹4,500 crore to localise solar photovoltaic production and to reduce India's dependence on Chinese imports. But there has been a cautious, disjointed approach to the scale and allocations. While five broad sectors (cement, steel, aluminium and fertilizers; decentralised solar power; greening irrigation pump sets; green hydrogen; and nuclear energy) received attention in Budget 2026-27, the most prominent announcement was the proposed five-year outlay of ₹20,000 crore for Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS). This is a modest provision for a suite of costly and complex technologies. The allocation signals that India is entering a pilot and demonstration phase, rather than embarking on immediate industrial deployment. While operational examples exist in Norway, Canada and the U.S., scaling CCUS has proven expensive and uneven. The technology is primarily relevant to sectors where emissions are embedded in the production process. The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) will impose carbon costs on imports of high-emission products, so for India, decarbonising industrial production is no longer only a climate imperative. It is now a question of export competitiveness, particularly for steel and aluminium, which form the bulk of India's CBAM-exposed exports to the EU.

The Budget also substantially scales up the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana rooftop solar scheme – ₹22,000 crore in 2026-27 from ₹17,000 crore (RE) for the current year. It is a welcome push towards decentralised energy systems that reduce land pressure, transmission losses and household energy costs. However, implementation challenges remain, including discom cooperation and upfront finance. Similarly, allocations for PM-KUSUM (solar irrigation pumps), have been sustained at ₹5,000 crore. Revised estimates suggest stronger-than-anticipated absorption. For nuclear energy, the government has extended zero basic customs duty on imports of nuclear plant equipment until 2035. While this reduces input costs, nuclear power remains capital intensive, with long construction timelines and financing risks. Recent legal changes permit private participation, but whether private capital will enter a sector entwined with national security, safety and liability concerns remains uncertain. Green hydrogen, despite budgetary support, continues to see modest actual spending, highlighting the persistent gap between policy ambition and execution. Overall, India's climate budget for 2026-27 repeats a pattern: big on intent, cautious on allocations, and uncertain in its ability to mobilise the private capital required to accelerate decarbonisation across vital sectors.

## More, and less

### The health-care component of Budget 2026 is a mixed bag

While this year's health-care allocations are aggressive in certain key sectors, it has failed expectations that Budget 2026 would be a milestone for increased health-care spending as a percentage of GDP. The total allocation this year is over ₹1.05 lakh crore, marking an increase of about 10% over the previous year's revised estimates. However, experts have pointed out that the 2026 health budget is approximately 1.9% of the total government expenditure, and about 0.26% of GDP. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman fronted the Biopharma SHAKTI scheme, among the projects with the single highest budgetary allocations this year. This ₹10,000 crore government initiative will transform India into a manufacturing hub for biologics and biosimilars over the next five years, she said. A pan-country clinical state-of-the-art trial infrastructure will also be created, through a network of 1,000 accredited clinical trial sites. No doubt, this will take care of an angle that has long been languishing in India – research and development. Additionally, the government will set up three new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) and modernise seven existing units, besides establishing a second NIMHANS campus in north India and two upgraded national mental health institutes. The government has set itself a target of training one lakh allied health professionals over the next five years, while another 1.5 lakh care workers will also be trained to take care of the health needs of the elderly; this is appreciable at a time when India is well on its way towards becoming a grey nation, with fertility levels falling. In the area of making care affordable, the government has exempted 17 cancer medicines and several treatments for rare diseases from customs and import duties, while also reducing the tax collected at source on medical and educational remittances from 5% to 2%. For patients suffering from these conditions, and their families, this will no doubt lead to better affordability for treatments.

Primarily under fire was the Union government's stodgy refusal to increase the allocation for health care to reach 2.5% of GDP by 2025, as committed in the National Health Policy of 2017. Public health activists have lambasted the drop in funding for the National Health Mission, despite the fact that funds have been consistently well utilised here. While fiscal devolution has enabled States to invest more heavily in the health sector, there are concerns, however, that the Centre steadily reducing its share will result in patchy outcomes, not even improvements, in the health-care sector of the country.

# The fading of India's environmental jurisprudence



**Faizan Mustafa**

is a legal scholar and the Vice-Chancellor of Chanakya National Law University, Patna, Bihar



**Aashank Dwivedi**

is a scholar at the B.R. Ambedkar National Law University, Sonipat

From its Aravalli ranges to its mangroves, India is at the same moral crossroads that Amitav Ghosh captures in *The Hungry Tide*, where the tides remember what the law chooses to forget. If environmental justice continues to be diluted in the name of development, the Constitution of India risks becoming a silent witness to ecological loss, where the consequences, like the tide itself, will return with unforgiving force.

On December 18, 2025, for non-coal mining projects, the policy of land acquisition first and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) later was changed. Now, an EIA can be done without details about the location and area. The Supreme Court of India helped in the dilution of environmental justice by recalling the case, *Vanashakti vs Union Of India* (2025) that banned retrospective environmental clearances. Within five months, a Bench led by (then) Chief Justice of India (CJI) B.R. Gavai, recalled the progressive judgment.

**From mountains to mangroves**

Recent developments indicate a slow, but systematic, dilution of ecological protection. The CJI, Justice Surya Kant, *suo motu*, stayed the controversial order, saving the reputation of the Court. But the debate concerning the Aravallis is not just about a technical argument on definition. It marks a paradigm change in the perception of development, the role of the environment, and the constitutional obligation by the state.

Similarly, the judicial sanctions to the destruction of 158 mangroves for Adani Cementation Limited (2025) in Raigarh, Maharashtra, and the new environmentally unfriendly infrastructure schemes such as the Char Dham highway in the Himalayas, highlight a dangerous trend – that the health of the environment is further being undermined by the government whose proximity with the corporate world is an open secret though it is also true that the private sector has been severely criticised in the annual Economic Survey presented in January 2026.

The Aravallis, traditionally acknowledged as the ecological backbone of north-western India, play a vital role which includes checking desertification, enhancing the recharge of groundwater, controlling micro-climates and maintaining biodiversity. Interestingly, the Court itself has recognised this ecological role. In *M.C. Mehta vs Union of India and Ors.* (2004), a ban was imposed on mining in the Aravalli region.

Later orders that culminated in the year 2010 admitted that unregulated mining in the area had had irreparable effects on the environment. More importantly, in these proceedings, the Court quashed efforts to restrict the Aravallis to a definition based on the landform's height, especially the suggestion that only landforms over 100 metres could be a component of the Aravalli ranges.

The Court realised how such a strict interpretation would ignore huge tracts of ecologically crucial land, thus foiling the objective of environmental conservation. The 100m norm was discarded in 2010 on an ecological basis. The hills and ridges at a low altitude are of significant importance in the preservation of groundwater and soil stability in the semi-arid landscapes. The Aravallis are not just a cluster of isolated peaks but are a geomorphological system. Unfortunately, the latest height-centric definition does not pay attention to crucial factors such as hydrology, biodiversity and ecological interdependence. It was due to the need to circumvent this reductionist strategy that the Court relied on the precautionary principle, in *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum vs Union of India and Others* (1996), rejecting the idea of any artificial limit.

> The higher judiciary appears to be aiding a watering down of environmental protection

The strange acceptance by the top court of the 100-metre definition, in *In Re: Issue Relating to Definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges* (2025), marked a clear departure from the position taken in 2010. In trying to keep landforms above a predetermined elevation as the sole subject of legal protection, the Court has efficiently deprived the Aravalli ranges of any statutory and judicial protection over large portions. Such a change has serious constitutional implications.

The right to a clean and healthy environment, which has been broadly understood in the application of Article 21, is directly involved. Article 48A, which requires the state to ensure the conservation and the enhancement of the environment, is now a hollow proclamation in instances where the interpretation of the law by the judiciary can promote rather than safeguard ecological exclusion. In fact, India's courts have been more enthusiastic about cow slaughter (Article 48) and uniform civil code (Article 44).

The discriminatory protection or preservation of some landforms in relation to their height creates an absurd classification that has no rational nexus to ecological goals. An interpretation of a law that safeguards outstanding hills and exposes the surrounding ecosystems to exploitation contravenes the principle of non-arbitrariness that forms the core of Article 14.

**A leniency**

This watering down of environmental protection is seen not only in the case of the Aravallis. This has been the case over years with courts and regulatory bodies supporting development projects based on the assurance of mitigation instead of their enforcing environmental norms to the letter. This is evident in the undermining of the EIA process and the legalisation of post-facto and conditional clearances, even after the judicial warnings. In *Common Cause vs Union of India* (2017), the Court had made it clear that the legalisation of illegal mining and environmental offences could not be done after the fact, and that the environmental law is to serve as a deterrent. But judicial leniency later in regard to lapses in procedure corresponds to a slow weakening of this principle.

The results of this kind of dilution are seen in cases of coastal urban ecology, especially the mangroves of Mumbai. Mangroves are multi-layered ecosystems which act as natural flood control systems, sinks of carbon and reservoirs of biodiversity. They protect against storm surges and tidal flooding. Continued judicial authorisations to fell (and transplant) about 34,000 mangrove trees to build infrastructure are a setback. Allowing mangrove destruction on a large scale on the 'promise of compensatory afforestation' marks the destruction of ecological science and constitutional responsibility. It requires decades to develop mature mangrove ecosystems, which cannot be compensated by having a plantation drive in some other place.

Another example is the Char Dham highway project in Uttarakhand. A June 2025 study identified 811 landslide zones along the Char Dham project. The Himalayan ecosystem is one of the most delicate in the world, and the road widening project on such a large scale has grave dangers – triggering landslides and disturbing rivers.

In *Citizens for Green Doon vs Union of India* (2021), the Court recognised the ecological importance of the area, but still allowed wider roads on the grounds of strategic defence needs. The flash floods and ecological disturbances that affected Uttarakhand raise questions about this 'balancing act'. The ill-effects of the current infrastructural rush affect future generations, especially when the constitutional obligations on the government and the citizen, under Article 48A and Article 51A(g), make it clear that it is the responsibility of citizens to safeguard the environment.

**Strong players and the issue of fairness**

Environmental clearances of corporations and large-scale infrastructure projects, especially those supported by serious capital in mining, highways or urban redevelopment, can pass through regulatory barriers rather easily. If there is a hearing, it is cut short, objections raised are considered obstructionist, and environmental compliance becomes a mere checklist. This casts grave doubts on procedural fairness and transparency which are contained in Article 14. When it disproportionately gives more privileges to economically strong players, environmental governance can destroy the trust of the populace and constitutional equality.

The changing stance of the judiciary in this dismal picture is crucial. Traditionally, courts have been the custodians of environmental rights as they have broadened the constitutional interpretation on issues of environmental damage. Judgments such as *M.C. Mehta vs Kamal Nath and Ors.* (1996) held that the public trust doctrine was deeply rooted in the belief that natural resources belonged to the state, were held in the trust of the people and could not be sold to be exploited privately. When such definitions or clearances are approved by the courts to promote the degradation of the environment, they basically go against the court's own jurisprudence. The Green Bench of the Supreme Court must sit regularly. Similar Benches must be set up in all the High Courts. Ease of business should not make destruction of the environment easy.

*The views expressed are personal*

# More money for defence, now fix the process



**Dushyant Singh**

is a retired Lieutenant General, and, currently, Director General of the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)



**Tara Kartha**

is Director, Research and Analysis, at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)

The Finance Minister has been rather generous. The new defence budget is being touted as being the first double digit jump in India's defence expenditure in decades, ever since its steady decline from 2017. At 2% of the Budget, it sends a signal of strategic determination in a more than unusually turbulent world. The funds will have to be used prudently and expeditiously, which demand systemic change, not tinkering, in the Budget process. As 'frenemies' abound and a tenuous 'rules-based order' collapses, there is no time to lose.

**The good and the bad**

The most talked about aspect is the Budget's 15% hike hitting 2% of GDP (up from 1.9% last year). Second, in a notable shift, capital expenditure has outpaced the revenue budget, up more than 22%, reversing years of neglect. Third, there is a clear thrust toward modernisation. The Indian Air Force gets a hefty 32% rise, while the Indian Army has got a 30% hike for heavy vehicles and weapons.

Oddly, the Indian Navy, with its ambitious commitments in the Indian Ocean, gets 3%. Ironically, this is probably due to its success in indigenisation, and a proven capability to absorb allotted funds.

All this is good. But the rupee has weakened substantially against the dollar, which means that payment for capital goods such as aircraft has become more expensive. It is not all bad news. Defence exports are rising – ₹23,000 crore last year as against ₹1,000 crore in 2014. A chunk of the Indian Army's mobility equipment is made here by the Tatas, Ashok Leyland and others. But this does eat into the 'double digit' increase.

There are also the pension payments which rose by 6.56% but it is still at 21.84% when compared to 27.95% for capital expenditure of the Ministry of Defence (MoD)'s allocation. Before FY1987-88, they came under central government pensions and were not clubbed with the defence budget. Despite this, the Budget was still 3.31% of GDP. The size of the economy then was less than half of what it is today, but it still provides a certain perspective.

It might be time to reinvent that wheel.

> A defence budget has to also be seen as a tool that powers growth

**Bureaucracy and delays**

A welcome aspect is that 75% of the capital acquisition budget for procurement has been earmarked for domestic industries, which includes private players. The government's thrust in this direction has been consistent, with defence production recording a 174% surge from 2014-15. But beyond this is the reality of a complex bureaucratic system, one aspect of which is the L-1 (lowest cost) rule which favours large industries rather than innovators who are vital for a tech-intensive industry. They cannot compete, especially when transitioning to manufacturing. This needs not only hand holding but also clarity in forward planning and promised volumes.

The next factor is this – the interminable delays in vital programmes such as Project 75 for submarines approved in 1997. Expected delivery times are now in the mid 2030s. The Rafale fighter aircraft deal which was envisioned in the 1990s, saw results only 2019-20. It is unsurprising then that the MoD had to return ₹12,500 crore of its capital allocation in FY2024-25.

It is time to re-examine the repeated demand for a Non-Lapsable Defence Modernisation Fund, which was announced in the FY 2004-05 Budget speech but never implemented. Financial convenience cannot result in the defence industry being held hostage.

**R&D lies scattered**

A key area is research and development (R&D). Funds for the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and a slew of research organisations have been increased; many have potential benefits for defence production. But research is segmented. Despite often being dual use, it seldom translates into better defence capabilities. India's overall research budget also remains 0.66% of GDP. Compare that to Japan at 3.70%, funded primarily by the private sector. In India, there is a near absence of private sector R&D. Those in the big league must loosen up and unify research and its direction.

A 'pacifist' country such as Japan has now allocated 2.2% for its defence. So has Australia with a far lower threat profile. Europe too is moving to larger allocations. At issue here is the 'guns vs butter' lens through which the defence budget is viewed. Instead, it needs to be melded with the vision of Viksit Bharat's $30 trillion economy. The Border Roads Organisation, for instance, delivers the connectivity for 'Vibrant Villages" programme which is vital to border development.

In another example, the Prime Minister remarked that indigenous shipbuilding has a 6.5 multiplier effect on employment, with its multiple ancillary industries. This applies almost across the board. The Budget has to be seen as a tool for powering growth, rather than being a 'non development' section. Once this is done, the processes will follow.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**The cover story**

What a sad commentary it is on how Parliament's time is squandered on unproductive debates over books. The Leader of the Opposition suddenly raises an issue over a former Army Chief's book, stalled by the Defence Ministry for opaque reasons. In response, ruling party MPs theatrically brandish books whose contents have long been in the public domain. As someone who has spent a lifetime in publishing, I expected Parliament to confront a far graver anomaly: GST on books. While books are 'exempt', every input — paper, printing, logistics, freelance honoraria, and author royalties — attracts GST. Publishers cannot claim input tax credit or seek refunds, effectively turning GST into a hidden tax. With costs rising relentlessly, this policy quietly penalises knowledge creation while Parliament argues over dust jackets.

**N. Nagarajan,**
Secunderabad

**The online age**

It was shocking to read the report on three minor girls ending their lives in Uttar Pradesh due to the restrictions their parents had imposed on them on the use of mobile phones (Front page, February 5). We find that many children cast their pens or pencils aside and are content with being immersed in their mobile phones. Letter writing is an alien concept. Internet 'addiction' in children is an important issue that needs to be tackled as it is affecting the mental health of young people. Our youth must have creative pastimes and an active lifestyle that involves outdoor games.

**A.J. Rangarajan,**
Chennai

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

# Should the Governor's address be scrapped?

PARLEY



**P.D.T. Achary**
Former Secretary General of the Lok Sabha



**Alok Prasanna Kumar**
Co-founder of Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy

Last month, during the joint session of the Karnataka Legislature, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot walked out of the House after reading only a few lines of his customary address prepared by the State Cabinet. The Chief Minister accused the Governor of violating his constitutional obligation. The incident followed similar developments in other Opposition-ruled States. In DMK-ruled Tamil Nadu, Governor R.N. Ravi walked out of the Assembly without delivering his inaugural address. In LDF-ruled Kerala, Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar omitted portions of the speech cleared by the Cabinet. Should the practice of Governors addressing the State legislatures be scrapped? P.D.T. Achary and Alok Prasanna Kumar discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Aaratrika Bhaumik**. Edited excerpts:

**Does a Governor's refusal to read the Cabinet-approved opening address violate the Constitution?**

**P.D.T. Achary:** Under Article 176, a Governor is constitutionally mandated to address the State legislature at the commencement of the first session each year and at the first session following a general election. The address sets out the government's legislative agenda, outlining the policies and programmes it proposes to pursue during the session and the year ahead. The text of this address is prepared by the State Cabinet, and the Governor, as a constitutional functionary, is required to deliver it in that form. A Governor who declines to address the House, or who makes only a token appearance by reading selective portions of the address, cannot be said to be acting in conformity with the mandate of Article 176.

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** Such conduct is contrary to the constitutional mandate. The Governor is an integral part of the State legislature, as recognised under Article 168 of the Constitution. This aspect is often overlooked, as the legislature is frequently understood to comprise only one or two Houses of elected representatives. As a constitutional head within this structure, the Governor is expected to facilitate, not obstruct, the functioning of the legislature.

**Can a Governor use discretion to alter such an address?**

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** No. In *Nabam Rebia v. Deputy Speaker* (2016), the Supreme Court clarified that the Governor's address to the House is an executive function performed strictly on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. The recurring departures from this constitutional convention are a consequence of the existing institutional design. Unlike the President, who is indirectly elected and subject to impeachment by Parliament, the Governor holds office at the pleasure of the President, in effect, the Union government. Consequently, while the President remains institutionally answerable to Parliament, the Governor's continuance in office depends upon the confidence of the Union government rather than the legislature within which the office functions.



Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot at the joint session of the State legislature, at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru.

**P.D.T. Achary:** I agree. The Governor cannot alter the address prepared by the State Cabinet and is required only to read it before the House. The Governor bears no responsibility for its contents and incurs no liability for what it states. In a representative democracy such as ours, executive authority is vested in the Council of Ministers, as the elected representatives of the people. The Governor is therefore precluded from running a parallel government or taking independent decisions de hors the aid and advice of the State Cabinet.

**What recourse does a Governor have if there are genuine reservations about the address's contents?**

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** The Governor cannot hold an independent view on whether the government's policies are desirable or even constitutional. Personal opinions need not be forfeited, but they must be conveyed through candid, private exchanges with the State Cabinet. Once the Governor assumes office, such personal views must yield to constitutional discipline. A Governor may offer counsel, but must recognise the limits of the office.

At the same time, it is a healthy convention for the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers to maintain regular communication with the Governor and to be receptive to any contrarian views he or she might have. Where such rapport and constitutional civility exist, it is unlikely that an elected government would disregard the Governor's counsel.

> At least two other sessions of the State legislature each year commence without a Governor's address, which indicates that the legislature's functioning is not inherently dependent on this ceremonial formality.
> **P.D.T. ACHARY**

**Is this address a colonial remnant that ought to be dispensed with?**

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** The practice ought to be retained, even if it is largely symbolic and serves little functional purpose. The focus should be on addressing instances of constitutionally impermissible gubernatorial discretion rather than abandoning the convention altogether. The address recognises the Governor's place as an integral part of the legislature and reflects the continuity of the Westminster parliamentary model adopted in India.

**P.D.T. Achary:** I do not believe there is anything sacrosanct about this practice. At least two other sessions of the State legislature each year commence without a Governor's address, which indicates that the legislature's functioning is not inherently dependent on this ceremonial formality. Moreover, Article 175 of the Constitution provides an alternative mechanism through which the Governor may address the House or send messages regarding any pending legislation. Reconsideration of this practice becomes particularly pertinent in light of the increasing instances of visibly partisan conduct by Governors in Opposition-ruled States.

Further, Article 355 imposes a duty upon the Union government to ensure that the governance of every State is carried on in accordance with the Constitution. When a Governor declines to deliver the address mandated under Article 176, it raises concerns about whether that constitutional obligation is being meaningfully upheld. Such situations also risk precipitating a constitutional crisis, as the legislative session cannot formally commence in the absence of the Governor's address.

**Is Presidential intervention necessary when Governors fail to discharge their constitutional duties?**

**P.D.T. Achary:** Yes. When Governors act in a partisan manner and fail to discharge their constitutional duties, it is incumbent upon the President to intervene and require the Governor either to perform those duties or to demit office. Article 160 of the Constitution empowers the President to issue directions for the discharge of a Governor's functions, particularly to address contingencies not expressly provided for in the Constitution. However, there have been no notable instances of Presidents invoking such powers to avert situations where gubernatorial conduct threatens to create a constitutional crisis in the States.

**Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has called for a constitutional amendment to do away with this address. How feasible is it to bring about such an amendment?**

**P.D.T. Achary:** It is unlikely that such a constitutional amendment will be achievable. The Union government is unlikely to support it, and its passage would require a special majority in Parliament – a majority of the total membership of each House and a two-thirds majority of members present and voting. This is a difficult threshold to meet without a broad consensus between the government and the Opposition. Moreover, when the existing framework yields evident political benefit, there is little incentive to alter it.

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** Such an amendment would be futile. If the Constitution is to be amended, a more meaningful reform would be to reconsider the manner in which Governors are appointed and removed. Such reform could ensure that Governors remain mindful that their allegiance lies with the Constitution, not the Union government, and that any departure from this role carries consequences for their continuance in office. This also explains why Presidents generally discharge their functions without controversy, while Governors often do not. The former is institutionally accountable to Parliament by virtue of indirect election and the possibility of impeachment.

However, as Mr. Achary has pointed out, even this would require political consensus that may be difficult to secure. Nevertheless, a serious discussion on such reforms is necessary to halt the gradual weakening of constitutional governance in Opposition-ruled States.

To listen to the full interview
**Scan the code or go to the link**
www.thehindu.com

NOTEBOOK

# The free press dies in broad daylight

## The fate of *The Washington Post* serves as a cautionary tale

**Narayan Lakshman**

The writing was on the wall. William Lewis, publisher of *The Washington Post,* and blue-eyed boy of its owner, Jeff Bezos, scarcely attended meetings with the editorial staff of the venerable newspaper since he took over in early 2024. But he set alarm bells ringing across the newsroom with less-than-constructive comments to journalists such as "People are not reading your stuff," openly calling for staff who "do not feel aligned with the company's plan" to leave, and reportedly describing some of them as "activists, not journalists."

Driving internal corporate disenchantment with the journalistic practices of the nearly 150-year-old newspaper was an apparent deepening ideological clash between the management and the long-standing, well-considered political position of the Post on a number of issues. For example, Mr. Bezos's decision to end the established practice of endorsing a presidential candidate before the U.S. election – thus effectively avoiding the image of the newspaper supporting Kamala Harris in November 2024 – raised eyebrows among insiders and external observers alike. Last year, he said that the opinion pages would defend "two pillars: personal liberties and free markets".

It should have come as little surprise then that the *Post* has now led what is widely being described as a "bloodbath" for quality journalism. In what will be remembered as a pivotal moment in the struggle of the U.S. media to stand up to challenging economic conditions and a president who routinely denigrates the free press of the country, Editor-in-Chief Matt Murray, reportedly told employees this week that the newspaper was undergoing a "strategic reset to better position the publication for the future". To this end, he announced sweeping layoffs of close to one-third of all editorial staff across departments, including international desks and correspondents worldwide, the books and sports divisions, and metro and cultural coverage.

At first glance, the proposal – apparently the motivation for this large-scale termination exercise – to narrow the focus of the broadsheet exclusively to politics and national security coverage might work in theory; yet upon closer inspection it fails the common sense test. Even if we accept the premise of the management that it is unprofitable to pursue the idea of a broad news offering – in the face of evidence to the contrary, offered by *The New York Times*, for example – how is the bottom line served by a strategy that rips away some of the finest international reporters and desk editors who are critical to producing quality journalism in politics and national security? A simple example highlights the contradictions inherent: shutting down reporting hubs in Ukraine – as reports suggest the *Post* has done – would directly impinge upon the newspaper's coverage of the machinations of the Donald Trump-led White House as it seeks to curry favour with Russia or reset ties with Europe by brazenly undermining NATO unity.

The deep learning for media houses across the free and democratic world is this: overzealous corporate owners of newspapers who are prone to genuflection to their political masters will happily seize the excuse of falling subscriptions or profits, even of a publication with a rich, hoary legacy of quality journalism, to re-bundle it as a prosaic, pliant publication that might offer a steady income stream to shareholders.

Editorial leaders who hope to avoid this fate would do the opposite of what the combative Mr. Lewis suggested, which is to pre-empt an exodus of readers and financial losses by reassessing what the core readership of the publication cares about and double down on multi-pronged offerings built on the latest and most suitable technology platforms.

The fate of the *Post* is a cautionary tale and its moral is this: while democracy may die in darkness, the free press dies in broad daylight.

*narayan@thehindu.co.in*

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

## A time for reflection



Kashmiri Shiite Muslims light candles at the graves of their relatives to mark Shab-e-Barat, at a graveyard in Srinagar. Shab-e-Barat means the Night of Salvation and it reflects the belief that Allah grants mercy to those who sin and blesses those who pray. IMRAN NISSAR

FROM THE ARCHIVES — The Hindu.

**FIFTY YEARS AGO** FEBRUARY 6, 1976

### Harold Macmillan to visit Madras

Madras, Feb. 5: The former British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Macmillan, will be in Madras for a couple of days this month. He is due to make a 10-day visit to India in his capacity as the President of the Macmillan group of companies. Arriving from Calcutta on February 20, a day after his landing in India, Mr. Macmillan will visit the local office and the press, besides meeting prominent citizens of Madras. On February 23, he will inaugurate the company's computerised type-setting export project at Bangalore. Mr. S.G. Wasani, Managing Director, Macmillan Company of India, said computerised typesetting represented a major breakthrough in printing technology. To begin with, the company would have one such unit, costing Rs. 40 lakhs. Another unit would be installed within two years. He expected the firm's exports to increase from the present Rs. 5 lakhs to Rs. 20 lakhs, by the end of 1976 as a result of this advanced process. In reply to a question, Mr. Wasani said the State Governments' policy of nationalising school text-books gradually had not affected the company's business, though many other publishers had to quit the field. If anything, the firm's turnover of school textbooks had risen from Rs. 60 lakhs to Rs. 91 lakhs during the last three years, he said.

**A HUNDRED YEARS AGO** FEBRUARY 6, 1926

### Control of Buddha Gaya

A meeting to consider the Indian Committee's Report issued in connection with the Buddha Gaya temple was held on 3rd February at the Olcott Memorial Hall, Ananda College. The Rev. Kahave Ratnasara, High Priest of the Maligakanda Temple, presided and a large number of delegates from various Buddhist Associations was present. Dr. O.A. Hewaritarne said that the agitation for the control of Buddha Gaya by the Buddhists began as early as 1891. After persistent efforts, they succeeded in getting the Indian National Congress to appoint a Sub-Committee to enquire into the matter.

## From Page One

## 18 killed in blast at illegal coal mine in Meghalaya

The police registered a *suo motu* first information report (FIR) at the Khliehriat (district headquarters) police station under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, read with the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act and the Explosives Substances Act.

Activists claim mine owners, backed by politicians and other influential people, continue to operate illegally despite the NGT's blanket ban on the mining of coal and its transportation in April 2014, which was later upheld by the Supreme Court.

**Several accidents**

There have been several cases of coal mine accidents before and after the ban, killing at least 50 workers to date. The last major incident was in December 2018, also in East Jaintia Hills district, where at least 15 miners were trapped in a flooded mine 370 feet below the surface.

Multiple agencies, including the Indian Navy, could retrieve only two bodies in the rescue operation that lasted months.

"Rat-hole mining, entailing digging holes about 4-5 feet in height, allowing an adult to squat and work, is risky. However, daily wages as high as ₹2,000 attract many people to take up the job," Shillong-based anti-illegal mining activist Agnes Kharshiing said.

Earlier, the High Court of Meghalaya constituted the one-man Justice (retired) B.P. Katakey Committee to investigate, monitor, and recommend measures for environmental restoration following the ban on illegal coal mining in the State. The panel's periodic reports have hardly made any difference, activists say.

## 'Oppn. has defiled the temple of democracy'

Speaking about the achievements of his government, the Prime Minister said that much of it was to correct the mistakes of previous governments, which were more focused on vote-bank politics rather than development.

Referring to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's appearance in the Supreme Court in the special intensive revision (SIR) case without naming her, he termed the Trinamool Congress-led government as *nirmam* or merciless, pushing for inclusion of "infiltrators rather than citizens", whereas every country in the world was determined to stop infiltrators along their borders.

He added that the throwing of papers during Opposition's disruption in the Lok Sabha at presiding officers in the House on Tuesday and Wednesday, belonging to the Dalit community of Andhra Pradesh (TDP's Krishna Prasad Tenneti) and Assam (BJP's Dilip Saikia) was an insult to both Dalits and Assamese.

Referring to slogans about "digging Modi's grave", he said that those who talk of '*mohabbat ki dukaan*' (a shop of love used by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi) are raising slogans like '*Modi teri kabr khudegi*' (Modi we will dig your grave), which he said, highlighted the Opposition's frustration over successive electoral defeats. "They will never be able to dig my grave, the blessings of the poor are with me," he said. "The Congress thinks that the Prime Minister's chair is reserved for the members of a particular family, they have been abusing me for 25 years, but the people of India, women, poor, farmers have blessed me, repeatedly," he said. Mr. Modi listed out the achievements of his government in the last 11 years, while asserting that high growth and low inflation reflect the strength in the country's economy.

## Kuki-Zo groups boycott tribal MLAs in Manipur

Normal life was hit in Chandel, Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, and Pherzawl districts as people rallied with posters calling some Kuki-Zo MLAs "traitors". There were reports of arson in these districts, where protesters accused the MLAs of prioritising government formation over pressuring the Centre for a separate Union Territory-like administration for the Kuki-Zo community.

Anger was directed at Nemcha Kipgen, sworn in as a Deputy Chief Minister on Wednesday, and two other legislators – former Director General of Police L.M. Khaute and Ngursanglur Sanate, who flew to Imphal from New Delhi with other NDA legislators. All three are Bharatiya Janata Party legislators. It was the first such visit by any Kuki-Zo MLA to the State capital since the ethnic conflict between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities broke out in May 2023.

The Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) said the decision of some Kuki-Zo legislators to join the government was in violation of a resolution adopted unanimously to abstain from government formation till the Central and the State governments gave written political commitment to support a separate administration. The KZC said these MLAs were party to the resolution along with leaders of Kuki-Zo social organisations and some rebel groups that had signed the Suspension of Operations agreement with the Centre in August 2008.

"By joining a Meitei-dominated government, these MLAs have aligned themselves with our enemy, disregarding pain and sacrifices endured by the Kuki-Zo community," the KZC said, viewing their act as a serious betrayal and a deliberate attempt to undermine the unity, sentiments and collective political stand of the Kuki-Zo people.

# DAC to weigh acquisition of Rafale ahead of Macron visit

Eighteen aircraft are likely to be acquired in flyaway condition to meet immediate needs, with the rest to be manufactured in India, an official says; the source code will remain with the French side

**Saurabh Trivedi**
NEW DELHI



The procurement will take the total Rafale fleet in India to 176, with the IAF already operating 36. PTI

Ahead of French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India for the artificial intelligence Summit, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, is scheduled to meet in the second week of February to consider key procurement proposals aimed at enhancing the operational capabilities of the armed forces.

A senior defence official confirmed that the DAC meeting would grant Acceptance of Necessity for several acquisition proposals. During his stay, President Macron is expected to meet Mr. Singh to discuss bilateral defence cooperation between India and France.

Another defence official said that multiple proposals will be tabled at the meeting, including the acquisition of 114 Rafale fighter aircraft from France. Following DAC clearance, the proposal will be placed before the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by the Prime Minister, for final approval.

Under the proposed plan, the bulk of the aircraft will be manufactured in India, with indigenous components accounting for approximately 30% to 40% of the overall content, providing a significant boost to domestic defence manufacturing. The official added that 18 aircraft are likely to be acquired in flyaway condition to meet the Indian Air Force's immediate operational requirements, while the remaining jets will be manufactured in India. The source code, however, will remain with the French side.

**Largest acquisitions**

Defence experts noted that once cleared by the CCS, the deal will rank among the largest defence acquisitions undertaken by India. The procurement will take the total Rafale fleet in the country to 176 aircraft, with the IAF already operating 36 Rafale jets and the Indian Navy having placed orders for 26 naval variants last year.

The AI summit is expected to see participation from representatives of several countries, including Brazil, Switzerland, Greece, Serbia, Spain and Finland.

Separately, Indian Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, in his interaction with presspersons earlier, had flagged concerns over delays in fighter aircraft deliveries, noting that Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. has fallen behind schedule, partly due to delays in the supply of the F404-IN20 engines from GE.

The IAF has repeatedly underscored the urgency of strengthening its fighter fleet amid a rapidly evolving regional security environment. "To maintain a comfortable strength, we need two squadrons, around 30 to 40 aircraft, produced every year. Replacement is not a choice; it's a necessity," the Air Chief had said earlier.

# EC holds briefing for observers in poll-bound States

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

**They were instructed to remain accessible and ensure that the grievances of voters were redressed**

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday began briefings for General, Police and Expenditure Observers to be deployed as Central observers for the Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

A total of 1,444 officers, including 714 General Observers, 233 Police Observers and 497 Expenditure Observers have been called for the briefing meetings, which will be held in three batches over two days from Thursday.

The briefing was done by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi.

The CEC said the observers should ensure free, fair and transparent elections, and their presence would energise the entire election machinery across 824 constituencies where elections were going to be held.

Senior EC officials also briefed the observers on various aspects of preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of elections. The observers were also briefed on the IT applications and platforms, and media-related matters during the sessions.

They were asked to familiarise themselves with all the election laws, rules, guidelines and provide inputs directly to the commission and ensure their strict and impartial compliance. They were instructed to remain fully accessible to political parties, candidates and ensure that the grievances of voters were redressed in a timely manner.

The observers were also instructed to visit polling stations and ensure the implementation of the recent initiatives taken by the commission for the convenience of voters, especially ensuring the provision of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs).

# 200 'illegal' online pharmacies tied to an India-based criminal organisation shut down by U.S.

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has announced the shutdown of over 200 website domains tied to an India-based transnational criminal organisation (TCO) allegedly responsible for at least six fatal and four non-fatal overdoses. Four persons have been arrested so far.

The DEA executed the operation in cooperation with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. "The TCO tied to these illegal online pharmacies has been under investigation by DEA's Rocky Mountain Field Division since 2022," read its statement.

"Leveraging its global reach, DEA actively collaborates with our Government of India law enforcement partners to identify, investigate, and dismantle dangerous criminal organisations that engage in these types of illegal drug trafficking operations," said the DEA, adding that it would continue its crackdown on illicit pharmaceutical distributors at the source through joint operations.

The agency's field offices launched the searches on January 27 across the U.S., leading to the arrest of four individuals along with the issuance of five Immediate Suspension Orders (ISO) and one Order to Show Cause (OTSC) against DEA-registered pharmacies. "These actions were in addition to the U.S. government shutting down more than 200 online pharmacies accused of filling hundreds of thousands of orders of diverted pharmaceuticals and counterfeit pills without valid prescriptions," the DEA said.

The agency has approached hundreds of customers who bought medication through them.

"This case demonstrates how foreign-based traffickers exploit our healthcare system, hide behind the internet, and use people inside the United States to move dangerous drugs under the guise of legitimate commerce," said DEA Administrator Terrance Cole. In 2024, DEA had cautioned the U.S. citizens against an increase in illegal online pharmacies.

# Anurag Thakur is free to participate in BCCI affairs: SC

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI



Anurag Thakur

The Supreme Court on Thursday modified its 2017 order in a major relief for former BCCI president and current BJP LS member Anurag Thakur, and said he shall be free to participate in the affairs of the cricket Board according to rules and regulations.

On January 2, 2017, the top court had directed Mr. Thakur to "forthwith cease and desist from being associated with the working of BCCI". A Bench headed by CJISurya Kant said Mr. Thakur was "hitherto free to participate in the affairs of the BCCI as per the rules and regulations". The Bench, including Justice Joymalya Bagchi, on Thursday lifted the embargo on Mr. Thakur considering the fact that he had given an unconditional apology and he has been unconnected with the BCCI for nine years now.

In January 2017, the court had declared Mr. Thakur and then BCCI honorary secretary Ajay Shirke "unfit" to continue at the helm of the BCCI for their "obstructionist" attitude and failure to implement the Justice Lodha Committee reforms in the BCCI.

# Centre signs tripartite pact to create Naga authority

**Vijaita Singh**
NEW DELHI

A tripartite agreement for creation of the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) was signed between Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO), Nagaland government and Union Home Ministry on Thursday.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio. ENPO is an apex body representing eight recognised Naga tribes of the six eastern districts of Nagaland.

The agreement paves the way for creation of the FNTA for six districts of Nagaland – Tuensang, Mon, Kiphire, Longleng, Noklak and Shamator – and devolution of powers in respect of 46 subjects to the FNTA.

Mr. Shah said it was a significant day for a dispute-free Northeast. "Eleven years ago, several armed groups and disputes in the Northeast were pushing the region towards fragmentation and disturbing its peace. At the same time, many inter-State disputes were disrupting the peace of the States," he said.

Mr. Shah said that since 2019, the Centre has signed 12 important agreements in the Northeast. Mr. Shah said that he wants to assure the representatives of ENPO that the Government of India will assist in the development of Eastern Nagaland and also will shoulder its responsibility. He added that a fixed amount will be determined every year, and the MHA will cover the initial expenditure for its establishment. The agreement provides, *inter alia*, for a mini-Secretariat for FNTA, headed by Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary, sharing of development outlay for the Eastern Nagaland region proportional to population and area. However, this agreement does not affect in any manner, the provisions of Article 371(A) of the Constitution, the Ministry said.

# Talks on, India-U.S. deal joint statement in 4-5 days: Goyal

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

India and the U.S. will "finalise and sign" a joint statement on the first tranche of the bilateral trade agreement in the next four to five days, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday.

He said U.S. tariffs on Indian exports will be cut from 50% to 18% through an executive order from the U.S. President following the statement.

India can reduce tariffs on U.S. imports after signing the legal and formal agreement, which is expected mid-March, the Minister said.

"Meaningful talks are going on between India and the U.S. on the decisions that were announced by the leaders of the two countries," Mr. Goyal said. "The first tranche of the Bilateral Trade Agreement is nearly ready."

On the commitment to buy goods worth $500 billion from the U.S., the Minister cited India's growth requirements and said one "can clearly see before our eyes as potential that we can import from the U.S. over the next five years".

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said a joint statement has followed each free trade agreement that India has negotiated with other countries.

"Once the joint statement is there, it needs to be converted into a legal agreement," he said. "The legal agreement will give us the authority to reduce our tariffs. Their (U.S.) tariffs are executive tariffs [and so can be amended by executive orders]. Our tariffs are most-favoured nation (MFN) tariffs that can only be cut after the legal agreement has been signed."

MFN tariffs are those that World Trade Organisation members impose on goods from other member nations.

# Army renames 246 roads, buildings, and facilities to shed colonial legacy

**Saurabh Trivedi**
NEW DELHI



Malcolm Lines in Mhow Cantonment has been renamed Piru Singh Lines.

The Indian Army has renamed 246 roads, buildings, and facilities across establishments nationwide as part of an effort to shed colonial-era symbols and reinforce an identity rooted in India's military heritage.

The Army stated that the revised nomenclature gives pride of place to the nation's gallantry awardees, battle heroes and distinguished military leaders, reflecting the core values of courage, sacrifice and leadership. Officials say the initiative is part of the Army's continuing efforts to align its institutional spaces with India's military traditions and national ethos.

The renaming exercise covers a wide range of infrastructure, including 124 roads, 77 residential colonies, 27 buildings and military facilities, and 18 other facilities such as parks, training areas, sports grounds, gates, and helipads.

This move complements broader national initiatives aimed at recognising bravery and supreme sacrifice, including sustained efforts to honour Param Vir Chakra awardees, ensuring that the legacy of India's heroes remains embedded in everyday military life.

Across several cantonments and military stations, British-era names have been replaced with titles drawn from India's military history. In Delhi Cantonment, Kirby Place has been renamed Kenuguruse Vihar, and Mall Road is now known as Arun Khetrapal Marg. Ambala Cantonment's Patterson Road Quarters is now Dhan Singh Thapa Enclave, while New Horn Line in Mathura Cantonment has been renamed Abdul Hamid Lines.

Similar changes include Queens Line Road in Jaipur Cantonment, which has been renamed Sundar Singh Marg, New Birdwood Line in Bareilly Cantonment is now called Thimayya Colony, and Malcolm Lines in Mhow Cantonment has been renamed Piru Singh Lines.

## Congress flags 'procedural irregularities' in Lok Sabha

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

Congress MP K.C. Venugopal on Thursday wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla alleging "serious procedural irregularities" and questioning the "authenticity" of the procedure adopted to pass the Motion of Thanks to the President without the customary reply by the Prime Minister.

In his letter, he said that under Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure, it is mandatory for the Prime Minister to explain the government's position at the end of the discussion. If the Prime Minister is unable to do so, the House must be informed, he said, adding that neither of these requirements was met.

"In the present case, neither did the Hon'ble Prime Minister reply to the debate nor was the House informed about his inability to do so. This clearly amounts to a violation of provisions of Rule 20," the Congress leader wrote.

Mr. Venugopal also referred to Rule 362, under which a debate may be closed without a Minister's reply only if a motion to that effect is moved by a member and approved by the House. He said that no such motion had been moved before the Motion of Thanks was put to vote. "This action, therefore, constitutes a violation of Rule 362," he added.

# PM absent, Lok Sabha passes Motion of Thanks

Amid continued protests by Opposition, Lok Sabha was adjourned; Speaker says the conduct of some Opposition members in his office on Wednesday was not appropriate, terms it a 'black spot'

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**
NEW DELHI



**Stormy scenes:** Opposition leaders trooping into the Well in the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session in New Delhi on Thursday. SANSAD TV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address before it was passed in the Lok Sabha on Thursday. In fact, he was not present in the House when the Motion was put to vote. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh were also not present.

The last time that the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address was passed without the Prime Minister's reply was in June 2004, when then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh could not deliver his reply to the debate in the Lok Sabha following BJP protests.

He had then asked the Lok Sabha to put the Motion to vote without his reply. In his 2005 speech, Dr. Singh mentioned that he had not been allowed to speak the previous year.

**'Concrete information'**

On Thursday, as the Opposition continued its protests after the passage of the Motion, Mr. Birla adjourned the proceedings yet again.

When the House reconvened at 3 p.m., the Speaker said: "When the Leader of the House was to reply [to the debate on the Motion of Thanks], I had concrete information that many members of the Congress party could carry out an unexpected act by reaching the spot where the Prime Minister sits."

He added: "If this incident had taken place, then this would have left the democratic traditions of the country in shreds."

The Speaker added that the conduct of some Opposition members in his office on Wednesday was not appropriate and was, in fact, "like a black spot".

"With sadness, I have to inform [the House] that some members displayed such behaviour in the House on Wednesday that had never been witnessed in its history," he said.

On Wednesday, women MPs from Opposition parties charged towards the Prime Minister's seat in the Lok Sabha, holding up banners ahead of his scheduled speech. The incident took place while BJP member P.P. Chaudhary was making his remarks on the Motion of Thanks. The Prime Minister was not present in the House at that point.

Mr. Birla thanked the Prime Minister for acceding to his request and avoiding unpleasant scenes in the Lok Sabha by not coming to the House on Wednesday.

He then adjourned the House for the day as Opposition members continued to protest and raise slogans.

**Persistent protest**

The Lok Sabha had witnessed protests since the morning, with Congress MPs trooping into the Well, carrying posters featuring a picture of the Prime Minster, with 'Narendra-Surrender' slogans written at the top.

MPs from the Samajwadi Party and the Trinamool Congress were also in the Well, while other members of the INDIA bloc, including the DMK and the Left, stood at their seats and in the aisle in solidarity.

# Tensions escalate in Rajya Sabha over Rahul issue, Opposition stages walkout

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI



**Speech row:** Rajya Sabha MP Mallikarjun Kharge speaking in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session on Thursday. SANSAD TV

The Congress and other Opposition parties staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, accusing the government of preventing Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi from speaking during the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President for her Address to the joint sitting of Parliament. The protest followed a heated exchange between the Treasury and Opposition benches.

In the Upper House, Leader of the Opposition and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge attempted to read out excerpts from an unpublished book by former Army chief General M.M. Naravane (retd), the very point of contention in the Lok Sabha. Chairman and Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan disallowed him from doing so, prompting Opposition members to walk out in protest.

Leader of the House J.P. Nadda criticised the Congress, and said that the party should not allow itself to be held hostage by an "*abodh balak* (ignorant child)", in a reference to Mr. Gandhi.

Tensions escalated soon after Zero Hour began. Raising the issue first, Mr. Kharge said Mr. Gandhi had not been permitted to speak in the Lok Sabha despite wanting to address matters of national interest. Before he could continue, Mr. Radhakrishnan ruled that the proceedings of the Lok Sabha could not be discussed in the Rajya Sabha, and handed the floor to Mr. Nadda.

Mr. Nadda countered, saying that the Opposition should advise its Lok Sabha members to participate in the debate rather than disrupt the House. Opposition MPs responded with slogans, alleging that democracy was being "throttled".

**Rijiju questions protest**

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju questioned the timing of the protest, noting that the Rajya Sabha debate had proceeded uninterrupted for three days. Reiterating his ruling, the Rajya Sabha Chairman cited a precedent based on an intervention by former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, advising against references to Lok Sabha proceedings in the Upper House.

Mr. Nadda said the government was prepared for discussion "in all forms and at all times". He advised Mr. Kharge, as Congress chief, to run the party independently and not allow it to become hostage to the "*abodh balak*". He added: "You shouldn't let pride, arrogance and ignorance dictate... Arrogance and ignorance are a potent combination and you should stay away from it."

The Congress president said such language was unacceptable and accused the BJP of stifling democratic processes. Mr. Kharge said BJP members were not free to speak their minds even as they lectured the Opposition.

## PM 'hiding behind' Speaker; claims of threat a 'lie': Cong.

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

Accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "hiding behind" Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday dismissed as "absolute lie" the claim that Opposition members were planning to hurt Mr. Modi.

"If you are going to allow your members to quote books, talk nonsense, the Opposition Benches are going to protest. I am sorry, the Prime Minister is hiding behind the Speaker... because three women were standing before his Bench, what nonsense is this," Ms. Vadra told pressmen outside the House.

Her remarks came after Mr. Birla said in the Lok Sabha that he had asked the Prime Minister not to come to the House to deliver his address, following "concrete information" that some Congress MPs could carry out an "unexpected act" near his seat.

Ms. Gandhi said the government was making the Speaker "say all this" because the Prime Minister "did not have the guts to come to the House".

"It is an absolute lie. There is no question of anybody raising hands on the Prime Minister, trying to hurt him or any such thing... there was no such plan," she added.

Congress leader Pawan Khera accused the BJP of insulting Dalit MP Varsha Gaikwad by casting aspersions on her conduct."Were the Modi government and their compliant journalists uncomfortable with a Dalit woman MP standing up? Do they consider them untouchable," Mr. Khera asked in a post on X.

In a social media post, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi said, "Just so much panic from questions? Modi*ji*, so scared of the truth, sought refuge in lies. Well, did what seemed right".

**PM has delivered 'another election rally speech' lasting 97 minutes: Jairam**

**'Forced to walk out'**

Meanwhile, Congress president and Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said that the Opposition was forced to walk out of the Rajya Sabha because the government was not ready to listen.

He said the Opposition had sought to place "issues of national interest" before both Houses, including concerns about unemployment, inflation, and the welfare of farmers.

Alleging that the government had "sacrificed farmers' interests" to "broker a deal with America", Mr. Kharge said the Opposition wanted accountability on what he described as India's "surrender" to U.S.'s demands under President Donald Trump.

"We wanted to ask all these questions... A united Opposition had decided that if the LoP is allowed to speak then we would participate. But they didn't allow us," he said.

He also criticised Mr. Modi remarks, saying that leaders who built modern India were being routinely insulted.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh posted on X that the Prime Minister had delivered "another election rally speech" lasting 97 minutes. He described the speech as "overflowing with abuses and assaults, distortions and dramatics, innuendos and insults".

## Rajya Sabha adopts the Motion of Thanks amid protests by Opposition

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI



**Talking point:** Opposition MPs walk out from the Rajya Sabha during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech. ANI VIDEO GRAB

The Rajya Sabha on Thursday adopted the Motion to Thank President Droupadi Murmu for her Address to the joint session of Parliament. The amendments moved by Opposition MPs were defeated in a voice vote in their absence. The Opposition had walked out of the House during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply to the debate.

Earlier in the day, BJP members addressed concerns expressed by Opposition members over the India-U.S. bilateral trade deal and said the deal was in the interest of the country. Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi said even External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar was unaware of the details of the trade deal. Quoting U.S. President Donald Trump, she said agriculture and dairy products were part of the deal and sought clarification from the government.

**'Farmers are a priority'**

BJP MP Maya Naroliya said under the Narendra Modi government, the allocation to agriculture sector had increased, helping the farmers to modernise farming systems. Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) alone, she said ₹4 lakh crore was distributed to farmers.

"Farmers are priority for the government," she said, adding that India had become the world's largest rice producer.

Another BJP MP, Mahendra Bhatt, said the PM-Kisan scheme instilled confidence among farmers to further their livelihood.

**Opposition parties say agriculture and dairy part of the India-U.S. bilateral trade agreement**

"This is a truth that farmers have an important role in India. If farmers remained poor and if their interests were not protected, India could have also faced a famine-like situation that some other countries suffered," he said.

Aam Aadmi Party MP Sandeep Kumar Pathak said nobody was against the special intensive revision of voter lists but it should be a gradual process. "You are rushing an activity which should take two years in three months. Who on earth can achieve this? I am very sure it is not achievable," he said.

## Ensuring energy security of Indians is top priority: govt.

**Kallol Bhattacherjee**
NEW DELHI



Randhir Jaiswal

India's latest decisions on energy sourcing were taken keeping in mind the need for "diversifying" energy supplies, the External Affairs Ministry said on Thursday in response to a question regarding U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "agreed to stop buying Russian oil".

Elaborating further on Mr. Trump's assertions regarding India agreeing to purchase crude oil from Venezuela, made on social media platform Truth Social on Monday, Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India "remains open to exploring the commercial merits" of crude oil supply from multiple sources, "including from Venezuela".

"Diversifying our energy sourcing in keeping with objective market conditions and evolving international dynamics is at the core of our strategy to ensure this. All of India's actions are taken and will be taken with this in mind," he said, highlighting that "ensuring energy security of 1.4 billion Indians is the supreme priority" for the government.

Russia had emerged as the biggest supplier of crude oil to India against the backdrop of the Ukraine conflict that erupted on February 24, 2022.

Russia attracted immediate sanctions from the West as the war escalated, but India maintained that the energy trade with Russia was in its interest. However, officials here indicated that India is weary of "overreliance" on any single source as such dependence increases the vulnerability of the Indian economy to any possible supply disruption.

**Ties with Venezuela**

Mr. Jaiswal described Venezuela as a "long-standing partner of India in the energy sector encompassing trade and investments". "Consistent with India's approach to energy security, India remains open to exploring the commercial merits of any new crude supply options, including from Venezuela," he said.

Mr. Jaiswal described the India-U.S. trade deal announced by Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump on Monday as one of the biggest commercial moves by the two sides.

"This agreement will give a major boost to India's export, labour intensive industries, job creation, growth and bring prosperity to our people," he said.

In remarks shared with the news agency ANI, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that he was not "directly" part of the negotiations on the deal and referred to the role played by Mr. Goyal.

"It is hard for me to say, and the Commerce Minister would know it better, because he is in direct engagement with the U.S. Trade Representative," Mr. Jaishankar said, adding that "a detailing of the trade negotiations is under way as we speak".

## Take note of Assam CM's 'hate speech', group urges Gauhati HC

**The Hindu Bureau**
GUWAHATI

A group of 43 citizens have urged the Gauhati High Court to take *suo motu* cognisance of "repeated instances of hate speech and constitutional impropriety" by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The citizens included academic Hiren Gohain; retired Director-General of Police Harekrishna Deka; former Archbishop of Guwahati Thomas Menamparampil; Ajit Kumar Bhuyan, MP; and environmental scientist Dulal Chandra Goswami.

In a memorandum submitted to the Chief Justice on Thursday, they cited public statements by the Chief Minister, which, they say, targeted the Bengal-origin Muslim community, called the *'Miya'* community. According to the representation, the remarks go beyond political rhetoric and amount to dehumanisation, collective stigmatisation, and threats of state-backed harassment.

**'Social humiliation'**

The memorandum highlighted a recent statement attributed to Mr. Sarma in which he allegedly urged people to make members of the community "suffer", including by underpaying them for their services. The citizens argued that such remarks, coming from the State's highest executive authority, constitute an incitement to economic discrimination and social humiliation, violating the right to live with dignity under Article 21.

They also raised concerns over alleged executive interference in the ongoing process of the Special Revision of the electoral rolls. Urging the court to intervene, they have sought directions for registration of cases, protection of the affected community's dignity and security, and reaffirmation of constitutional discipline and secular governance.

## Okram Ibobi Singh is new Manipur unit chief of Cong.

**Press Trust of India**
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday appointed former Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh as its Manipur unit chief, replacing K. Meghachandra.

The party appointed Mr. Meghachandra as the new Congress Legislature Party Leader (CLP) with K. Ranjit Singh as his deputy. Mr. Ibobi Singh was the CLP leader till now.

Victor Keishing and Manga Vaiphei have been appointed working presidents, according to a party release.

## INBRIEF



### Procurement of minor forest produce dips 92% in 2024-25

Government procurement of minor forest produce (MFP) at minimum support price (MSP) saw a sharp dip in 2024-25 compared to the year before, with data tabled in Parliament on Thursday showing that the amount of MFP procured across 19 States dropped by over 92% from 2023-24 to 2024-25. Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram tabled the data in response to a question on MFP procurement by Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Mr. Oram said that the Tribal Affairs Ministry had, till date, released ₹319.65 crore to State governments for the procurement of MFP at MSP.

### Senior Maoist leader killed in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur

A senior leader of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) was gunned down by the security forces in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh on Thursday, the police said. Udham Singh, a divisional committee member of the South Bastar division, had been with the outfit for over 20 years, a police officer said, adding that he carried a reward of ₹8 lakh on his head. Based on a tip-off about the presence of Singh and other armed Maoists in a forested, hilly area under the Tarrem police station, a joint team of the District Reserve Guards, Bijapur, and CoBRA personnel took part in the operation, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Yadav said.

# SC flags States' preference for 'ad-hoc' DGP appointments

CJI-led Bench says States are opting for 'Acting' police chiefs of their choice in violation of 2006 verdict, directs UPSC to approach top court if process for appointing regular DGPs is delayed

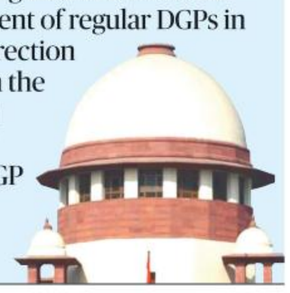
**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday observed that States were avoiding appointment of regular Directors-General of Police (DGPs) with a fixed tenure of two years, opting instead for "Acting" police chiefs of their choice in violation of a 20-year-old top court judgment.

The court, in a 2006 judgment in the *Prakash Singh* case, had made it clear that the office of DGP should be divorced from political or other external pressures and cautioned governments against mixing politics and law enforcement.

It had invoked its extraordinary powers under Article 142 to direct that DGPs must be selected by States from among the three senior-most and meritorious officers empanelled by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). The court had thrown out the "concept" of Acting DGPs. It had held that State police chiefs should have a minimum fixed tenure of two years.

> There are several States which keep on delaying the submission of proposals for appointment of regular DGPs in total disregard of the direction of the Supreme Court in the Prakash Singh case... An ad-hoc arrangement by appointing an Acting DGP is preferred
>
> SUPREME COURT



Subsequent top court orders in July 2018 and March 2019 detailed the appointments mechanism, which included the State concerned sending a proposal to the UPSC three months ahead of the retirement of the incumbent DGP. The UPSC would prepare a panel of suitable officers. The State would appoint one of the empanelled officers as DGP "immediately".

On Thursday, the UPSC informed a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant that the reality on the ground hardly resembled the process envisaged in the 2006 judgment.

The Bench was hearing the case of Telangana, where the UPSC said the last regular DGP retired about nine years ago, in November 2017. The State had not forwarded any proposals to initiate the appointment of a regular DGP, choosing to carry on with 'Acting' DGPs. "A State will send a proposal only when it wants to appoint a certain officer," Chief Justice Kant said.

**Meritorious officers**

The court said many meritorious and senior police officers had lost their opportunity at becoming DGPs owing to the "inordinate delay" shown by State governments to send proposals to the UPSC. "There are several States which keep on delaying the submission of proposals for appointment of regular DGPs in total disregard of the direction of the Supreme Court in the *Prakash Singh* case... An ad-hoc arrangement by appointing an Acting DGP is preferred," the Bench observed.

The court said the UPSC should not fall into ploys of the States. The Bench directed the Commission to write to States to send timely proposals for appointment of regular DGPs whenever such an occasion arises in the future. The Bench gave the UPSC liberty to approach the Supreme Court in case the States chose to ignore such communication.

"Then necessary consequences, including accountability of those responsible for the delay would follow," the court observed in its order.

Noting that there was a "serious lapse" on the part of Telangana in not sending a timely proposal to the UPSC, it gave the Commission four weeks to hold meetings and make the recommendations to the Telangana government on the appointment of a regular DGP.

# UPSC adds more norms for Civil Services aspirants

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

**A notification says that the conditions will apply to those allotted IPS or any 'Group A' service**

The Union Public Services Commission has expanded the restrictions on applying for the Civil Services Examination from 2026 for candidates who are allotted the Indian Police Service or any other Central Services Group "A", said the notification for the 2026 exam issued on Wednesday.

The notification said the UPSC was looking to fill approximately 933 vacancies this year, of which 33 would be reserved for Persons with Benchmark Disability.

While keeping the restrictions for those already allotted the Indian Administrative Service or the Indian Foreign Service in past CSEs unchanged, it introduced a set of conditions. A candidate allotted any of these services in the CSE 2026 would be eligible for the CSE 2027 if they are granted an exemption from training for that service by the "authority concerned".

The notification added that the candidate would be eligible for grant of one-time exemption only from joining the training in order to enable him/her to appear in CSE-2027. It added that such a candidate should join the training for "foundation course only".

Further, the notification said that such candidates would not be allowed to appear in CSE 2028 or any subsequent CSEs "unless he/she resigns from the allocated service".

**One-time opportunity**

The notification said that candidates who had been allotted any service based on CSE 2025 or earlier years, would have "a one-time opportunity" to appear either in this year's examination or the one for 2027 without having to resign from their service.

If their aim was to use their remaining attempts for CSE 2028 or subsequent exams, they would have to follow the resignation rule, the UPSC said.

The notification said that this set of conditions would apply to those being allotted Indian Police Service or any Central Service categorised as Group A.

# NHRC issues notice over exploitation of women at gyms

**Ishita Mishra**
NEW DELHI

**The authorities have been asked to submit a response within two weeks for the Commission's perusal**

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Wednesday issued notice to the Chief Secretaries of all States and Union Territories, the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and the Sports Authority of India over allegations of exploitation and forced religious conversion of women at gyms and fitness centres.

The notice was issued by NHRC member Priyank Kanoongo who said that numerous cases of sexual exploitation of women targeted by trainers in gyms and fitness clubs had come to light from various places across the country.

"Additionally, from a health perspective as well, substandard food supplements and uncontrolled physical activities also pose a threat to human life. Therefore, notices have been issued to all State governments, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, and sports authorities, summoning information regarding the rules and guidelines related to the establishment/operation of gyms/fitness centers. So that steps can be taken in the direction of controlling unethical activities in this sector," he wrote on X.

The authorities have been asked to submit a response within two weeks for perusal of the Commission.

# Shah launches India's first cooperative ride service

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

Union Home, Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Thursday launched Bharat Taxi, India's first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform, after a successful two-month pilot operation.

The service has been initially launched in Delhi-NCR and Gujarat, and will be expanded across all States and Union Territories within two years.

"In three years, Bharat Taxi will be rolled out across the country, from Kashmir to Kanniyakumari and Dwarka to Kamakhya," Mr. Shah said after launching the platform. He said the profits will be shared with drivers associated with Bharat Taxi. Customers can hail cars, three-wheelers and two-wheelers through the platform.

# MSF raises concerns over FTA impact on medicines in India

**Bindu Shajan Perappadan**
NEW DELHI

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), an international aid organisation that provides emergency medical assistance to populations in distress in more than 80 countries, has written to the European Union expressing its concern over the recently announced EU-India Free Trade Agreement.

The group said that the proposed restrictive provisions will have major consequence for access to medicines in India and the rest of the developing world. "We are concerned that the EU-India FTA may contain provisions with dire consequences for access to medicines in India and the rest of the developing world," MSF said in its letter to the European Commissioner for Trade.

"They will strengthen and extend the monopoly rights of multinational pharmaceutical manufacturers at the expense of patients in India and beyond," the group warned.

MSF has specifically expressed concern over data exclusivity that could effectively block compulsory licences, patent term extensions, enforcement and border measures that seek to detain imports or exports of good suspected of infringing intellectual property rights.

It also said that some provisions of the negotiation seeks to limit, and in some cases completely block, generic competition. "Generic competition has proven to be key in lowering the prices of medicines...," the letter said.

# Webinar on biotechnology education, skill development to be held on February 8

**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

The Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai, in association with *The Hindu*, has launched the "Biotechnology: Role in Industry 5.0 - Sustainable Future Pathways" initiative to examine the expanding role of biotechnology in an Industry 5.0 landscape that emphasises human-centric innovation, sustainability, and technological integration.

As biotechnology continues to drive advances across healthcare, agriculture, environmental solutions, and research-led innovation, the initiative seeks to create wider awareness of its societal impact while positioning it as a dynamic and future-ready career domain.




As part of this ongoing initiative, the second webinar in the series, titled "Biotechnology Education: Skills & Opportunities for a Sustainable Future", will focus on how education and skill development in biotechnology are evolving to meet these emerging demands.

The second webinar will be held on February 8, 2026 from 11.30 a.m. onwards. It will bring together experts from academia, international education, and research, to discuss how biotechnology education is evolving to meet the demands of a sustainable and innovation-led future.

The webinar will feature G. Jayaraman, professor and dean, School of Bio Sciences and Technology, VIT Chennai; Pooja Shivanand Breh, Environmental and Life Sciences Programme, Faculty of Science, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei; K.S. Nagabhushana, Director – Research, Prayoga Institute of Education Research, Bengaluru; and Jayanthi Velayudhan, Project Post Doctoral Fellow and alumni, VIT. The discussion will be moderated by Soma Basu, journalist.

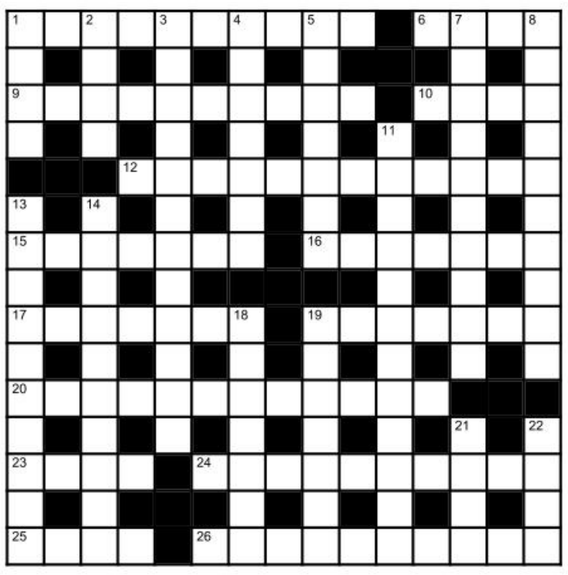
To register, visit *https://newsth.live/THVITBTSE* or scan the QR code.

## TH CROSSWORD + 14710

(set by Bruno)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



**Across**

**1** Post-graduate hiding dead girl with sheet (10)
**6** Spice's odour turning estate's core inhabitants out (4)
**9** More fighting - guerrilla finally escapes with family (10)
**10** Greek Goddess's loss of heart in earth sadly (4)
**12** Straps designed with a bend and decorated like a flag (4-8)
**15** Circular displaying head of communist revolutionary (7)
**16** Model's bottoms - one concealing nothing is tops! (1-6)
**17** Agricultural product from a very old company displaying a date (7)
**19** Setter's excited being part of attempt to retract ragtag army (7)
**20** Assembly embargoed bananas after seeing money stuffed in (5,7)
**23** One chosen to convey answer (4)
**24** Dodgy part of city square's last line with worn interior's redesigned (10)
**25** Sailor left Shanghai channel (4)
**26** Teen milling around very loud riot often recklessly robbing contents has cheek (10)

**Down**

**1** Spy week? (4)
**2** Realtors pitching outskirts... it's low! (4)
**3** Cabins slated to be renovated with stretchy things (7,5)
**4** After some time, a language becomes creative (7)
**5** Game popular in Spain and Utah (4,3)
**7** Delight of perverted liar consumed by old hostility (10)
**8** Drink label has upturned flower (10)
**11** Ultimately, running hotel's hard (2,3,4,3)
**13** Old custom - to put hand in mouth and put on black register (5,5)
**14** Essential part of testimony - a cop hid it, surprisingly for unknown causes (10)
**18** How I would refer to setter's working style, mainly, during leave? Kicking back! (7)
**19** Man waving red flag returning from Belgorod - a Tamilian (7)
**21** Fail to win not so tight ODIs, initially getting out (4)
**22** Individual working largely in the peripheries (4)

## SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 7 | | | 3 | | | | |
| | | | 2 | | | | 8 | 4 |
| | 5 | | 4 | | | | 7 | 3 |
| | | 8 | 9 | | | | | 5 |
| 5 | | | | 2 | | | | 1 |
| 9 | | | | | 5 | 2 | | |
| 7 | 2 | | | | 3 | | 5 | |
| 3 | 4 | | | | 8 | | | |
| | | | | 1 | | | 4 | |

No.SS6783 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

**Solution to previous puzzle**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R | I | C | O | C | H | E | T | | S | P | R | A | Y | S |
| A | | L | | R | | X | | T | | O | | C | | L |
| K | O | I | C | A | R | P | | R | I | S | O | T | T | O |
| I | | C | | N | | R | | A | | E | | O | | W |
| S | A | H | I | B | | E | F | F | O | R | T | F | U | L |
| H | | E | | E | | S | | F | | | | G | | A |
| | | | D | R | E | S | S | I | N | G | G | O | W | N |
| A | | T | | R | | I | | C | | U | | D | | E |
| M | E | R | R | Y | G | O | R | O | U | N | D | | | |
| A | | A | | | | N | | F | | T | | A | | T |
| R | U | N | F | O | U | L | O | F | | U | L | N | A | R |
| N | | S | | P | | E | | E | | R | | T | | O |
| A | F | F | A | I | R | S | | N | A | R | W | H | A | L |
| T | | E | | N | | S | | C | | E | | E | | L |
| H | E | R | M | E | S | | B | E | D | T | I | M | E | S |

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

## FAITH

### Bring home Mahalakshmi

Every day is a good day to pray to Mahalakshmi. However, Fridays falling in the Tamil month of *Thai* are considered extra special. Mahalakshmi is the repository of everything that a devotee needs in this life and needs to be blessed in order to pray to Her or listen to discourses on Her, said Damal Perundevi. When one recites or listens to Swami Vedanta Desikan's Sri Stuti, one can be assured of Mahalakshmi's blessings.

Why does Mahalakshmi enjoy this exalted status?

In the Ramayana, when Vali lies wounded, he looks at Rama and says, "You have attacked me and wounded me. This has happened only because Janaka's daughter Sita, the manifestation of Mahalakshmi, is not with you. Had She been by your side, you would not have harmed me." She is the one who makes everything better. When Perumal joined the devas and asuras as they churned the Milky Ocean, with his locks of hair dancing due to the effort, Mahalakshmi emerged from it, glowing brilliantly like the light of one crore suns. She placed Her garland around Perumal and He gave Her a place in His heart, where She always resides. He churned the ocean for the ultimate *amrut*, Mahalakshmi. Wherever there is *Mangalam* (auspiciousness, welfare), there will be Her abode.

The only time She enters any other place is when She is moved by the devotion of Her devotees: She rushes to their homes, ever ready to shower Her grace, blessings and prosperity. When a poor bachelor appealed to Vedanta Desikan for funds for his wedding, the great preceptor composed Sri Stuti and Mahalakshmi responded by showering wealth. She showers lasting wealth on all.

## INBRIEF



### Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles posts ₹3,483 cr. loss

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles on Thursday reported a consolidated net loss of ₹3,483 crore for the third quarter ended December 2025, impacted significantly by the cyber incident at its British arm, Jaguar Land Rover. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹5,485 crore in the corresponding quarter of the last fiscal. Consolidated total revenue from operations stood at ₹70,108 crore compared with ₹94,472 crore in the year-ago period, it added.

### Govt. says 2,645 posts vacant at AAI, 3 aviation regulators

A total of 2,645 positions are lying vacant at the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and three aviation regulators DGCA, BCAS and AERA, the government said on Thursday. In a written reply to Lok Sabha, MoS for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said adequate steps are taken from time to time to fill up vacancies under the ministry, including its attached offices and regulatory bodies. At the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, there are 787 vacancies, largely due to the creation of 441 additional posts as part of the restructuring undertaken during 2022-2024. PTI

### TRAI issues telecom services interconnection regulations

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Thursday issued the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) (Seventh Amendment) Regulations, 2026. The salient features include clearly defined timelines for audits, wherein distributors have to conduct audit and submit audit report to broadcasters by September 30 every year; audit to be done on financial year basis in place of calendar year; and presence of broadcasters' representatives during audit to ensure transparency and credibility.

# India, GCC nations sign terms of reference for FTA

Appropriate that we enter a robust trading arrangement for greater free flow of goods and services, and predictability, stability to policy: Goyal

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

Representatives of India and the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on Thursday signed the Terms of Reference for negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA). The GCC countries are together India's largest merchandise trade partners, with total merchandise trade exceeding that done with even the EU and the U.S.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) were signed by India's chief negotiator for the FTA, Additional Secretary Ajay Bhadoo, and his counterpart representing the Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Raja Al Marzouki. The signing of the ToR is a necessary precursor for the start of formal negotiations. The GCC countries



The GCC countries are together India's largest merchandise trade partners.

are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

"It is most appropriate that we now enter into a much stronger and robust trading arrangement, which will enable a greater free flow of goods and services, bring predictability and stability to policy, help encourage greater degree of investments and take our bilateral relations between the six nation GCC group and India to greater heights," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who presided over the signing, said in his speech.

**Bilateral benefit**

Mr. Goyal pointed out that the two sides could significantly benefit from each other, with India's workforce both within the GCC countries as well as in India standing to gain from the eventual agreement.

"The GCC countries can help us with further diversification and growth of our energy sources, opportunities for our youth, and massive amounts of investments that different countries have already committed at different points of time, which will further get an impetus with a free trade agreement between India and the GCC nations," he added.

# India-U.S. trade deal provides macro predictability: Nasscom

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

**Indian tech firms are increasingly contributing to AI-driven energy optimisation**

The India-U.S. trade deal provided much-needed macro predictability at a time when technology, talent and trust are central to global competitiveness, said Nasscom President Rajesh Nambiar. "Indian technology companies are already delivering measurable outcomes for the U.S. economy – high-quality jobs, regional investment and innovation at scale," he said at a Nasscom U.S. CEO Forum meeting held in Washington DC , shortly after the announcement of the trade deal.

Energy security also emerged as a strategic priority, with the U.S. scaling AI-critical energy capacity and India integrating green and nuclear energy to support next-generation data centres, the forum noted.

According to the forum, Indian technology companies are increasingly contributing to AI-driven energy optimisation, grid analytics, and digital infrastructure, reinforcing the resilience of the U.S. innovation ecosystem.

The meeting held at Capitol Hill, brought together leading Indian technology business leaders and senior U.S. policymakers to advance a shared agenda focused on enhancing innovation, AI, trusted supply chains, workforce development and local job creation across the U.S., Nasscom said in a statement on Thursday.

Meanwhile, in another statement, Nasscom said AI models and tools would continue to drive exponential innovation and rapid adoption. "However, concerns that such tools will significantly disrupt or eliminate the technology services sector where India has a strong global presence are misplaced," the apex trade body said.

## MARKETS

**MARKET WATCH**

| | THURSDAY | % CHANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Sensex | 83,314 | -0.60 |
| US Dollar | 90.34 | 0.14 |
| Gold | 1,60,600 | -2.72 |
| Brent oil | 67.44 | 0.00 |

**NIFTY 50**

| | PRICE | CHANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Adani Enter | 2236.60 | 8.40 |
| Adani Ports | 1570.20 | 2.30 |
| Apollo Hosp | 7122.00 | 6.00 |
| Asian Paints | 2432.10 | -20.60 |
| Axis Bank | 1330.60 | -8.10 |
| Bajaj Auto | 9647.00 | 8.00 |
| Bajaj Finserv | 2000.10 | -19.50 |
| Bajaj Finance | 964.75 | 1.45 |
| Bharat Elec | 432.90 | -6.30 |
| Bharti Airtel | 1992.40 | -33.40 |
| Cipla | 1333.30 | 6.60 |
| Coal India | 431.85 | -3.05 |
| Dr Reddys Lab | 1244.90 | 4.70 |
| Hindustan Unilever | 40.20 | DE* |
| Eicher Motors | 7209.50 | -68.00 |
| Eternal Ltd. | 286.85 | -7.30 |
| Grasim Ind | 2863.90 | 19.00 |
| HCL Tech | 1610.00 | -11.80 |
| HDFC Bank | 949.70 | -3.40 |
| HDFC Life | 720.70 | -1.80 |
| Hindalco | 935.45 | -29.50 |
| Hind Unilever | 2354.40 | -16.60 |
| ICICI Bank | 1396.50 | -11.90 |
| IntGlobeAvi | 4932.20 | -28.50 |
| Infosys | 1520.20 | -15.60 |
| ITC | 310.20 | -3.65 |
| Jio Financial Services Ltd. | 269.95 | 1.95 |
| JSW Steel | 1239.80 | 11.60 |
| Kotak Bank | 408.75 | -3.60 |
| L&T | 4063.30 | -23.80 |
| M&M | 3572.00 | -2.00 |
| Maruti Suzuki | 15059.00 | -12.00 |
| Max Healthcare | 1040.80 | 15.35 |
| NestleIndia | 1303.50 | 0.30 |
| NTPC | 367.00 | -0.25 |
| ONGC | 269.20 | 2.25 |
| PowerGrid Corp | 289.35 | -0.05 |
| Reliance Ind | 1443.40 | -13.40 |
| SBI Life | 2017.80 | -23.90 |
| State Bank | 1073.50 | 5.30 |
| Shriram Finance Ltd. | 992.00 | -6.80 |
| Sun Pharma | 1702.60 | -1.80 |
| TataConsumerProduct | 1155.90 | 2.90 |
| Tata Steel | 197.76 | 2.36 |
| TCS | 2991.50 | -7.60 |
| Tech Mahindra | 1646.20 | 0.90 |
| Titan | 4097.60 | -46.40 |
| Tata Motors PV | 374.15 | -1.30 |
| Trent Ltd. | 4131.30 | 118.70 |
| UltraTech Cement | 12773.00 | -33.00 |
| Wipro | 233.39 | 0.05 |

DE: Demerged Entity

# RIL buys 2 mn barrels of Venezuelan oil

**Reuters**
NEW DELHI/SINGAPORE

India's Reliance Industries has bought 2 million barrels of Venezuelan oil from trader Vitol, trade sources said on Thursday, the first purchase by the company from the South American nation in nearly a year.

Reliance, which operates the world's biggest refining complex, has bought Venezuelan crude for April delivery at a discount of around $6.5-$7 per barrel to ICE Brent, the trade sources said.

Reliance did not respond to a *Reuters* email seeking comment.

# IndianOil Q3 profit rises fourfold amid lower crude oil prices

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

State-owned refiner IndianOil's profit in the December-ended quarter accelerated more than four times on a year-on-year (YoY) basis fuelled by a favourable lower crude oil price regime.

The refiner's net profit, on a standalone basis, more than quadrupled to ₹12,125.86 crore from the comparable period last year.

Gross refining margin in the ongoing financial year until the end of December 2025 more than doubled from the comparable period last year to $8.41 for a barrel. Standalone revenue rose 6.62% on a year-on-year basis to ₹2.32 lakh crore in the reporting quarter.

Domestic sales increased approximately 5% on a year-on-year basis to 26.015 million metric tonnes (MMT).

### PBPL arm's GMP certificates revoked

The National Centre for Public Health and Pharmacy, Hungary (NCPHP) has revoked the good manufacturing practice (GMP) certificates it had issued to Panacea Biotec Pharma's (PBPL) facility in Baddi, Himachal Pradesh.

# LIC Q3 net climbs 17% to ₹12,958 crore on premium

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) reported standalone net profit for the December quarter increased more than 17% year-on-year to ₹12,958.22 crore.

The higher net profit came on 17.5% increase in the net premium income to ₹1,25,613.36 crore (₹1,06,891.48 crore). Total income increased almost 16% to ₹2,33,983.79 crore.

Consumers and firms in the life insurance industry have responded positively to the various initiatives of the government, especially



Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) logo.

to GST 2.0, CEO and MD R. Doraiswamy said, referring to the GST exemption since September 22, from 18% earlier, on individual life insurance policies.

To queries on government's plans to cut stake in LIC, he said the government is committed to paring its holding by 10% as required within five years from the May 2022 IPO. The timing of the reduction will be decided by the government, he said.

On the proposed foray into health insurance, he said LIC is not moving fast on the plan to enter the sector by becoming a strategic investor in a standalone health insurer.

To a query on monetising real estate, Mr. Doraiswamy and other senior officials said the plan is to leverage the assets to enhance returns.

# Bharti Q3 net up 34% on subscriber growth

**Reuters**

Bharti Airtel, India's second-largest mobile carrier by number of users, posted its seventh straight quarterly profit rise on Thursday, as subscribers upgraded to higher-margin telecom plans amid steady rise in the customer base.

Bharti Airtel's industry-leading average revenue per user (ARPU) rose 5.7% year-on-year to ₹259 during the quarter with the share of users on faster 4G and 5G connections rising.

Bharti Airtel's India user base rose 12.6% year-on-year to 465.9 million as of December 31, 2025.

Consolidated pre-tax profit rose 34.4% to ₹12,558 crore ($1.39 billion) from



A man walks across the logo of Bharti Airtel.

₹9,346 crore a year earlier.

The results include a ₹257 crore charge linked to the implementation of new labour codes.

The firm's year-earlier profit had got a ₹7,550-crore boost from a higher valuation of its stake in telecom infrastructure provider Indus Towers.

# Alchemist: NCLT recalls CIRP after ED intervention

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) recalled the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) initiated in the case of Alchemist Limited, holding it was vitiated by fraud, collusion and malicious intent as claimed by the Enforcement Directorate.

The ED found Alchemist Holdings and Alchemist Township India allegedly collected over ₹1,840 crore from people for offering high returns/plots/villas/flats to investors. But investors neither got their money nor were given plots/villas/flats/high returns.


**The Managing Director on behalf of**
**TAMIL NADU TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED**
Notice inviting Bids for the work as detailed in table below in

"SINGLE BID and TWO BID SYSTEM" (LUMPSUM CONTRACT) e-Tender Notice Reference No.0317/Engg/Proj/ 2026 Dt: 04.02.2026

| Sl. No | Name of work | Earnest Money Deposit(in Rs.) | Tender Last date | Tender Opening Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SINGLE BID SYSTEM | | | |
| i | Development with Tourist Infrastructures at Sherverayan Hills, Yercaud in Salem District | Rs.3,35,000/- | 18.02.2026 | 18.02.2026 |
| ii | Development of Tourist basic amenities at Karumanthurai Fruit farm in Kalvarayan Hills, Salem District. | Rs.1,47,000/- | 18.02.2026 | 18.02.2026 |
| iii | Development of Tourist basic amenities at Manimuktha Dam in Kalvarayan Hills, Kallakurichi District. | Rs.2,00,000/- | 18.02.2026 | 18.02.2026 |
| iv | Development of Tourist basic amenities at Gomuki Dam in Kalvarayan Hills, Kallakurichi District | Rs.3,46,000/- | 18.02.2026 | 18.02.2026 |
| v | Setting up of an Adventure and Eco – Camping Site at Ariyaman Beach, Ramanathapuram District | Rs.1,43,000/- | 18.02.2026 | 18.02.2026 |
| | TWO BID SYSTEM | | | |
| vi | Development of Tourist Infrastructures in Yelagiri of Tirupattur District. | Rs.8,67,000/- | 19.02.2026 | 19.02.2026 |
| 2 | Download tender document | Through Online https://tntenders.gov.in/ | | |
| 3 | Time/Date of receipt/ opening of bids | I) Last date and time for submission of Bid documents along with EMD upto 3.00 PM on mentioned date above. ii) Opening of bids will be on 3.30 PM on mentioned date above. | | |
| 4 | Address for Communications | The Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, No.2, Wallajah Road, Tourism Complex, Chennai Tamil Nadu - 600 002, India Website: www.ttdconline.com Email: pe.ttdc@gmail.com Phone: 044-2533 3555 | | |

DIPR/778/TENDER/2026 MANAGING DIRECTOR

**National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology, Chennai**
MeitY, Govt. of India

**Vacancies for Multiple Position (Purely Contract Basis)**

- **Senior Project Engineer** (Data Science) - 01 No.
- **Project Engineer** (Data Science) - 01 No.
- **Project Engineer** (VLSI) - 01 No.
- **Project Engineer** (3DPAM) - 01 No.
- **Project Engineer** (RPA) - 01 No.
- **Training Coordinator** - 01 No.
- **Project Associate** (Training) - 01 No.
- **Senior Administrative Assistant** - 02 Nos.
- **Senior Accounts Assistant** - 01 No.
- **MTS** - 01 No.

**Online Interview will be held on 23.02.2026**
For further details, please visit: **https://rect.nielitchennai.edu.in**
E-mail : **chennai@nielit.gov.in** Ph : **+91 9445880125**
Adv.No.01/04/2025/Recruitment/07 **Director i/c**

**No. 04 /SSB Dated. 05.02.2026**
**TENDER CALL NOTICE**

Sealed Cover Tenders are hereby invited from the reputed Registered Firms/ Companies/Agencies for Work related to **"Generation of Admit Cards, Printing and Supplying of OMR Answer Sheets, its Scanning & Processing of various Results of various Recruitment Examination"** to the State Selection Board, Higher Education Department, Bhubaneswar-751009 within **06.02.2026 to 05.03.2026 (5 P.M.)**

The authority reserves the right to cancel or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reasons thereof. The details of tender papers along with terms and conditions can be obtained from **www.ssbodisha.ac.in**. The Tender paper should be reached in the office of the undersigned through Speed Post only.

**Secretary**
**State Selection Board**
11001/9/2526 OIPR-11001/11015/1/25-26/0009

**Government of Odisha, "e"- Procurement Notice**
**INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)**
**Bid Identification No. C.C.E.Dkl.(R&B)16/2025-26**
Letter No.252 / Dt.02/02/2026 Email Id- sedklpwd@gmail.com

The Chief Construction Engineer, Dhenkanal (R&B) Circle, Dhenkanal on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate bids in double cover system to be received in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Building work as detailed below:

1. Name of the work : **Building work**
2. No of works : **01 (One) No.**
3. Estimated Cost : **Rs. 2.54 Crore (as given in column No.03 of table)**
4. Cost of tender paper : **Rs.10,000.00**
5. Class of contractor : **'B' Class & 'A' Class (as given in column No.07 of table)**
6. Period of Completion of work : **07 (Seven)** Calendar months **(as given in column No.08 of table)**
7. Date and time of availability of bid Document in the website : From Dt.**09.02.2026** to **5.00 P.M. of Dt.23.02.2026**
8. Date of opening of bid : Dt.**24.02.2026** at **11.00 A.M.**

The bidders have to participate in ONLINE biding only, further details can be seen from the e- Procurement Portal : **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

**Chief Construction Engineer, Dhenkanal (R&B) Circle, Dhenkanal**
34001/15/2526 OIPR-34001/34132/1/25-26/0015

Government of Tamil Nadu
**S.1565 Palace Nagar Co-Operative House Building Society Ltd.**
Cherry Road, Salem-1

**e-TENDER NOTICE**

Salem Palace Nagar Co-Operative House Building Society Owned Property Sale Of Apartment House, Shops and Commercial Complex Space.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tender Document available<br>Bid submission start date and Time | **https://tntenders.gov.in** in the e-Tender portal **06-02-2026 at 09.00 AM** |
| Tender Reference | **PNCOHBS_S1565_2026** |
| Bid Submission End Date and Time | **27-02-2026 at 09.00 AM** |

Further Details
Contact No: 94864 34227
DIPR/788/TENDER/2026 **Administrator / Secretary**

**ODISHA CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LIMITED**
**UNIT-VIII, BHUBANESWAR**
e-mail: theocctd@odishaconstruction.com
**"e"-Procurement Notice No. 58 /OCCL/2025-26 (on-line)**
Bid Identification No.OCCL-LSSP/04/2025-26

Online tenders are invited for EPC Contract for "Construction of In-stream storage structure (ISS) across river Indra/Sundar near village **Patharla** in the district Bolangir including Hydro-mechanical works, Power Connectivity works, Road Connectivity, Staff Quarters including Survey, Investigation, Planning, Design and Estimate of all Components with Operation and Maintenance of the project for a period of five years or five Flood Seasons whichever is more after successful commissioning of the Project."

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Name of Work | **Construction of In-stream storage structure (ISS) across river Indra/Sundar near village Patharla in the district Bolangir including Hydro-mechanical works, Power Connectivity works, Road connectivity, Staff Quarters including Survey, Investigation, Planning, Design and Estimate of all Components with Operation and Maintenance of the project for a period of five years or five Flood Seasons whichever is more after successful commissioning of the Project."** |
| 2. | Approximate Value of work put to Tender | **Rs.165.72 Crore** |
| 3. | Period of Completion | **30 Calendar months including rainy seasons** |
| 4. | Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal | **From Dt.06.02.2026, 10.00 AM to Dt.23.03.2026, 5.00 PM** |
| 5. | Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal | **Date - 23.03.2026, 5.00 PM** |
| 6. | Name & address of the officer Inviting Bid | **Managing Director, OCCL** |

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal **http://tendersodisha.gov.in**
**Managing Director, OCCL, Bhubaneswar.**
34001/26/2526 OIPR-34001/34176/1/25-26/0026

**ODISHA STATE CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LTD.**
(A Govt. of Odisha Undertaking)
REGISTERED OFFICE: C/2, NAYAPALLI, BHUBANESWAR-751012
CIN : U51211OR1980SGC000894
Tel No: 0674-2395391, Fax No-0674-2395291, Website: www.oscsc.in
**Request for Proposal (RFP) for Empanelment of manufacturers to supply FORTIFIED RICE KERNEL (FRK) for the KMS 2025-26 in the state of Odisha**
**File No. OSCSC-PROC-PROC-0042-2025**
RFP Advt. No. 2051 /OSCSC Ltd., Date : 05.02.26

Proposals are invited from interested bidders registered under the Companies Act-1956/2013 or any other legal entity registered in India and having valid registration certificate and eligibility as per the criteria given in the Request for Proposal (RFP) published in the official website **www.foododisha.in & www.oscsc.in & www.tendersodisha.gov.in** for **'Empanelment of Manufacturers to supply FORTIFIED RICE KERNEL (FRK) for the KMS 2025-26'** in the state of Odisha. The details of timetable of the RFP are as under.

| Sl No | Event Description | Date |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Publication of RFP in website | 06/02/2026 at 18:00 Hours |
| 2 | Pre-Bid Meeting | 17/02/2026 at 15:00 Hours at Office of OSCSC Ltd., C/2, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751012 |
| 3 | Last Date and time for submission of Proposal | 02/03/2026 at 17:00 Hours through online at www.tendersodisha.gov.in |
| 4 | Opening of Technical Proposal | 05/03/2026 at 11:00 Hours at Office of OSCSC Ltd., C/2, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751012 |
| 5 | Opening of Financial Bid | 09/03/2026, 11:00 Hours Any Change to the aforementioned scheduled date, the same will be intimated through online and registered e-mail id for the technical qualified bidders. |

Any amendment in the tender document due to decision in pre-bid meeting/extension of bid, if any, shall be notified in the websites mentioned above. The proposals shall be submitted through online mode at **www.tendersodisha.gov.in.** The authority reserves the right to cancel any or the entire selection process without assigning any reason thereof.
**Managing Director, Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited**
7001/3/2526 OIPR-7001/7002/1/25-26/0003

HAVANA

## Power grid failure leaves hundreds of thousands in darkness in Cuba



AFP

A power grid failure in eastern Cuba plunged three entire provinces into darkness on Wednesday, utility officials said, leaving hundreds of thousands of people without electricity. The state-owned Union Electrica de Cuba said a fault at a substation in Holguin caused an electrical system disconnect that impacted the four provinces. AFP

RAMALLAH

## West Bank displacement due to settler attacks hit record rate: UN



REUTERS

Israeli settler violence in the occupied West Bank displaced nearly 700 Palestinians in January, the United Nations said on Thursday, the highest rate since the Gaza war erupted in October 2023. To force Palestinians out, settlers resort to harassment, intimidation and violence, the settlement watchdog said. AFP

JOS

## Nigeria President deploys Army after gunmen killed 162 people



REUTERS

Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu deployed an army battalion to a troubled state after gunmen killed as many as 162 people in one of the country's deadliest attacks. The attack late Tuesday in Kwara State came after the military carried out operations in the area against what it called "terrorist elements". AFP

LAHORE

## Imran's sons accuse Pak. govt. of refusing visa to meet their father



REUTERS

Suleman Khan and Kasim Khan, sons of Pakistan's incarcerated former Prime Minister Imran Khan, have accused the Shehbaz Sharif government of "deliberately" refusing visas to them, saying democracy in the country is "hollow" and basic human rights are being "crushed". Mr. Khan's sons are living in London. PTI

# Nuclear diplomacy set to resume in Muscat as U.S., Iran stay far apart

Tehran says the format of the talks will mirror previous rounds held before the Israeli attacks in June 2025; U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio says the dialogue should include the range of Iran's ballistic missiles and its support for militant groups

**Stanly Johny**

After weeks of uncertainty and military tensions in the Persian Gulf, Iran confirmed on Thursday that it would hold nuclear talks with the U.S. in the Omani capital, Muscat, on Friday. However, statements from both sides indicated that wide gaps remain, starting with disagreements over the very format of the talks.

"Nuclear talks with the United States are scheduled to be held in Muscat at about 10 am Friday. I'm grateful to our Omani brothers for making all necessary arrangements," Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote in a social media post. The White House had said on Tuesday that Steve Witkoff, a special envoy of President Donald Trump, would meet Iranian officials later this week. According to Iranian state media, Mr. Araghchi would lead the delegation, which would also include Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's former Permanent Representative to the UN, and Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi.




**Miles away:** People walk past an anti-U.S. mural on a street in Tehran, Iran, on Thursday. REUTERS

"The format of the talks will mirror previous rounds held before the unlawful U.S.-Israeli war on Iran last June, which derailed the diplomatic process," said a report in the state-owned *Press TV*.

Mr. Araghchi and Mr. Witkoff had held five rounds of talks last year. Israel attacked Iran on June 13, just two days ahead of the scheduled sixth round of talks.

While Iran insists that talks should focus solely on its "peaceful nuclear programme", the U.S. wants the framework to also include Iran's ballistic missile production and its support for various militia groups in the region.

"If the Iranians want to meet, we're ready, " U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Wednesday at the State Department. "[T]hey will have to include certain things, and that includes the range of their ballistic missiles... their sponsorship of terrorist organisations across the region... the nuclear programme... the treatment of their own people," said Mr. Rubio, contradicting the Iranian claim that the talks would be only on the nuclear programme.

# Pak. concludes offensive against militants; 216 killed

**Reuters**
KARACHI

Pakistan's military said on Thursday that it had concluded a week-long security operation against separatists in Balochistan, killing 216 militants in targeted offensives across the troubled southwestern province.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest and poorest province, was brought to a virtual standstill on Saturday when the separatist Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) stormed schools, banks, markets and security installations across the region in one of their largest operations ever.



Residents look at a damaged bank on the outskirts of Quetta on February 1 after an attack by Baloch separatists. AFP

### Largest attack

The military said 22 security personnel and 36 civilians were killed in the attacks. The BLA's coordinated strikes in over a dozen locations began after the military launched its "intelligence driven" Radd Al-Fitna 1 (countering chaos) operation, which the army said began on January 29.

"Through meticulous planning, actionable intelligence, and seamless joint execution Pakistan's security forces and law enforcement agencies with support of intelligence agencies under Operation Radd-ul-Fitna-1 responded with precision and resolve," the military said in a statement, adding that 216 militants had been killed since the operation began.

# The end of New START and a new era of nuclear rivalry

NEWS ANALYSIS

**Vasudevan Mukunth**

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) officially expired on February 5, marking the end of the last remaining bilateral agreement constraining the nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and Russia. The New START treaty emerged from a period of diplomatic reset between Washington and Moscow in the late 2000s.

After entering into force on February 5, 2011, New START set up verifiable limits on the strategic offensive arms of both nations, including capping the number of deployed warheads to 1,550, and required both parties to reach these limits within seven years and maintain them thereafter. It also allowed 18 on-site inspections a year, mandated data exchange, and set up a bilateral commission to resolve issues.

New START was constantly beleaguered. Russia often argued that U.S. missile defense systems undermined the strategic balance, suggesting that if one side could neutralise the other's retaliatory strike, the 'mutually assured destruction' dynamic would be broken. The U.S. expressed concerns over conventional prompt global strike capabilities, where precise conventional warheads are placed on ballistic missiles, systems that New START counted under its nuclear limits.

Later Russia also unveiled several novel strategic systems, including the Sarmat heavy ICBM and the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle. While



The treaty was originally set to expire in 2021. AP

the U.S. successfully argued that these should be counted under New START, other systems like the nuclear-powered underwater drone Poseidon and nuclear-powered cruise missile Burevestnik remained outside the treaty's technical definitions.

### No binding limits

The treaty was originally set to expire in 2021. Just days before the deadline, the Biden administration and the Kremlin agreed to a one-time, five-year extension, moving the expiration date to February 5, 2026. But in February 2023, after the conflict in Ukraine escalated and undermined bilateral relations, President Vladimir Putin said he was suspending Russia's participation in New START because, Moscow said, the U.S. was seeking a "strategic defeat" of Russia and that western aid to Ukraine made on-site inspections in Russia impossible. The U.S. soon followed.

Today, for the first time since 1972, there are no legally binding limits on the number of strategic nuclear weapons the U.S. and Russia can deploy. The formal channels to verify the locations and status of nuclear forces have ceased to exist, forcing intelligence agencies to rely entirely on satellite imagery and other unilateral methods, which are more error-prone and easier to politicise. Nuclear and non-nuclear strategic systems are also entangled today and that, together with the premium both sides place on non-contact options like cyberattacks, can threaten nuclear command and control without crossing a nuclear threshold. This is why analysts have stressed the loss of predictability rather than the appearance of new warheads alone.

New START's expiry also makes the prospect of including China and other nuclear states in a larger nonproliferation regime harder in practice. Washington can now argue that it shouldn't be the only state constrained while Beijing grows. Moscow can argue that it shouldn't accept constraints while NATO's aggregate capabilities shape its security environment. And Beijing has already argued that its arsenal is smaller than those of the U.S. and Russia and that therefore it's "not fair or reasonable" to demand it enter their disarmament framework now.

In 2025, Arms Control Association board chairman Thomas Countryman argued that the most realistic near-term path is a regime with three prongs: the U.S. and Russia establishing measures to restore basic level of transparency, the P5 group standardising definitions and modest transparency practices; and setting up of nonproliferation tools such as hotlines, launch notifications, incident prevention, and fissile material security, to involve more states without immediately forcing them to count each other's warheads.

## U.K. sanctions RSF, Sudanese Army leaders over conflict

**Reuters**
LONDON

Britain sanctioned six individuals suspected of committing atrocities in Sudan's war or of fuelling the conflict through the supply of mercenaries and military equipment, the government said on Thursday.

The measures targeted senior commanders in both the Sudanese paramilitary group, Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and the Sudanese Armed Forces, the government said.

The conflict has displaced millions and caused a vast humanitarian crisis since it broke out in April 2023.

## UN human rights agency in 'survival mode': chief

**Agence France-Presse**
GENEVA

The UN human rights chief said on Thursday his agency was "in survival mode" due to funding shortfalls, as he launched a $400 million appeal to tackle global rights crises in 2026.

Volker Turk warned countries that at a time when global human rights are under significant assault, his office was facing dire funding shortages hampering its life-saving work.

The UN human rights office lost around 300 out of 2,000 staff last year and had to end or scale back its work in 17 countries.

**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
WBSETCL

NIT No.: CE(P)/WBSETCL/SST/25-26/37 Date: 06.02.2026

E-Tender is invited from eligible bidders having experience in doing similar nature of work for supply of 10 nos. 33/0.415 KV 315 KVA Station Service Transformers and 15 nos. 33/0.415 KV 100 KVA Station Service Transformers. Bid documents can be downloaded from **06.02.2026, 10:00 A.M.** and bids shall be submitted up to **04:00 P.M., 04.03.2026.**

Visit the following websites - www.wbtenders.gov.in, www.wbsetcl.in for details.

ICA-T2996(3)/2026

IISER THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
भारतीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान तिरुवनंतपुरम
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
MARUTHAMALA P.O., VITHURA, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM Tel: 0471-2778044, 8146

**NON-TEACHING STAFF RECRUITMENT 2026**

IISER(T)/HR/001/2026 05.02.2026

**Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Thiruvananthapuram** invites applications from eligible Indian nationals for various non-faculty posts - Assistant Engineer (Civil) (UR-1), Library Superintendent (UR-1), Jr. Technical Assistant (OBC-2), Office Assistant (MS) (UR-2, SC-1).

The last date of submission of applications online is by 17.00 hrs on 25.02.2026.

For detailed advertisement, please log on to:
***https://www.iisertvm.ac.in/openings/active_openings?post_category=Administration***

**07/25-26 dt.05.02.2026** **REGISTRAR**

**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, RNT MEDICAL COLLEGE & CONTROLLER ASSOCIATED GROUP OF HOSPITALS, UDAIPUR (Raj.)**

No. RNT/Pur-I/F.16/(e-Tendering Proc)/2025-26/190 Dated : 27.01.2026

**Notice Inviting Bid No.32/2025-26 (e-Tender)**

Bids for Medical Equipments / Goods are invited from interested bidders upto Date :- 16.02.2026 Time:- 01.30 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in) of the state. Estimated Cost -1027.50 Lac

UBN -
MCU2526GLOB00427, MCU2526GLOB00428, MCU2526GSOB00429,
MCU2526GLOB00430, MCU2526GLOB00431, MCU2526GLOB00432,
MCU2526GLOB00433, MCU2526GLOB00434, MCU2526GLOB00435,
MCU2526GLOB00436, MCU2526GLOB00437, MCU2526GLOB00438,
MCU2526GLOB00439, MCU2526GLOB00440, MCU2526GSOB00441,
MCU2526GLOB00442, MCU2526GSOB00443, MCU2526GLOB00444,
MCU2526GLOB00445, MCU2526GLOB00446, MCU2526GSOB00447,
MCU2526GLOB00448, MCU2526GSOB00449, MCU2526GSOB00450,
MCU2526GSOB00451, MCU2526GLOB00452, MCU2526GLOB00453,
MCU2526GLOB00454, MCU2526GLOB00455

DIPR/C/1998/2026 PRINCIPAL & CONTROLLER

**TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED**
(A Government of Andhra Pradesh Undertaking & An ISO 27001-2022 Certified Company)

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The APTRANSCO invites bids online for Spec.No.PMM32-e-08/2026: Supply of 622 Nos. 33 KV Polymer LAs, 63 Nos. 132 KV Polymer LAs, 80 Nos. 220 KV Polymer LAs and 8 Nos. 400 KV Polymer LAs with 31mm/kV creepage distance. Date & Time of availability of above tender: 06.02.2026 at 6:00 PM. Website: **www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in.** Contact No.CE/ Transmission: 0866-2429230.

RO No: GMCC/APTRANSCO/38/26 Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER/ TRANSMISSION

**धुळे महानगरपालिका, धुळे**
**बांधकाम विभाग – ई–निविदा सुचना क्र.128, सन 2025–26**

मा. आयुक्त, धुळे महानगपालिका, धुळे हे खालील कामाकरीता ई निविदा प्रणालीद्वारे (ऑनलाईन) महाराष्ट्र शासन सार्वजनिक बांधकाम विभाग यांचेकडील नोंदणीकृत ठेकेदार/ संस्था/ व्यक्तींकडुन **B_1** पद्धतीने **Percentage Rate** नुसार निविदा दर मागविण्यात येत आहे.

| अ. क्र. | कामाचे नांव | अंदाजपत्रकीय रक्कम |
|---|---|---|
| मनपा निधी अंतर्गत..(सन 2025–26) | | |
| 1) | धुळे शहरातील अवधान येथील सर्व्हे नं. 62/1 येथे भटक्या कुत्र्यांसाठी शेल्टर हाउस तयार करणे. | 2,89,89,818 |

उपरोक्त निविदांबाबतचा सविस्तर तपशिल https://mahatenders.gov.in या संकेतस्थळावर दि. 09/02/2026, सायं. 17.05 वाजेपासुन पहावयास मिळेल.

सही/–
जा.क्र./ धुमपा/ बां.वि./122/2025–26 उपायुक्त
दिनांक : 5/2/2026 धुळे महानगरपालिका, धुळे

**PUNJAB STATE GRAINS PROCUREMENT CORPORATION LIMITED (PUNGRAIN)**
**ANAAJ BHAWAN, SECTOR-39-C, CHANDIGARH**

**Notice Inviting Tender**

Bids are invited from bidders for the purchase of 18000 HDPE Monofilament Nets (Meshnets) for storage of wheat during RMS 2026-27 on behalf of all State Procuring Agencies (Pungrain, PSWC, Punsup and Markfed) in the State of Punjab.

**For details log onto: https://eproc.punjab.gov.in or http://foodsuppb.gov.in**
**Bid Submission Start Date and Time: 10:00 AM on 06.02.2026**
**Bid Submission Last Date and Time: Till 06:00 PM on 22.02.2026.**
**Date and time of Opening Technical Bid: 10:00 AM on 23.02.2026.**
**Pre-bid Conference:** On **10.02.2026** at **11:00 AM** in the Committee room, Anaaj Bhawan, Sector 39-C, Chandigarh.
**Note:** Any corrigendum(s)/addendum(s) to the e-tender shall be published on the above websites only.

**1026/12/2025-26/7959** **MANAGING DIRECTOR, PUNGRAIN**

READ
FRONTLINE
LEADING THE DEBATE SINCE 1984
EVERY FORTNIGHT.
TO SUBSCRIBE, VISIT
www.thehindugroup.in/subscribe

*By E-Mail/e-Despatch E_Mail ID:-serwcbaripada@gmail.com; Ph.No.06792-261343/261344;* Gangraj, Baripada
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BARIPADA**
***"e" Procurement Notice for Weir on Bridge Work***
**Identification No.- Online Tender-Weir on Bridge N.C.B. No.406 for 2025-26**
**Letter No. 768 / Date : 29.1.26 //**

1. Name of the Work : Construction of Weir adjacent to Bridge over Katra Nallah at 33th Km on Jharpokharia to Kulapata Road in the District of Mayurbhanj for the year 2024-25..
2. Total No. of Work : 01 Nos (One)
3. Estimated Cost : Rs.200.45 Lakhs (approximately).
4. Eligible Class of Contractor : As per Annexure
5. Period of Completion : As per Annexure
6. Other details

| Procurement Officer | Bid Identification No. | Availability of Tender On-line for bidding From | Availability of Tender On-line for bidding To | Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification | Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/O C.C.E.R.W.Circle,Baripada. Technical Bid | Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/O C.C.E.R.W.Circle,Baripada. Financial Bid |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Baripada. | Weir on Bridge On-line N.C.B. No.406 | Dt.10.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M. | Dt.25.02.2026 up to 5.00 P.M. | Dt.24.02.2026 up to 5.00 P.M. | Dt.26.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M. | Will be intimated later |

- Further details can be seen from the website : www.tendersorissa.gov.in
- Any Corrigendum / Addendum will be displayed in the above e_tender website only.

Sd/- Er.A.K.Naik, Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Baripada.
25001/27/2526 OIPR-25001/25130/1/25-26/0027

PERIOD OF DOMINANCE

## Three titles in as many years for RCB is amazing: Smriti



VIJAY SONEJI

Three titles in three years for the franchise is amazing. The role clarity we got from the support staff helped us a lot. I had the feeling that Georgia Voll would play a match-winning knock in the final, and I am happy for her. The group was hard-working and we believed we could do anything – RCB captain Smriti Mandhana.

SHOWING GRACE

## I tried to bring energy to an exciting game: Harris on final



FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

I said to the girls that you get this opportunity only once. Want to quote Roger Federer and that he only won 54% of his points. We wanted to give it a good crack. I tried to bring a little bit of energy to what is an exciting game. In the crowd, there is a lot of representation, and we really appreciate that — Grace Harris.

OVER THE MOON

## To play that way and perform in the final is super special, says Voll



VIJAY SONEJI

Disappointing we could not finish it together but what a great season it has been. To play that way in the final... could not have hit the ball better. To perform in the big game is super special. It's awesome watching her (Smriti Mandhana) go about it. She's one of the cleanest hitters I have ever seen – Georgia Voll.

THE BIG ONE

## A battle between unbeaten teams as India takes on England in final




GETTY IMAGES

India and England, both unbeaten so far, will meet in the final of the ICC under-19 World Cup in Harare on Friday. While Ayush Matre's side will bank on its swashbuckling batting line-up to clinch a record-extending sixth title, Thomas Rew's team will look to its in-form skipper to deliver in the big clash.



**Heady stuff:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru capped a memorable campaign by edging out Delhi Capitals in a dramatic final. The six-wicket victory also helped Smriti & Co. draw level with Mumbai Indians' tally of two titles. VIJAY SONEJI

# Smriti-Voll blitz powers RCB to second crown

The two put on a record 165-run stand for the second wicket as the Bengaluru side chases down 204 in a thrilling finish; the Delhi outfit falls short in a final for the fourth successive time

WPL-4

**Vivek Krishnan**
VADODARA

Smriti Mandhana and Georgia Voll couldn't have found a better occasion to produce a partnership for the ages.

With the Women's Premier League trophy up for grabs against Delhi Capitals at the Kotambi Stadium on Thursday, the Royal Challengers Bengaluru pair came together in pursuit of a target of 204 and left the opponent in a daze with a sublime show of strokeplay.

The record stand between skipper Smriti and Voll, worth 165 runs, helped RCB clinch its second title in four years. While Smriti caressed her way to a 41-ball 87 (12x4, 3x6), Voll hit 79 (54b, 14x4) as the southern side tracked down the highest target in a WPL final with six wickets in hand and two balls to spare.

The climax wasn't without its nervous moments as RCB lost three wickets in quick succession. With 10 runs needed by the Bengaluru outfit off the final over, bowled by Shree Charani, a couple of singles were followed by back-to-back fours from Radha Yadav to finish the game in style. Radha was dropped by Minnu Mani in the penultimate over of the chase.

For Jemimah Rodrigues' DC, a fourth straight runner-up finish will be a bitter pill to swallow.

Despite the dismissal of Grace Harris in the second over, RCB kept up with the asking rate through the partnership between Smriti and Voll. In the initial stages, Smriti didn't get much strike. Voll took charge – cheeky ramps behind the wicket, fierce cuts square on the off-side and elegant drives in front all flowed from the Australian's willow.

Through the middle overs, Smriti came into her own. She deployed her twinkling feet against spin in serene fashion, notably dancing down the track to Shree Charani for a six over long-on in the 11th over.

RCB's response with the bat overshadowed Jemimah's 37-ball 57. The rest of the Capitals batters chipped in with brisk contributions.

Laura Wolvaardt (44, 25b, 3x4, 2x6) and Chinelle Henry (35 n.o., 15b, 4x4, 2x6) provided the finishing kick with a blistering stand of 55 off just 24 balls. Wolvaardt also forged a 76-run partnership with Jemimah.

**SCOREBOARD**

**DELHI CAPITALS**
Lizelle Lee c Harris b de Klerk 37 *(30b, 3x4, 3x6)*, Shafali Verma c Richa b Arundhati 20 *(13b, 3x4)*, Laura Wolvaardt run out 44 *(25b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Jemimah Rodrigues c de Klerk b Sayali 57 *(37b, 8x4)*, Chinelle Henry (not out) 35 *(15b, 4x4, 2x6)*; Extras (w-10): 10; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 203.

**FALL OF WICKETS**
1-49 (Shafali, 5.5 overs), 2-72 (Lee, 7.3), 3-148 (Jemimah, 15.6), 4-203 (Wolvaardt, 19.6).

**RCB BOWLING**
Bell 4-0-19-0, Sayali 4-0-46-1, Arundhati 4-0-40-1, Shreyanka 2-0-32-0, de Klerk 4-0-48-1, Radha 2-0-18-0.

**ROYAL CHALLENGERS**
Grace Harris b Henry 9 *(7b, 2x4)*, Smriti Mandhana b Henry 87 *(41b, 12x4, 3x6)*, Georgia Voll c Shafali b Minnu 79 *(54b, 14x4)*, Richa Ghosh c Minnu b Nandani 6 *(6b, 1x4)*, Nadine de Klerk (not out) 7 *(5b, 1x4)*, Radha Yadav (not out) 12 *(5b, 2x4)*; Extras (b-2, w-2): 4; Total (for four wkts. in 19.4 overs): 204.

**FALL OF WICKETS**
1-9 (Harris, 1.1), 2-174 (Voll, 16.3), 3-181 (Richa, 17.4), 4-191 (Smriti, 18.4).

**CAPITALS BOWLING**
Kapp 4-0-38-0, Henry 4-0-34-2, Nandani 4-0-41-1, Shree Charani 3.4-0-46-0, Shafali 1-0-9-0, Minnu 2-0-19-1, Sneh 1-0-15-0.

**Toss:** RCB.

**PoM:** Smriti.

*RCB won by six wickets with two balls to spare to clinch the title.*

**The award winners**
*Orange Cap:* Smriti Mandhana (RCB); *Purple Cap:* Sophie Devine (GG); *MVP:* Devine; *Emerging Player:* Nandani Sharma (DC).

# Flight booked and we are going to Colombo, says Suryakumar

T20 WORLD CUP

**Amol Karhadkar**
MUMBAI

Captain Suryakumar Yadav has stressed that India is fully prepared to face Pakistan in the T20 World Cup preliminary-stage clash on February 15.

But he raised doubts about whether the decision-makers will be able to ensure the game takes place following the Government of Pakistan's directive to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) of not taking the field against India.



**Let the games begin!** The captains of the 20 teams which will vie for honours in the T20 World Cup. ICC

"Our mindset is pretty clear. We have not said no (to playing against Pakistan). They have.

"The ICC has given the fixture. Our flight is booked and we are going there (Colombo)," Suryakumar said during the pre-tournament captains' media interaction here on Thursday.

"Their (Pakistan's) decision is not in my control. I wish I could take their decision, but then, it is their call."

Last week, the Pakistan government announced via social media that the Pakistan team will forfeit the group match against India. While the International Cricket Council (ICC) responded through a media release, there has been no official dialogue between the PCB and the ICC regarding the fate of the contest so far.

Asked about his message to the ICC with the future of the world's most anticipated cricket fixture hanging in the balance, Suryakumar admitted that he was unsure how much the governing body could intervene.

"I feel it is not an easy job. It is not my call. I am sure they might be working out something as well, but since it has come from the other government or the nation, how can they (the ICC) help?" Suryakumar said.

"For them as well, I know it will be a difficult situation. But as I said, if we are told and the fixtures are ready, we will definitely go ahead."

The India captain reiterated that the team was never hesitant about facing Pakistan in multi-nation tournaments, as has been the norm for over a decade.

"We played them three times in the Asia Cup, we played some good cricket. We won (all the matches) and we were very happy. Similarly, if we get an opportunity in Colombo, we will definitely play," Suryakumar said.

# Suryakumar's merry bunch looks the team to beat

Former champion Pakistan should progress to the Super Eight stage even if it forfeits the marquee game against India; Namibia, Netherlands and USA will hope to punch above their weight



**Superstars:** India's dashing opener Abhishek and Pakistan pace spearhead Afridi are capable of changing the complexion of a game inside the PowerPlay itself. FILE PHOTOS: RITU RAJ KONWAR, K.R. DEEPAK

T20 WC COUNTDOWN

K.C. Vijaya Kumar

A subcontinental rivalry overshadowing a global cricket tournament is again at play as the ICC Twenty20 World Cup is all set to commence during the weekend. The political undercurrents that simmer in matches involving India and Pakistan is being strongly felt in Group A.

The strident voices from across the Wagah border insist that the big clash between the neighbours at Colombo on February 15 is a non-starter. Just as the ICC, BCCI and PCB buckle down, Group A isn't just about India and Pakistan as Namibia, the Netherlands and the United States of America (USA), are also in the fray.

Even if Pakistan forfeits its game against India, the estranged neighbours should find a berth in the Super Eight stage. India, defending champion and No. 1 in the ICC T20I rankings, has a strong unit helmed by Suryakumar Yadav. Even if Sanju Samson's poor form is a worry, the team has enough firepower to prevail over opponents.

The recent 4-1 triumph over New Zealand highlighted the riches within India's playing XI and the larger squad. Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar, and Shivam Dube, flexing his all-rounder muscle, have flourished. Hardik Pandya lends balance while Jasprit Bumrah's pace, Arshdeep Singh's perseverance, and the guile of Axar Patel, Varun Chakaravarthy and Kuldeep Yadav, should keep the attack in good stead.

Defending a title in home conditions brings in the familiar comfort of the backyard and the attendant expectations of local fans, besides an Indian diaspora that will fly in. Currently, Suryakumar's merry bunch seems primed to cope and deliver well.

Meanwhile, Pakistan, mercurial, and stationed in Sri Lanka, has to find a voice. Salman Agha and his key men Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman and Shaheen Afridi need to be at their best. A former champion in cricket's shortest format, Pakistan has slipped over the years.

While in the popular narrative, dirges about West Indies prevail, the decline of Pakistan from the heady days of Imran Khan, Javed Miandad and Wasim Akram, remains a concern. Still, against the other opponents in Group A, Pakistan is expected to succeed.

For the remaining teams, a global championship offers both an honest mirror and an opportunity to dream big. There are enough lessons from history; in a 1987 World Cup game at Hyderabad, Dave Houghton's 142 helped Zimbabwe briefly threaten New Zealand. But it lit a spark and in the 1999 edition in England, Zimbabwe defeated India. Those were 50-over World Cups.

In the more abridged T20Is, lesser teams can mask flaws and dream big. This is the beacon that Namibia, the Netherlands and the USA should chase. Namibia has its former star Craig Williams as coach, while the Dutch have been bolstered by the presence of Max O'Dowd and Bas de Leede.

And the USA, helmed by Monank Patel, will lean on batter Saiteja Mukkamalla, and also hope some of the contests are as easy as tucking into street-side chaat, which most of its players relished in Mumbai.

## The Group A schedule

| DATE | TEAMS | VENUE | TIME |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feb. 7 | Pakistan vs. Netherlands | Colombo (SSC) | 11 a.m. |
| Feb. 7 | India vs. USA | Mumbai | 7 p.m. |
| Feb. 10 | Netherlands vs. Namibia | Delhi | 11 a.m. |
| Feb. 10 | Pakistan vs. USA | Colombo (SSC) | 7 p.m. |
| Feb. 12 | India vs. Namibia | Delhi | 7 p.m. |
| Feb. 13 | USA vs. Netherlands | Chennai | 7 p.m. |
| Feb. 15 | USA vs. Namibia | Chennai | 3 p.m. |
| Feb. 18 | Pakistan vs. Namibia | Colombo (SSC) | 3 p.m. |
| Feb. 18 | India vs. Netherlands | Ahmedabad | 7 p.m. |

Note: Pakistan has decided to boycott its match against India at Colombo on February 15

# It's all down to the 'Indian mentality', feels skipper Suryakumar

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI



**Doffing his hat:** Suryakumar credits Gambhir for driving the cultural shift within the side. FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

Never has a team entered a men's T20 World Cup – a format as fickle as the weather – as clear favourites as India in 2026. Captain Suryakumar Yadav attributed it to a fundamental shift in approach, describing it as the emergence of the "Indian mentality".

"This is the Indian mentality. We have been playing some good brand of cricket for the last two-three years, but we have changed our thinking," Suryakumar said during the pre-tournament captains' media interaction here on Thursday.

"Earlier, we used to play bilateral (series) differently than the ICC tournaments, but now, be it an ICC event or (the) Asia Cup or even a bilateral (match), we try to play in the same manner.

"This is why, when we went to play the 2024 T20 World Cup, it did not feel any different. It felt like we have been playing this way for an entire year.

"Even now, the kind of cricket we have been playing for the last year, we will try to play the same way (in the T20 World Cup).

"And if we play well, the result will also be on our side."

Despite the historical trends – no team having won a T20 World Cup on home soil and none having successfully defended the title – India arrive with unprecedented momentum.

Their struggles in Test cricket aside, the partnership between head coach Gautam Gambhir and Suryakumar, which has spanned most of the 17-month cycle, has turned India into a dominant force in the shortest format. Since July 2024, India has lost just six of its 41 T20 Internationals.

Suryakumar did not hesitate in crediting Gambhir for driving the cultural shift within the side.

"It has been a wonderful journey since he (Gambhir) has taken over.

"The main thing is the atmosphere that he has created in the dressing room – that it's a team game. He has infused that personal milestones should be kept aside and the team goals are more important. It's been one year since he has been working on it," he said.

"For example, in the last match in Thiruvananthapuram, Ishan Kishan was in his 90s and he completed his hundred with a six. That is one thing he (Gambhir) is trying in the dressing room, keeping the personal milestones away and focusing on what's the team's goal and then the work towards it."

# 'We will try and showcase that the UAE is one of the teams coming up'

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI



**Coaching philosophy:** Rajput believes the key is not to get overawed by the occasion or the opponent. R. RAGU

Nineteen years ago, the inaugural ICC World T20 was a step into the unknown. The success of that event back in 2007 – driven in large part by India's triumph – led to the birth of the IPL, and the subsequent boom of the shortest format, which has reshaped the sport's landscape.

One person who played a key role in India's victory was coach Lalchand Rajput. The former Indian cricketer has since taken on other coaching assignments and is back at the T20 World Cup for the first time after the 2007 edition, as the UAE's head coach.

The Middle-Eastern country missed the 2024 edition but has made steady progress over the last 18 months under Rajput.

"We have worked very hard, and hopefully we'll try and showcase that the UAE is also one of the teams which is coming up now," said Rajput in a chat with *The Hindu*.

The Gulf team, slotted in Group D, will kick off its campaign against New Zealand at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium here before moving to New Delhi for its remaining matches against South Africa, Afghanistan and Canada.

In 2025, the UAE shocked Bangladesh 2-1 in a three-match T20 series ahead of the Asia Cup, and Rajput felt it showed what the team was capable of.

"It was very important for us because we don't play Test nations often. So, competing with them and showing that we can be as good as they are was huge. If you look at that, we could have won it even 3-0. That gave us the momentum and the boost. The players now believe themselves, yes, we can do it. And I think from there on, we just carried forward and we qualified for the World Cup."

Sharing his experience coaching associate countries, the former Mumbai opener stressed that a key aspect he emphasises is not getting overawed by the occasion or the opponent.

In last year's Asia Cup, the UAE pushed Pakistan close in the group-stage game before letting the opportunity slip away. "When you give the big teams an opportunity, they will take it. In that game, we had them at 100 for seven *(sic)* and let them score 140 *(sic)*. We also batted only 18 overs *(sic)*. These are things we need to improve."

"I think ILT20 has had a big impact on the players. Rubbing shoulders with top players has given them confidence, and they are starting to believe they can do it," said Rajput.

# I have done whatever I could to make a comeback, says Nagal

DAVIS CUP

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU



**Friendly battle:** Nagal and Dhakshineswar in high spirits during practice. K. MURALI KUMAR

To have your best singles player under a fitness cloud ahead of a crucial Davis Cup tie is never the ideal preparation.

India captain Rohit Rajpal would have been experiencing this tension ever since Sumit Nagal retired from his second-round match at the Nonthaburi Challenger near Bangkok in Thailand little over three weeks ago.

However, at the S.M. Krishna Tennis Stadium here on Thursday, Nagal expressed happiness that his comeback was on track, with the Davis Cup qualifier against the Netherlands starting on Saturday.

"I am feeling better day by day," Nagal said after practice.

"For me, the camp started right after Bangkok. I have been working a lot in the last two-three weeks. I don't have any complaints. I have done whatever I could to get ready."

The 28-year-old admitted that there were fears that the muscle tear in his hip could force him out for much longer.

"You don't know how you are going to recover," Nagal elaborated.

"Every day you wake up, you don't know if you are going to be sore or how much load you can take. The thoughts were there throughout the three weeks. Even yesterday, even today. The first match [after injury] is always like this. But, you name it, I have done it."

The congenial team atmosphere a Davis Cup fixture offers should help calm his nerves and energise him.

"The environment is lovely," the World No. 281 said. "We joke around a lot and we make rookies do a lot of stupid things. Wherever I see my Indian mates, I am with them.

"It is tough at Slams because our schedules are different, the site is so big and everybody is spread out.

"But whenever we get a chance, we are always doing things together."

# Prozorova makes light of an injury to tame Sidorova

MUMBAI OPEN

Tarun Shastry
MUMBAI



**Gritty:** Prozorova overcame movement discomfiture to advance to the last eight. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Despite an injury scare that struck at the worst possible moment and the weight of intense humidity, Russia's Tatiana Prozorova produced a stirring display to thump Kristiana Sidorova 6-4, 6-1 in the round-of-16 and move into the quarterfinals of the L&T Mumbai Open 125K Series at the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association courts here on Thursday.

From the outset, Prozorova was in command and dictated play with heavy cross-court forehands, opened the court with the backhand down the line, and consistently disrupted Sidorova's timing. Sidorova never quite found her rhythm, mistiming routine groundstrokes and struggling to settle into rallies as Prozorova mixed depth with subtle variations. With assured net play and firm volleys, Prozorova surged ahead to pocket the opening set 6-4.

Just before the second set began, the contest took an unexpected turn. Prozorova pulled a muscle in her left thigh and returned to the court heavily taped, her movement visibly restricted. For a fleeting moment, Sidorova sensed an opening as Prozorova conceded a game while testing her leg, relying on slices to stay afloat.

What followed, however, was a striking shift in momentum. Prozorova began shortening points with bold returns and stepping inside the baseline to strike flat forehands into the corners. She used angled backhands to stretch Sidorova wide, finishing points with crisp volleys and the occasional teasing lob.

Any hope Sidorova harboured faded away as Prozorova reeled off four games on the trot, sealing the second set 6-1 with a flurry of cross-court winners and unreturnable serves to march into the quarterfinals.

**Other results: Singles (round-of-16):** Tian Fangran (Chn) bt Hanne Vandewinkel (Bel) 2-6, 6-4, 6-4; Lanlana Tararudee (Tha) bt Park So-hyun (Kor) 3-6, 6-3, 6-0; Lilli Tagger (Aut) bt Eri Shimizu (Jpn) 6-2, 6-2.

**Doubles (quarterfinals):** Nicole Fossa Huergo (Arg) & Mananchaya Sawangkaew (Tha) bt Rutuja Bhosale & Peangtarn Plipuech (Tha) 4-6, 6-1(9).

## INBRIEF



### Honoured to carry Olympic flame at Winter Games: Bindra

Olympic gold medallist shooter Abhinav Bindra on Thursday said he is "truly humbled" and "honoured" after carrying the Olympic torch ahead of the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, describing it as a symbol of unity and perseverance. The Winter Olympics begin on Friday at Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo in Italy. "Honoured to carry the Olympic flame at @milanocortina26. A symbol of unity, perseverance, and shared human aspiration," Bindra wrote on 'X' along with a few pictures taken on a rainy day. Bindra, a gold winner in the 10m air rifle event in the 2008 Beijing, was selected as torch-bearer in October last year.

### Poojari wins gold in Elite 60kg category

Two-time Commonwealth Games medallist Gururaja Poojari rode on his better clean and jerk show to total 269kg and beat reigning Commonwealth championships gold medallist Ch. Rishikanta Singh by 3kg for the men's Elite 60kg title at the National weightlifting championships in Modinagar on Thursday. Poojari lifted 150kg in clean and jerk, while Rishikanta managed 147kg.

**The results (winners only): Men: Elite: 60kg:** Gururaja Poojari (Kar) snatch 119kg, clean and jerk 150kg, total 269kg; **Junior: 60kg:** Chera Tania (Aru) 110kg, 143kg, 253kg; **Youth: 60kg:** Subrat Naik (Odi) 107kg, 125kg, 232kg; **56kg:** Dharma Jyoti Dewgharia (SSCB) 103kg, 127kg, 230kg.

### Indian team for ITF Masters World Championships named

The Indian team for the ITF World Tennis Masters Tour World Championships has been named with Surinder Mohan Sharma, Chander Bhushan and Rakesh Kohli captaining their respective sides in the various age groups. The tournament is scheduled from March 8-13 in Turkey.

**The team: 60 years and above:** Chandra Bhushan, Nagraj Revanasiddaiah, Rajan Beri, Puneet Kumar Gupta.
**Over-65:** Rakesh Kohli, Ajeet Bhardwaj, O.P. Dikshit, Mehar Prakash Koduri.
**Over-70:** Surinder Mohan Sharma, Thulasi Ramubilikere Siddaraju, SJS Randhawa, Dileep Shivpuri.

### Osmania triumphs in inter-university cricket

Kunal Daswani (65 n.o., 41b, 7x4, 2x6) and Vaibhav Sajaana (45 n.o., 27b, 2x4, 4x6) shone as Osmania defeated VTU (Belagavi) by 10 runs in the final of the South Zone inter-University cricket tournament in Mysuru on Thursday.

**The scores: Final:** Osmania 214/5 in 25 overs (Kunal Daswani 65 n.o., Vaibhav Sajaana 45 n.o.) bt VTU (Belagavi) 204 in 24.3 overs (Samarth Hegde 46, Vishnu G. Goudar 39, S. Aditya 38, Vamshhi Kumaar 3/48, Dharmapuri Sathwik 3/40).
**Third-place match:** Anna 135/6 in 20 overs (P. Saravanan 66 n.o.) lost to Reva 137/4 in 19.4 overs (P. Prateek 36, Gyan Somaiah 44).
**Final placing:** 1. Osmania, 2. VTU (Belagavi), 3. Reva, 4. Anna.

**LIVE TELECAST**

**Ranji Trophy:** JioHotstar, 9.30 a.m.
**Men's U-19 World Cup (final):** England vs India, Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 1 p.m.
**Bundesliga:** Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 1 a.m. (Saturday)
**Serie A:** DAZN, 1.15 a.m. (Saturday)
**Premier League:** SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 1.30 a.m. (Saturday)
**LaLiga:** FanCode, 1.30 a.m. (Saturday)

# High-flying Bengal holds all the aces against Andhra

The host will rely on a strong bowling attack and a fine home record to continue its good run; focus on the incisive Shami; Abhishek and Rasheed headline the visiting team's batting unit

**RANJI TROPHY**

**Y.B. Sarangi**
KALYANI

A strong bowling attack and a fine track record at home should give Bengal an edge over Andhra Pradesh when the two unbeaten sides lock horns in a Ranji Trophy quarterfinal clash at the Bengal Cricket Academy (BCA) ground here on Friday.

Bengal recorded five outright wins, including three at home, on its way to top Group-C with 36 points, while Andhra secured four clear victories to manage a second-place finish in Group-A after tying with two others on 31 points.

The BCA ground, which saw Bengal nearly beat Assam and then outplay Services, has served the host well. The Abhimanyu Easwaran-led side will hope to continue its fine run at the picturesque venue.

Bengal will rely on its international pace attack, comprising Mohammed Shami (27 wickets), Akash Deep and Mukesh Kumar, along with gentle medium-pacer Suraj Sindhu Jaiswal, who can serve as a handy lower-order batter. Left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed, an international all-rounder who is Bengal's top wicket-taker (35) and fourth highest run-scorer (363), will provide balance to the side.



**Strike force:** The Shami-led Bengal attack could pose problems for the Andhra batters. FILE PHOTO: J. ALLEN EGENUSE

The bowlers' success has helped Bengal take 20 wickets five times this season.

Sumanta Gupta (425), Sudip Chatterjee (417), Abhimanyu (372), Anustup Majumdar (358) and Sudip Gharami (352) present loads of experience in the batting department.

For Andhra, Abhishek Reddy (582), Shaik Rasheed (523) and K.S. Bharat (369) have contributed heavily with the bat. It explains why the team has collected two 500-plus and as many 470-plus aggregates. The capability of captain Ricky Bhui and all-rounder Nitish Kumar cannot be undermined.

Left-arm spinner Saurabh Kumar (30), off-spinner T. Vijay (23) and pacer K. Saiteja (21) are the tourists' leading wicket-takers.

While a sporting track is expected to treat batters and bowlers alike, the progress of the contest will tell who uses on the conditions better.

**RANJI QUARTERFINALS**

Mumbai vs. Karnataka (Mumbai); Bengal vs. Andhra (Kalyani); Madhya Pradesh vs. J & K (Indore); Jharkhand vs. Uttarakhand (Jamshedpur).

# Lovlina starts with a win; Hitesh marches on

**BOXING**

**Press Trust of India**
ALICANTE (SPAIN)

Olympic bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain started her campaign blanking Ukraine's Olha Pylypchuk 5-0 in the 75kg category, while Hitesh Gulia also rolled on as Indians extended their strong run in the BOXAM Elite International 2026 here.

Lovlina controlled the bout throughout, combining sharp combinations with disciplined movement to ease into the next round.

In the men's 70kg section, Hitesh continued his impressive form, shutting out Canada's Vincent Santoriello with a dominant 5-0 verdict.

Manju Rani (48kg) cruised past France's Gloria d'Almeida 5-0, while Nitu (51kg) made quick work of Spain's Laura Calderon, forcing an RSC in Round 1.

Kusum (51kg) followed suit, edging Spain's Claudia Alcaniz 4-1, and Arundhati Choudhary (70kg) continued her fine run with a clean 5-0 win over Kazakhstan's Aziza Issina.

Later Sanamacha Chanu (75kg) added another victory to India's sheet with a controlled 4-1 decision against Canada's Viktoria Penney.

In the men's bouts, Pawan Bartwal (55kg) advanced after Thailand's Thanarat Saengphet retired in Round 2.

Jadumani Singh (55kg) secured a solid 4-1 win over Ukraine's Siiovush Mukhammdiiev.



Lovlina. FILE PHOTO: AP

Deepak (70kg) dominated Spain's David Edenel Rosalen 5-0, and Ankush (80kg) edged past Kazakhstan's Yerassyl Zhakpekov in a closely fought 3-2 contest.

Harsh Choudhary (90kg) capped the day with a commanding 5-0 victory over Canada's Bryan Colwell.

**The results: Women: 75kg:** Lovlina Borgohain bt Olha Pylypchuk (Ukr) 5-0, Sanamacha Chanu bt Viktoria Penney (Can) 4-1.
**70kg:** Arundhati Choudhary bt Aziza Issina (Kaz) 5-0.
**51kg:** Nitu bt Laura Calderon (Esp) RSC in Round 1, Kusum bt Claudia Alcaniz (Esp) 4-1.
**48kg:** Manju Rani bt Gloria d'Almeida (Fra) 5-0.
**Men: 90kg:** Harsh Choudhary bt Bryan Colwell (Can) 5-0.
**80kg:** Ankush bt Yerassyl Zhakpekov (Kaz) 3-2.
**70kg:** Hitesh Gulia bt Vincent Santoriello (Can) 5-0, Deepak bt David Edenel Rosalen (Esp) 5-0.
**55kg:** Pawan Bartwal bt Thanarat Saengphet (Tha) retired in Round 2, Jadumani Singh bt Siiovush Mukhammdiiev (Ukr) 4-1.

## SNAPSHOTS

**Indian shuttlers lose to Thailand but qualify for quarterfinals**

QINGDAO (CHINA): Tanvi Sharma produced a stunning win, but defending champion India suffered a narrow 2-3 loss to Thailand in its second Group Y match of the Badminton Asia Team Championships on Thursday. Despite the defeat, India qualified for the quarterfinals. India finished second in the group behind Thailand.
**The result:** Thailand 3 bt India 2 (Busanan Ongbamrungphan lost to Tanvi Sharma 14-21, 21-17, 18-21; Tidapron Kleebyeesun & Nattamon Laisuan lost to Gayatri Gopi Chand & Treesa Jolly 14-21, 22-20, 11-21; Pitchamon Opatniputh bt Rakshitha Ramraj 21-19, 21-17; Hathaithip Mijad & Napapakorn Tungkasatan bt Tanisha Crasto & Shruti Mishra 19-21, 21-14, 21-15; Pornpicha Choeikeewong bt Malvika Bansod 21-18, 21-14).

**Keerthana to meet Anupama in Asian snooker semifinals**

DOHA: India's Keerthana Pandian stormed into the women's semifinals with an 18-57, 39-29, 52(36)-41, 51-24 victory over Hong Kong's Chu Pui Ying in the Asian snooker championships here on Thursday.

Keerthana will meet former champion and compatriot Anupama Ramachandran, the reigning IBSF world champion, for a place in the final.

Anupama overcame Hong Kong's Yee Ting Cheung 32-60, 63(62)-25, 62-26, 31-40, 52-18.

Hong Kong's Ho Yee Ki downed Amee Kamani, the third Indian to make the knockouts, 23-51, 21-53, 44(37)-1, 57(30)-10, 52-36.

**Pooja suspended for evading dope test**

NEW DELHI: Indian long-distance runner Pooja Aatmaram has been provisionally suspended by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) for evading a dope test. Pooja competes in the 5000m and 10,000m events.

# Four-star Kerala demolishes Punjab, sets up summit clash with Services

**SANTOSH TROPHY**

**Sports Bureau**
SILAPATHAR

Kerala stormed into the final of the 79th Santosh Trophy National football championship by crushing a 10-man Punjab 4-0 in the semifinal at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium here on Thursday.

Seven-time champion Kerala will meet Services in the final on Sunday. Services defeated Railways 2-0 in the first semifinal at the same venue.

Muhammed Ajsal opened the scoring for Kerala in the 16th minute as he headed in M.M. Arjun's corner-kick from the far post.

**Set-piece does the trick**

P.T. Muhammed Riyas doubled the lead in the 34th through a set-piece move off another corner-kick taken by Arjun.

Bibin Ajayan ran into the box to receive the short corner and relayed it to an unmarked Riyas who scored from close range.

M. Viknesh capitalised on a defensive error to make it 3-0 at the stroke of half-time.

Punjab was reduced to 10 men in the 72nd minute when Harjit was sent off for his second bookable offence.

Riyas netted from Ajsal's assist to complete the rout in the 83rd.

Earlier, Abhishek Pawar struck once in each half as Services beat Railways to enter the final for the 13th time.

Abhishek volleyed home the first goal and converted a penalty for the second when Zaheer Khan was tripped inside the box by a Railway defender.




**Putting the game to bed:** Viknesh capitalised on a defensive error to make it 3-0 for Kerala at the stroke of half-time. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**The results (semifinals):** Services 2 (Abhishek Pawar 32, 73) bt Railways 0; Punjab 0 lost to Kerala 4 (Muhammed Ajsal 16, P.T. Muhammed Riyas 34, 83, M. Viknesh 45).

# 10m air pistol mixed team silver for Samrat-Suruchi

**Sports Bureau**
NEW DELHI

Samrat Rana and Suruchi Singh joined forces to clinch silver in the 10m air pistol mixed team event in the Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range on Thursday.

India extended its domination by taking its gold count to 10 after two days of the competition.

The host has also bagged five silver medals and one bronze. Uzbekistan is second in the tally with three gold medals.



**Top three:** Suruchi and Samrat, left, on the podium with the Uzbekistan and Taiwanese pairs.

In the 10m air pistol women's junior event, Rashmika Sahgal and Vanshika Chaudhary finished one-two respectively.

In the corresponding youth category, Priyanshi Purva won gold while Chahek Kohli finished second.

Uzbekistan's lone gold of the day came from the 10m air pistol mixed team pair of Nigina Saidkulova and Mukhammad Kamalov, which prevailed over Samrat and Suruchi by 481.3 to 479.6 in the final points.

The Indian pair had earlier topped the 10-team qualification round with a total of 583 after 60 shots.

Three more teams, Vietnam (582, 2nd) and Chinese Taipei (575, 4th), besides Saidkulova and Kamalov, followed them into the final.

Two more gold medals for the host came through the team competitions.

The trio of Rashmika, Vanshika and Agam Grewal won the junior women's air pistol team gold with a combined tally of 1714, 43 points ahead of the silver-winning Kazakhstan team. Priyanshi, Chahek and Shiksha Saran also won the women's youth air pistol team gold with 1709.

Kazakhstan won silver in this category as well with a score of 1627.

# India announces 24-member squad for Pro League

**HOCKEY**

**Sports Bureau**
NEW DELHI

A 24-member squad for the upcoming home leg of the FIH Pro league was named on Thursday with several youngsters finding place in the Indian men's hockey team's season opening competition for the year.

The Rourkela leg is scheduled from February 10-15 with Argentina and Belgium being the other teams.

While Pawan Malik gets a chance in the goal, defender and drag-flicker Amandeep Lakra has earned a call-up after an impressive outing in the Hockey India League, where he was adjudged the player-of-the-tournament.

Also included are 21-year-old Rosan Kujur with his maiden call-up to the senior National squad and Manmeet Singh, both part of the side that won bronze at recent Junior World Cup.

**The squad:**
**Goalkeepers:** Suraj Karkera, Pawan.
**Defenders:** Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Harmanpreet Singh, Sumit, Sanjay, Nilam Sanjeep Xess, Amandeep Lakra; **Midfielders:** Rajinder Singh, Manmeet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Hardik Singh, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Rosan Kujur; **Forwards:** Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Shilanand Lakra, Selvam Karthi, Mandeep Singh, Araijeet Singh Hundal, Aditya Arjun Lalage.

MARUTI SUZUKI

NEXA

# Your Loyalty Deserves An Upgrade.

Reserved privileges for Maruti Suzuki owners upgrading to their next.




LOYALTY REWARD OF **UP TO ₹30 000** ON EXCHANGE OF MARUTI SUZUKI CARS

SCAN TO CONNECT TO A SHOWROOM NEAR YOU!

VISIT WWW.NEXAEXPERIENCE.COM

Contact us at 1800-200-6392 1800-102-NEXA

The loyalty reward scheme is subject to terms and conditions. For more details visit authorised dealership. The offers are valid only on Grand Vitara (up to ₹30 000) and Invicto (up to ₹50 000).



/MaangalyaShoppingMall

# నేడే మహా శుభారంభం 11:01 AM






శ్రీలీల
వెండితెర సౌందర్య శిఖరం

తెలంగాణలో అతిపెద్ద ఫ్యామిలీ షాపింగ్ మాల్

Telangana - Andhra Pradesh - Karnataka

Maangalya® shopping mall

Women | Men | Kids

Opp. Coliseum Mall, Karmanghat.

## SAREES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ₹222 రికో SPL శారీస్ | 2 PCS క్యాండీ క్రష్ శారీస్ ₹550 | 2 PCS సింబా శారీస్ ₹600 |
| ₹333 లేడీ లైన్ శారీస్ | 2 PCS బాన్ బాన్ శారీస్ ₹550 | 2 PCS మ్యాజిక్ ఇంక్ శారీస్ ₹700 |
| ₹400 జాక్ పాట్ శారీస్ | 2 PCS రిచ్ ఫీల్ శారీస్ ₹550 | 2 PCS కల్పన శారీస్ శారీస్ ₹700 |
| 2 PCS రాయల్ మ్యారేజ్ శారీస్ ₹550 | 2 PCS అనార్కాలి శారీస్ ₹550 | 2 PCS ఆవిష్కార్ శారీస్ ₹700 |
| 2 PCS సిం సిం శారీస్ ₹550 | 2 PCS ఆరంజ్ షిఫాన్ శారీస్ ₹555 | 2 PCS రూప్ కళా శారీస్ ₹700 |
| 2 PCS కలంకారీ శారీస్ ₹550 | 2 PCS పార్శ్వ శిల్క్ శారీస్ ₹600 | 2 PCS శ్రీవల్లి శారీస్ ₹700 |
| 4 PCS వాటర్ పార్క్ శారీస్ ₹550 | 2 PCS డిజిటల్ ఫ్లవర్ శారీస్ ₹600 | 2 PCS వైట్ హౌస్ శారీస్ ₹800 |

*T&C Apply

## LADIES WEAR

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 PCS Ankle Length Leggings ₹500 | 4 PCS Branded Ankle Length Jeans ₹1000 |
| 3 PCS Heavy Printed Reyon Kurtis ₹500 | 3 PCS Fancy Co-ord Sets ₹1000 |
| 3 PCS Vatican Kali Kurti's ₹500 | 2 PCS Party Wear Plazzo Sets ₹1000 |
| 3 PCS Fancy T-Shirts ₹500 | 4 PCS Casual Wear Dress Materials ₹1000 |
| 5 PCS Imported Plazzo Bottoms ₹500 | 2 PCS Fancy Wear Dress Materials ₹1000 |
| 5 PCS Cotton Nighties ₹500 | 2 PCS Office Wear Plazzo Sets ₹1000 |
| 3 PCS Western Tops ₹1000 | 4 PCS Party Wear Sharara Suit ₹2000 |

## KIDS WEAR

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 PCS Boys / Girls T-Shirts ₹600 | 3 PCS Shorts ₹699 |
| 3 PCS Boys Fancy T-Shirt ₹699 | 2 PCS Branded T-Shirts ₹600 |
| 4 PCS Boys / Girls Night Pants ₹799 | 3 PCS Track Pants ₹700 |
| 4 PCS Boys / Girls Night Suit ₹999 | 2 PCS Imported T-Shirts ₹700 |
| 4 PCS Boys Shirts ₹999 | 2 PCS Collar T-Shirts ₹800 |
| 4 PCS Girls Long Skirts ₹1000 | 3 PCS Formal Shirts ₹900 |
| 3 PCS Girls Short Tops & Plazo Set ₹1199 | 2 PCS Fashion Shirts ₹1000 |
| 4 PCS Boys / Girls Jeans ₹1199 | 4 PCS Trendy Shirts ₹1000 |

## MENS WEAR




# I wanted a new challenge and a new opportunity to make an impact in a new league

The Irish shot-stopper, who rates Tamil Nadu Dragons teammate Prince Deep highly, talks about the evolution of goalkeeping, the value of experience and enjoying the pressure moments

INTERVIEW

## *David Harte*

**K. Keerthivasan**

Ireland's 36-year-old goalkeeper David Harte was a pillar of strength for the Tamil Nadu Dragons in the 2025-26 Hockey India League (HIL), producing a series of outstanding saves during regulation time as well as in shoot-outs.

A vastly experienced campaigner with over 240 international caps, Harte has featured in domestic leagues in Ireland, the Netherlands, India and Germany, bringing a wealth of knowledge to every team he represents. Speaking to *The Hindu*, the Irish goalkeeper, who announced his international retirement on Thursday, reflected on his move to a German club this season, his experiences playing in "incredible India," and the importance of sharing his expertise with younger players.

"I wanted a new challenge, a new opportunity to make an impact on a new group and in a new league – to travel around Germany, play different clubs, and experience different playing styles," Harte said. Comparing HIL with the Malaysian league, where he previously played, Harte noted similarities in structure. "I would compare HIL's structure and set-up a little closer to the league in Malaysia, which is played during the winter breaks. I played there for the University of Kuala Lumpur for three seasons. The HIL and the Malaysian league are shorter, with matches coming closer together, whereas the domestic leagues I played in Ireland, the Netherlands and Germany are longer," he explained. Excerpts

**It was your fifth HIL. Very few have played five HIL editions before you. As a senior goalkeeper of Tamil Nadu Dragons and one who has played for long in India, how was the experience?**

It was fabulous. As a senior player in the team, it's also about trying to recognise the position and the role you have within a group. Can you have an impact on that group and can you have a positive presence within the team? Can you bring experience of having played in five HILs?

Can you show that to the junior players who are coming through? Can I do that with young and promising goalkeeper Prince Deep Singh as my deputy here as well. I will try and help to develop him to become one of the best goalkeepers of the Indian National team.

When I calculated all months and weeks of competitions in the Hockey India League, with tournaments representing Ireland, like the World Cup and the World League, I think I've spent maybe close to a year and a half of my life in total in incredible India. It's a country that I can't keep away from.

**Any player from Tamil Nadu Dragons who impressed you this season?**

Prince Deep as a goalkeeper has made impressive strides and being the quality person who he is, he open to helping the group, helping the team. He's been one to watch out for. Forward Uttam Singh really impressed with dedication, his drive, and his want to be better as a player and he's also a fabulous human being. All those things combined make it a brilliant package deal.




**You have played in leagues in Ireland, The Netherlands, and now in Germany. In what way HIL differs from the other leagues?**

I would compare HIL's structure and set-up probably a little bit closer to the league in Malaysia, which is played during the winter breaks. I played there for the University of Kuala Lumpur for three seasons. One of them was with my roommate Sander De Wijn, who is now with us at TN Dragons. I think the HIL and Malaysian league are just shorter, matches come a little bit closer together whereas the domestic leagues that I played in Ireland and in the Netherlands, and also the one in Germany, all start in September, maybe through to November. Then, a winter break, you'll start up again in March, you'll finish in the playoffs hopefully sometime in May-June.

**How are you able to maintain peak reflexes and agility while playing at the highest level?**

You have to put in a lot of time and a lot of dedication to your work. You have to have a supporting family, a very supporting wife, like in my case. And let's be honest, if you speak to anyone else also approaching the age, I think Vincent Vanasch, Belgium goalkeeper playing for JSW Soorma HC in HIL, he will say it does get a bit tougher as the years go on. But if you still have the same kind of fire burning inside you and the same motivation and goal sets, then that's what drives you and gives you energy in the mornings and late evenings when you're on the turf. And that's currently the same situation for me.

**What has experience at the highest level taught you?**

As you age, you have a little bit more trust and belief in yourself. So, basically what you can do is you can spend time on helping and coaching others. And that's certainly what I try and aim to do, guide the players around me. It doesn't matter if it's a young junior international with zero caps or the likes of Sander or Amit Rohidas with over 200 international games and Olympic medals. That's what you do at the back as a goalkeeper. You try to be a pillar of strength for them as a goalkeeper; and it doesn't matter if you're playing in the Dutch league or elsewhere.

**Why did you quit SV Kampong, a top division Dutch club after 13 long years?**

I have recently joined a German club, HTC Uhlenhorst Mülheim. The choice behind it was family. My eldest daughter was going to primary school. It was time potentially to be more focused towards family. As I said, after 13 years, it was time to return home to our homeland. My wife is from Belfast, a city in Northern Ireland. Our eldest daughter was starting her schooling at the beginning of this year in a primary school. And my wife in particular was eager to get home to family and be closer to friends. And I said, that was no problem. I knew I wasn't done with hockey yet. So, a German club reached out and ended up signing me with Moritz Ludwig, a teammate from the Hockey India League last season. I wanted a new challenge, a new opportunity to make an impact on a new group and in a new league, travel around Germany, play in different clubs, play with different styles of teammates.

**How has the shift to the German club been?**

It has been quite hectic. I train locally on Tuesday with the local Irish team. I then fly on a Thursday and stay until Sunday with my German club, Ullenhorst Mulheim. Yes, one particular reason was that it was a shorter competition. And less time away from family and less travelling.

German league started in the first week of September and will finish in May-June. It's very intense, though. That way, I could combine my role and my life as a father back here to help out my wife and be with my two daughters.

**How do you mentor young goalkeepers, both in Ireland and in leagues in Germany, Dutch and India?**

I just recall like many goalkeepers that have been before me who have passed on a lot of information and knowledge and have helped me big time in my career. And that's something I would try to do for the younger goalkeepers moving forward. It's also a great way to have a good impact on them and to connect at a deeper level, because not everybody really understands what it's like until you're actually there standing under the crossbar and experiencing the pressure of being a goalkeeper.

**How much has the role of goalkeepers evolved since your early days?**

I think it's like logically with anything that goes, you just become a little bit more experienced, perhaps, maybe a bit more of a common figure. And I think also with that, you just become a lot more trusting and comfortable with yourself as a person and individual. And that really helps a lot to be able to try and nurture and develop other goalkeepers and players around you. You try to instill confidence in them as well.

**How do you manage pressure situations during shootouts at high-stake tournaments?**

I think you believe in the training that you've done and the experiences that you have been through and seeing the opportunity that you have to make a difference. You see it as a positive rather than a pressure moment. Like I've always said, as a goalkeeper, you might have an opportunity to be the hero where I often think the pressure was usually on the taker. They perhaps only have that one opportunity and those eight seconds to make a difference.

**Which one remains your most memorable tournament?**

Personally, it was my last tournament, the Paris Olympics in 2024. It was just the five incredibly tough games, but probably the most consistent matches that I had ever played at that level. And the most relaxed and the best feeling I had. And having my two daughters with my wife and family in the stands watching are moments I'll cherish forever and certainly never forget.

# Infertility in India: bringing mental health to the forefront of condition

Mental health is not a peripheral concern in fertility care, it is a central determinant of reproductive health; until it is treated as an integral component of care for all genders, gap between what science knows and what society believes will widen; stigma should be replaced with science, silence with dialogue, and blame with compassion

Rashikkha Ra. Iyer

Is womanhood synonymous with motherhood? This question has lingered in the Indian social imagination for generations. The country's fertility landscape remains firmly anchored in a patriarchal narrative, where a woman's worth, identity, and social legitimacy are overwhelmingly tied to her ability to bear children.

Despite the biological fact that conception requires both a man and a woman, the moral burden of infertility is placed almost exclusively on women. Women without childrenare openly discouraged from attending weddings, baby showers, or religious ceremonies. Such exclusions deepen feelings of shame, isolation, embarrassment, identity fragmentation, and perceived moral failure.

Infertility, though a medical condition like any other, is frequently subjected to moral scrutiny. Even when medical evaluations clearly identify male-factor issues – such as low sperm counts or unexplained infertility – the cultural script continues to place blame squarely on women. This persistent assumption reinforces a deeply entrenched gender bias that distorts both responsibility and compassion.

## Men's mental health

What often goes unacknowledged in these conversations is that male infertility itself is deeply intertwined with mental health, and that psychological distress can directly impair sperm quality. This is well-established in contemporary reproductive science. A 2024 original research article in *Frontiers in Endocrinology* found that depression is significantly associated with decreased semen quality, including reduced sperm concentration and motility (Zhang et al., 2024). This means that the very men who are culturally insulated from blame may themselves be experiencing psychological states that biologically diminish fertility potential.

Further evidence comes from a 2025 open-access study in *Reproductive Biology and Endocrinology*, which demonstrates that depression, anxiety, and stress impair sperm quality through dysregulation of the mitochondrial PDK-PDC axis, a pathway essential for healthy sperm metabolism (Wang et al., 2025). This mechanistic insight reinforces that mental health is not merely an emotional overlay, but a physiological determinant of reproductive function.

Ironically, the very patriarchal norms that so swiftly assign fault to women also conspire to keep men silent about their own psychological distress. This enforced quietude does more than perpetuate stigma – it may be actively undermining fertility itself. Observations from clinical reviews indicate that chronic psychological stress triggers activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, driving up cortisol levels and destabilising the hormonal milieu essential for healthy spermatogenesis.

What emerges from this body of research is a striking paradox: while women absorb the social, emotional, and reputational costs of infertility, men's unaddressed mental health burdens may be biologically fuelling the very condition for which women are castigated.



Research shows that heightened anxiety and depressive symptoms are associated with lower success rates in procedures such as IVF. The monthly cycle of hope, hyper-vigilance, and disappointment compound this stress, creating a physiological environment that is less conducive to conception. GETTY IMAGES

**Infertility, though a medical condition like any other, is subjected to moral scrutiny. If the silence around men's mental health obscures its biological consequences, the landscape for women is even more fraught**

Acknowledging this dual reality is not merely a matter of fairness or empathy – it is central to improving reproductive outcomes.

If the silence around men's mental health obscures its biological consequences, the emotional landscape for women is even more fraught – and the science here is equally unambiguous. Mental health challenges do not merely accompany infertility; they can actively impair reproductive function. A landmark study in *Human Reproduction* found that women experiencing high levels of psychological stress had significantly lower probabilities of conception during each menstrual cycle, with elevated salivary alpha-amylase – a biomarker of stress –correlating with reduced fecundability (Lynch et al., 2014). In other words, stress is not just a by-product of infertility; it can be a precursor.

Findings from a number of studies underscore that emotional distress is not simply "in the mind" – it is inscribed in the endocrine system.

Taken together, the evidence paints a sobering picture: women are not only socially penalised for infertility but may also be physiologically disadvantaged by the very emotional burdens that stigma imposes. It is a cruel feedback loop – one in which social pressure becomes a biological impediment, and biology becomes further ammunition for social blame. Recognising this interplay is essential. Mental health is not a peripheral concern in fertility care, it is a central determinant of reproductive health. Until emotional well-being is treated with the same seriousness as hormonal assays and ultrasound scans, the gap between what science knows and what society believes will continue to widen, to the detriment of the very people seeking to build families. The consequences of this emotional burden extend even further when couples enter the realm of infertility treatment. Assisted reproductive technologies are often portrayed as purely biomedical solutions, yet their success is intimately tied to psychological wellbeing. Chronic stress – fuelled by stigma, family pressure, financial strain, and the relentless expectation to conceive – can disrupt hormonal regulation, impair ovulation, and interfere with the body's responsiveness to treatment protocols.

## Pressures of treatment

Research consistently shows that heightened anxiety and depressive symptoms are associated with lower success rates in procedures such as IVF. The monthly cycle of hope, hyper-vigilance, and disappointment compound this stress, creating a physiological environment that is less conducive to conception.

The pressures of infertility treatment also reshape the most intimate dimensions of a couple's relationship. What is ordinarily an expression of desire, connection, or spontaneity can become tightly choreographed around ovulation windows, clinic schedules, and medical directives. Many couples describe sex during treatment as increasingly mechanical – an obligation rather than an act of intimacy.

This can erode relational closeness. Over time, the emotional strain can dampen libido, heighten anxiety, and create a sense of detachment between partners. Ironically, the very effort to conceive can undermine the relational and psychological conditions that support healthy sexual functioning.

Recognising this dynamic is crucial. Fertility treatment is not only a medical journey but a relational one. Without compassionate support that acknowledges the toll on intimacy, couples may find themselves navigating not only the challenges of infertility but also the quiet erosion of the connection that once anchored their partnership.

## The path forward

India stands at a crossroads. The science is clear, the human cost undeniable, and yet our cultural narratives remain stubbornly unchanged.

The first step forward is cultural honesty. We must finally sever the idea that womanhood is validated through motherhood. As long as society treats fertility as a measure of virtue, women will continue to pay with their dignity, their mental health, and in many cases, their biological chances of conceiving. Equally urgent is the need to bring men into the centre of the conversation. The data shows that male mental health directly affects fertility, yet patriarchal norms keep men silent, unexamined, and emotionally unsupported.

Clinics, too, must evolve. Mental health support cannot remain a decorative add-on to reproductive care. It must be embedded into every stage of assessment and treatment. Screening for anxiety, depression, and relational strain should be as routine as semen analysis or hormone testing. When emotional wellbeing is treated as essential, outcomes improve – not just medically, but humanely. Finally, couples need support that protects their relationships from the corrosive pressures of treatment. Infertility should not be allowed to hollow out intimacy or turn partnership into performance.

The way forward is not complicated – it is simply long overdue. We must replace stigma with science, silence with dialogue, and blame with compassion. Only then can fertility care in India move from being a site of quiet suffering to one of dignity, equity, and genuine healing.

*(Rashikkha Ra. Iyer is a multidisciplinary clinician working in the U.K., specialising in the delivery of clinical interventions in forensic settings. Rashikkha.RaIyer@outlook.com)*

## THE GIST

- Despite the biological fact that conception requires both a man and a woman, the moral burden of infertility is placed almost exclusively on women. Even when medical evaluations clearly identify male-factor issues — such as low sperm counts or unexplained infertility — the cultural script continues to place blame squarely on women
- Mental health challenges do not merely accompany infertility; they can actively impair reproductive function. Findings from a number of studies underscore that emotional distress is not simply "in the mind" — it is inscribed in the endocrine system
- Mental health support cannot remain a decorative add-on to reproductive care. It must be embedded into every stage of assessment and treatment. Screening for anxiety, depression, and relational strain should be as routine as semen analysis or hormone testing

## THE HEALTH QUIZ

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

### Despite centuries of research, the brain continues to remain the most mysterious of organs in the human body. Here is a quiz testing your knowledge about the important organ and how to care for it?

Zubeda Hamid

**QUESTION 1**
What is the human brain primarily made of? This comprises about 60% of the brain, with the remaining 40% being protein, carbohydrates, salt and water.

**QUESTION 2**
We all know about grey matter and white matter in the central nervous system. In your spinal cord, which matter is on the outside, and which is inside?

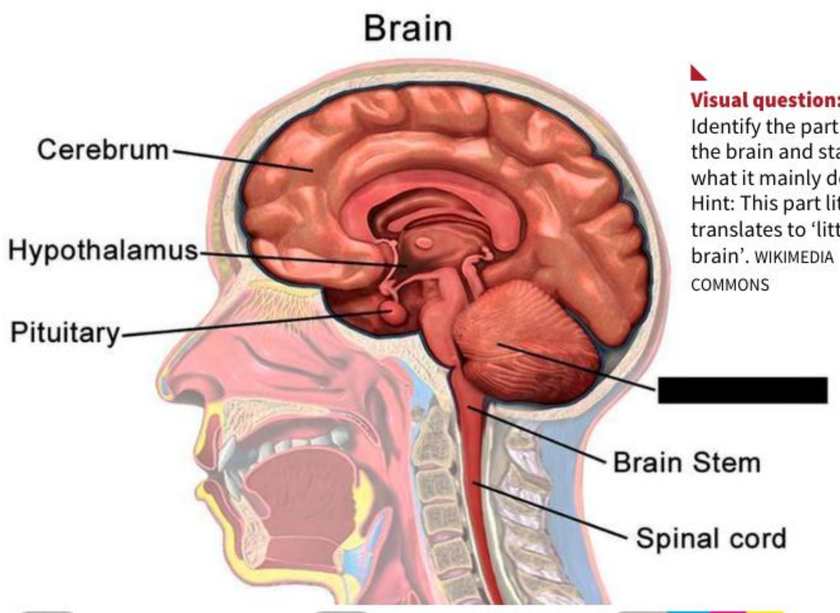
**QUESTION 3**
Is the following statement true or false? Walnuts are good for brain health and can also help improve memory.

**QUESTION 4**
Which daily hygiene ritual that many of us skip is believed to reduce the risk of stroke?

**QUESTION 5**
Looking after which of your organs, besides the brain, is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of dementia?

**QUESTION 6**
Take a guess as to how many neurons the brain is believed to have: a) Over 100 billion b) Between 40 and 50 billion c) Between 80 and 90 billion

**QUESTION 7**
Is the following statement true or false? The brain's ability to change stops with age.




**Visual question:** Identify the part of the brain and state what it mainly does. Hint: This part literally translates to 'little brain'. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

**Answers to previous edition's quiz:** 1. Which virus is most often the culprit behind your common cold? **Ans: Rhinoviruses** 2. After a viral infection, some people contract _____, a condition in which the airways of the lungs get inflamed. **Ans: Acute bronchitis** 3. Paracetamol is commonly used as a fever reliever and to manage symptoms of winter infections. What is the safe dosage for adults in a 24-hour period? **Ans:Adults can take two 500mg tablets, 4 times in 24 hours. You must wait at least 4 hours between doses** 4. True or False: Cold air kills viruses. **Ans: False** 5. Pneumonia is a common winter infections. Which part of the lungs does it affect? **Ans: Air sacs or alveoli** 6. The influenza virus causes the flu, and people often contract it in winter. Influenza viruses A, B and C are the common viruses behind the flu. Is the flu contagious? **Ans: Yes** 7. RSV is a common virus, usually mild, causing cold-like symptoms. Immunity from contracting this infection does not last, so people can get it more than once. What is the full form of RSV? **Ans: Respiratory syncytial virus** 8. Which vitamin is more useful to help prevent winter illnesses? Ans: Vitamin D Visual: Black pepper, commonly used as a home remedy to soothe symptoms of stuffy noses and sore throats. What is the active compound in it that helps, called? **Ans: Piperine**
**Winners:** C. Saravanan | Tamal Biswas | Manda Venkata Apparao

# Text&Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

### Ukrainian soldiers killed in the Russian invasion of Ukraine

**55,000** The number of Ukrainian soldiers killed on the battlefield as a result of the country's war with Russia is estimated at 55,000, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Wednesday. He added that on top of that casualty figure was a "large number of people" considered officially missing. REUTERS

### Number of deaths in the U.S. from wildfire smoke from 2006-20

**24,100** A paper, in the journal *Science Advances*, found that from 2006 to 2020, long-term exposure to tiny particulates from wildfire smoke contributed to an average of 24,100 deaths a year in the lower 48 states. Long-term exposure can lead to a range of chronic and deadly health issues. AP

### India's payment to UN Regular Budget for 2026

**35.18** In dollar million. India has paid $35.18 million to the UN Regular Budget for 2026, joining the "honour roll" of 47 Member states who have paid their regular budget dues in full to the world body on time. The UN Committee on Contributions said that 47 Member states have paid their regular budget assessments in full. PTI

### Number of Indian based orgs' websites seized by U.S.

**200** U.S. federal authorities have seized more than 200 website domains tied to an India-based transnational criminal organisation having illegal online pharmacies. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration field offices throughout the country also conducted multiple operations leading to the arrest of four individuals, it said in a statement. PTI

### Public grievances received against the Centre and State

**22** in lakh. These public grievances against Union Ministries/departments and State/Union territories governments were received during 2024-25 through a dedicated CPGRAMS portal. The government has undertaken a comprehensive set of measures to reduce grievance pendency. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Follow us facebook.com/thehindu X.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

# DISCOMs and the road ahead

DISCOMs show improvement in performance, recording a positive turnaround marked by reduced AT&C losses, a narrowed ACS-ARR gap and improved financial discipline; however, many utilities continue to rely on tariff subsidies and loss takeovers by State governments, underscoring the scope for further improvement

EXPLAINER

T. Ramakrishnan

Better days seem to be ahead for the country's electricity sector, especially power distribution utilities, including power departments, commonly known as DISCOMs.

For long, DISCOMs, now numbering 72 across the country (44 State-owned, 16 private-sector entities, and 12 power departments), had presented a grim picture with never-declining line losses, also called Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses, and the consequent widening gap between the Average Cost of Supply (ACS) and the Average Revenue Realised (ARR). Between 2020-21 and 2024-25, accumulated losses rose from ₹5.5 lakh crore to ₹6.47 lakh crore, with outstanding debt increasing to ₹7.26 lakh crore. Non-cost-reflective tariffs and delayed payment of State subsidies were among the factors that contributed to this state of affairs.

### A legacy of losses

As far as India is concerned, DISCOMs and losses have become synonymous, forcing specialists to use the prefix "minus" whenever a power utility's ARR exceeds its ACS. One may argue that loss-making is a legacy matter, as these power utilities – in their previous 'avatar', State Electricity Boards (SEBs), formed under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948 – were mostly in the red. But what was overlooked, even then and now, was that Section 59 of the law had originally required SEBs to make a profit of three or more per cent, as specified by State governments.

### Signs of a turnaround

Even though many DISCOMs are struggling to cope with chronic issues, several others have begun improving their performance perceptibly in the wake of steps taken by various stakeholders, including those of the Union government. A Survey revealed that DISCOMs recorded a positive Profit After Tax (PAT) of ₹ 2,701 crore in the financial year 2024-25, marking "a decisive turnaround" from a loss of ₹67,962 crore in 2013-14. This improvement was accompanied by a reduction in AT&C losses from 22.62% to 15.04 % during the years in question. Further, the ACS-ARR gap (on an accrual basis) came down from 78 paise per unit (kilowatt-hour) to 0.06 paise per unit, signalling much improved cost recovery.

In mid-January, the Union government also made public the performance details of DISCOMs for the financial year that ended March 31, 2025. Claiming credit for the financial turnaround, the government attributed it to several measures, including the implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), amendments to the Electricity Rules, and the introduction of the Late Payment Surcharge Rules.

The RDSS's objective is to improve the quality and reliability of power through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector, with the release of funds linked to the execution of necessary measures. The effective implementation of the Rules has helped utilities arrest the mounting surcharges on legacy dues, as it allows DISCOMs to clear their dues through a maximum of 48 equated monthly instalments (EMIs).

### Discipline and debt reduction

Prior to the Rules coming into force, delays and non-payments by DISCOMs had made it difficult for generators to pay for the fuel, which had to be prepaid, to continue generation, apart from having to pay the Railways in advance for the rakes.

When the Rules came into force on June 3, 2022, outstanding legacy dues totalled ₹1,39,947 crore. Since then, utilities in 13 States and Union Territories paid ₹ 1,31,942 crore till December 2025 through 39 EMIs, prepayments, and reconciliations. In January 2026, the dues went down further to ₹ 4,927 crore, with DISCOMs largely paying their current dues on time, reflecting a marked improvement in sectoral financial discipline.

Yet, not everything is rosy. Many DISCOMs, if not most, have been able to achieve the turnaround, essentially due to tariff subsidies received from and the takeover of losses by their respective governments. For instance, in the case of Tamil Nadu, during 2024-25, the Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDCL), the successor to the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO), received ₹15,772 crore as tariff subsidy and ₹16,107 crore towards the takeover of losses. In fact, the utility recorded a profit (after tax) of ₹2,073 crore only after receiving the State government's largesse. But for the takeover of losses, TNPDCL had registered a loss of ₹14,034 crore, according to the findings of the 14th Integrated Rating Exercise conducted by the Power Finance Corporation Limited (PFC) under a framework approved by the Union Ministry of Power. The findings were released in late January 2026.

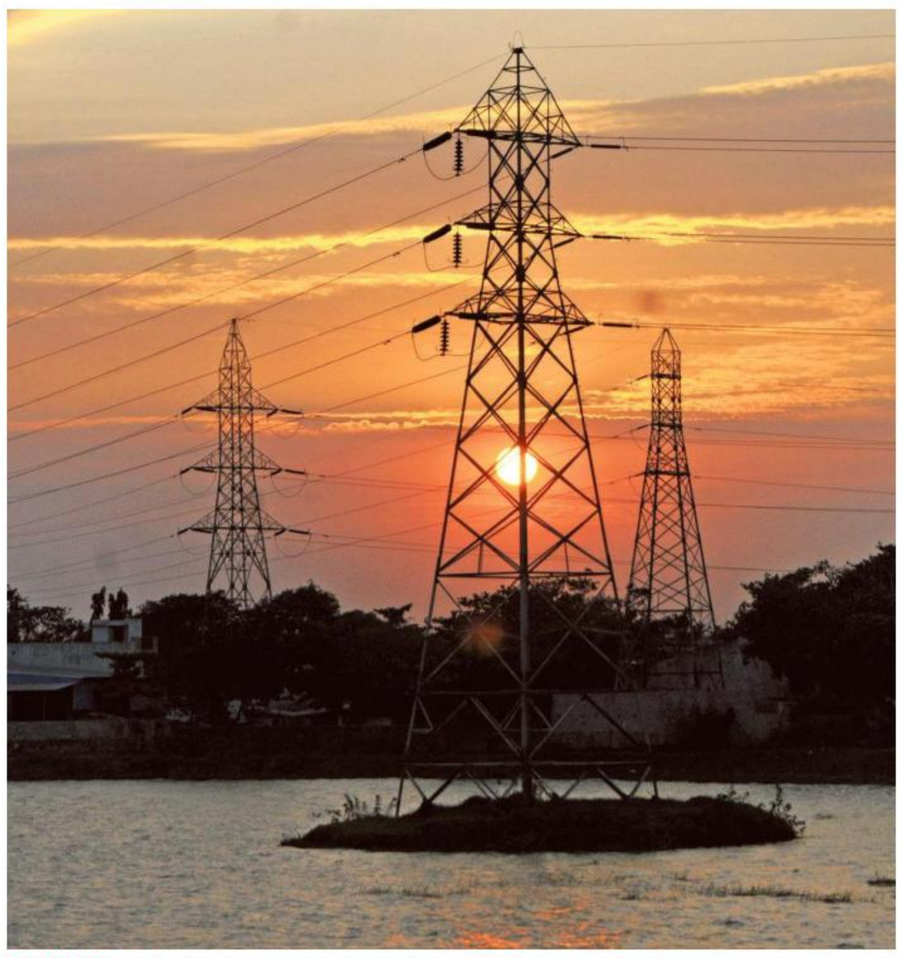
Take the case of Rajasthan: Jodhpur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (JDVVNL), which, according to PFC's assessment, improved its showing during 2024-25 compared to the past. This utility recorded a profit of ₹92 crore, but this was after the receipt of ₹ 11,625 crore towards tariff subsidy and ₹ 2,540 crore towards loss takeover.

Besides, even the present position of DISCOMs enjoying revenue surplus appears to be transient, because when the utilities may have to effect pay revision for employees in a few years, the probability of them slipping back to square one – revenue deficit – is quite high.

### The way forward

Still, the emphasis on government support, which is nothing new, is not to be viewed as taking away the credit for DISCOMs for enhanced performance. However, there is still scope for further improvement. At present, feeder segregation works, taken up in States such as Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra with large rural or agricultural consumer bases separating feeders for agricultural use from non-agricultural use, should be extended to other States such as Tamil Nadu, where an unmetered power supply to the farm sector has been the norm. Only then will there be data, closer to the real picture, regarding the quantum of power supplied to agriculturists.

As Niti Aayog noted in its August 2021 study on the distribution sector, DISCOMs should be proactive in promoting the use of solar pumps in agriculture, a move that would lead to a significant decrease in power procurement costs. The political executive must resist the temptation to offer free electricity universally to domestic consumers or any other category, as economically stronger sections of society invariably benefit disproportionately by any such measure. Political will, combined with public-spirited bureaucracy, can easily transform the face of DISCOMs into that of viable and consumer-friendly entities.



**Call for change:** Political will, combined with public-spirited bureaucracy, can easily transform the face of DISCOMs into that of viable and consumer-friendly entities. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

**Even though many DISCOMs are struggling to cope with chronic issues, several others have begun improving their performance**

## THE GIST

- DISCOMs record a decisive turnaround, with reduced AT&C losses, a sharply narrowed ACS-ARR gap and improved cost recovery following reforms and rule changes.
- Financial discipline improves, as legacy dues decline, current payments are largely made on time and mounting surcharges are arrested through structured instalments.
- Government support remains central, with tariff subsidies and loss takeovers underpinning profits, even as scope for further improvement persists through feeder segregation and efficiency measures.

## On the grid

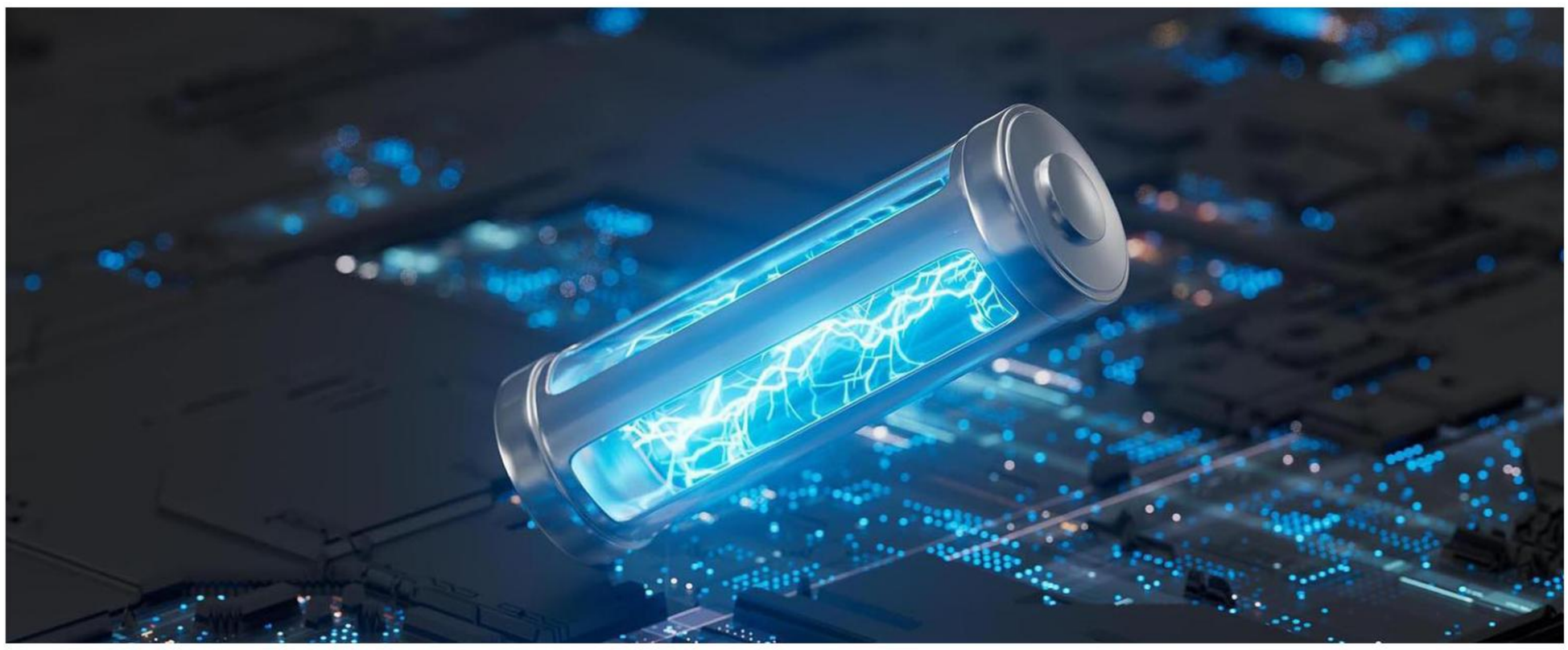
The table presents an assessment of select States based on key operational and financial parameters, including AT&C losses, accumulated surplus or deficit, and the ACS-ARR gap for 2023-24 and 2024-25

| State | AT&C loss (in %) | | Accumulated Surplus / -Deficit (₹ in crore) | | ACS-ARR gap* (₹ per kilo watt per hour or unit) (-:deficit) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| Assam | 14.03 | 15.44 | -1,324 | -1,028 | 0.22 | 0.26 |
| Manipur | 13.41 | 12.90 | -295 | - 290 | 0.45 | 0.20 |
| Bihar | 20.32 | 15.51 | -18,529 | -16,526 | 0.18 | 0.41 |
| Uttar Pradesh | | | | | | |
| State sector | 16.39 | 19.54 | -90,039 | -1,00,858 | -0.55 | -0.73 |
| Private sector | 7.75 | 8.48 | 1,426 | 1,561 | 0.57 | 0.15 |
| Punjab | 10.96 | 19.21 | -9,620 | -3,404 | 0.20 | 0.30 |
| Rajasthan | 22.13 | 15.18 | -91,565 | -90,303 | -0.31 | 0.04 |
| Gujarat | | | | | | |
| State sector | 8.97 | 8.25 | 5,165 | 7,355 | 0.58 | 0.40 |
| Private sector | 3.92 | 3.63 | 2,823 | 3,892 | -0.14 | 0.42 |
| Maharashtra | | | | | | |
| State sector | 23.86 | 17.69 | -36,226 | -35,671 | -0.28 | -0.56 |
| Private sector | 5.39 | 4.99 | 474 | 1,245 | 0.99 | 2.04 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 22.89 | 22.76 | -69,506 | -71,394 | -0.18 | 0.04 |
| Chhattisgarh | 15.88 | 14.25 | -10,016 | -10,423 | 0.20 | 0.19 |
| Jharkhand | 30.51 | 28.19 | -18,512 | -20,512 | -1.66 | -0.95 |
| West Bengal | | | | | | |
| State sector | 17.13 | 17.17 | 158 | 174 | -0.17 | -0.03 |
| Private sector | 4.64 | 4.77 | 197 | 205 | -0.13 | 0.30 |
| Odisha** | 19.59 | 17.81 | 824 | 1,263 | -0.10 | -0.18 |
| Telangana | 19.01 | 19.84 | -67,276 | -69,741 | -0.75 | -0.27 |
| Karnataka | 11.89 | 11.92 | -26,109 | -34,980 | -1.08 | -0.69 |
| Kerala | 7.44 | 6.61 | -37,543 | -38,648 | -0.42 | -0.17 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 12.05 | 7.87 | -29,210 | -29,420 | -0.34 | 0.15 |
| Tamil Nadu | 11.39 | 10.96 | -1,66,944 | -1,19,153 | -0.11 | 0.18 |
| ALL INDIA | 15.97 | 15.04 | 6,91,416 | 6,47,210 | 0.20 | 0.06 |

**AT&C** - Aggregate Technical and Commercial *__ACS__ - Average Cost of Supply | __ARR__ - Average Revenue Realised, which covers tariff subsidy received basis but without regulatory income and UDAY grant | **where all the discoms belong to the private sector

Source: 14th Annual Integrated Rating & Ranking of Power Distribution Utilities, Power Finance Corporation

CACHE



GETTY IMAGES

# Rethinking battery strategy in India: the case for sodium-ion technology

India's dependence on lithium-ion batteries exposes structural constraints linked to critical minerals, import dependence, and supply security; sodium-ion batteries emerge as a safer alternative with lower material risk, compatible with existing infrastructure, and the potential to strengthen energy security

Jaideep Saraswat
Nikhil Mall

Batteries have become deeply embedded in modern life. From laptops, mobile phones, wearable devices such as smartwatches and wireless earphones, to power tools, electric vehicles (EVs), and large-scale battery energy storage systems, batteries now underpin both personal convenience and critical infrastructure. A newer trend is also emerging, with batteries being integrated directly into household appliances. These developments collectively point to a future saturated with batteries, making energy storage a foundational pillar of economic growth, energy security, and the clean energy transition.

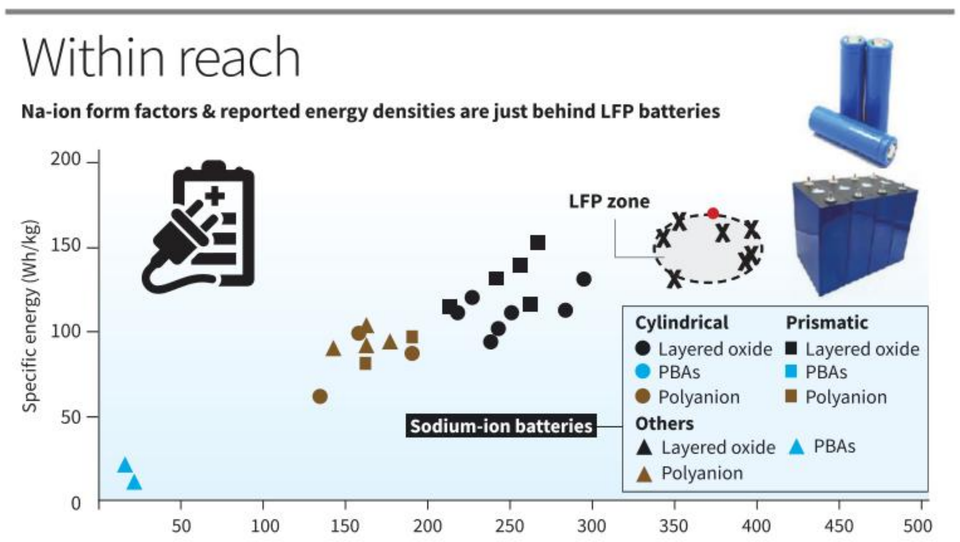
**Dominant, not a perfect solution**

Among the various battery chemistries that have existed or are still in use, lithium-ion batteries have emerged as the dominant global technology. This dominance is largely driven by their high energy density, low self-discharge rates, and long cycle life. Sustained global focus on lithium-ion technology over the past two decades has resulted in steady improvements in performance, manufacturing efficiency, and large-scale capacity build-out. By 2024, global lithium-ion manufacturing capacity had reached nearly 2.5 times annual demand, further accelerating cost reductions through economies of scale. As a result, costs have fallen dramatically, from nearly $1,100 per kWh in the early 2010s to about $108 per kWh in 2025.

However, the success of lithium-ion batteries masks several structural challenges. These batteries are highly resource-intensive and depend on critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, and graphite. The availability of these materials is unevenly distributed across a handful of countries, while refining and processing capacities are even more geographically concentrated. This creates vulnerabilities related to supply security, price volatility, and geopolitical risk. As global demand for batteries accelerates, these constraints are likely to intensify, reinforcing the need for alternative technologies that can support a more resilient and equitable energy transition.

**Ambitions and structural constraints**

The Government of India has made sustained efforts to build domestic battery manufacturing capacity, most notably through the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cells launched in 2021. Under this scheme, around 40 GWh of manufacturing capacity has been allocated so far. While this represents meaningful progress, deployment remains at an early stage, with just over 1 GWh commissioned to date and additional capacities expected to come online gradually.




The specific energy density of a battery indicates the amount of electrical energy it can store per unit of its own mass, measured in Watt-hours per kilogram (Wh/kg), determining how light a battery can be for a given potential. The volumetric energy density of a battery refers to the amount of energy it can store per unit volume, measured in Watt-hours per litre (Wh/L), defining how compact a battery is. Ideally, both should be high. We notice that commercially available layered oxide sodium-ion batteries of different shapes have better specific energy density and volumetric energy density than their sodium-ion counterparts built of polyanionic compounds and Prussian blue analogues (PBAs). However, they have lower specific energy density and volumetric energy density than lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries, indicated as (x). Data from the Volta Foundation's Annual Battery Report 2024

More critically, India's upstream ecosystem, from raw material availability and mineral processing to cathode and anode active material production and separator manufacturing, remains underdeveloped. Domestic reserves of lithium are limited and yet to be proven commercially viable, while processing infrastructure is still nascent. Consequently, import dependence for lithium-ion batteries is likely to persist for a considerable period. This reality underscores the importance of parallel investments in alternative battery technologies that can reduce material risk and strengthen long-term energy security. Sodium-ion batteries (SiBs) represent one such technology, offering significant promise for India in the medium to long term.

**Energy density: sodium vs lithium**

From a fundamental perspective, sodium-ion batteries exhibit lower specific energy (Wh/kg) than lithium-ion batteries, largely because sodium has a higher atomic mass than lithium, which intuitively leads to more mass per unit of stored energy. However, this performance gap is often overstated. In practice, it can be significantly narrowed if the mass of other cell components in sodium-ion batteries is reduced, thereby compensating for the higher mass of sodium itself. Moreover, among commercially available sodium-ion chemistries, layered transition-metal oxide cathodes already deliver higher specific energy than polyanionic compounds and Prussian blue analogues, underscoring the growing competitiveness of sodium-ion technology.

Importantly, layered oxide sodium-ion batteries are now approaching the specific energy of lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries, as illustrated in **Figure 1**. Although their volumetric energy density (Wh/L) still trails that of LFP, ongoing materials and cell-level optimisations are expected to substantially narrow this gap and potentially lead to meaningful overlap. It is also important to emphasise that this comparison is based on commercially available products, whereas laboratory-scale and pilot-level research results suggest even greater performance potential. By contrast, comparisons with high-energy lithium nickel manganese cobalt (NMC) chemistries are less instructive, as NMC batteries occupy a distinct performance space and entail separate trade-offs related to safety and reliance on critical minerals.

**EV manufacturers should be encouraged through procurement policies, pilot programmes, and regulatory nudges to type-test and approve vehicle platforms using sodium-ion batteries alongside lithium-ion options. This approval strategy would allow rapid substitution in response to supply disruptions or cost fluctuations**

**Safety first**

Safety is one of the most compelling advantages of sodium-ion batteries. Studies, including those conducted by the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, have shown that sodium-ion cells exhibit significantly lower peak temperature rise during thermal runaway events compared to lithium-ion cells. This intrinsic safety advantage extends well beyond cell performance into storage, handling, and transportation.

Lithium-ion batteries are classified as "Dangerous Goods" by national and international transport authorities, necessitating strict packaging, handling, and transportation requirements. They are typically shipped at a state of charge not exceeding 30%, which increases logistical complexity and cost. These restrictions stem from the use of copper current collectors on the anode side, which can dissolve at low voltages and redeposit on the cathode, increasing the risk of internal short circuits.

Sodium-ion batteries do not suffer from these limitations. They use aluminium current collectors on both the anode and cathode sides, as sodium does not form unstable alloys with aluminium. As a result, sodium-ion cells can be safely stored and transported at zero volts without degradation or safety risks. Prolonged storage at zero volts has been shown not to compromise cycling stability. This feature offers significant benefits across the value chain, including safer handling, lower transportation costs, and greater flexibility in manufacturing and installation.

**Manufacturing ready**

Another critical advantage of sodium-ion batteries is their compatibility with existing lithium-ion manufacturing infrastructure. With relatively minor modifications, lithium-ion production lines can be adapted to manufacture sodium-ion cells. This dramatically lowers the capital barrier to adoption and allows manufacturers to hedge against raw material supply risks.

The primary process difference lies in moisture sensitivity during cell stack preparation. Sodium-ion batteries require more stringent vacuum drying conditions, as residual moisture can have a greater negative impact on performance. While lithium-ion cells can tolerate drying at relatively mild vacuum levels, sodium-ion cells require deeper vacuum conditions, which may marginally increase energy consumption and manufacturing costs. However, as the industry progresses toward dry electrode coating and advanced manufacturing techniques, these challenges are expected to diminish.

Sodium-ion batteries offer a structurally different material pathway compared to lithium-ion systems. Sodium is derived from abundantly available resources such as soda ash, which are far more plentiful and geographically diversified than lithium. Several sodium-ion chemistries eliminate the need for critical minerals.

In addition, sodium-ion batteries use aluminium as the current collector for both electrodes. Aluminium is cheaper, lighter, and more widely available than copper, resulting in cost savings and weight advantages. These material choices significantly reduce exposure to global commodity price volatility and enhance supply chain resilience, a critical consideration for a country like India.

**Why sodium-ion matters**

Taken together, these attributes suggest that sodium-ion batteries are not merely an experimental technology but a commercially viable and strategically important solution. Cost projections indicate that sodium-ion batteries could undercut lithium-ion batteries by 2035. As of 2025, around 70 GWh of sodium-ion manufacturing capacity is already operational globally, with expectations of scaling to nearly 400 GWh by 2030. This rapid expansion highlights the urgency for India to engage early and decisively with this technology.

**Policy, regulatory, and ecosystem recommendations for India**

To ensure sodium-ion batteries become a meaningful part of India's energy storage landscape, a coordinated policy and regulatory approach is essential. Public support for upstream battery infrastructure, such as cathode, anode, electrolyte, and separator manufacturing, should explicitly include sodium-ion chemistries rather than remaining narrowly focused on lithium-ion systems. Future incentive programs, including revisions to the PLI framework, should encourage flexibility, ensuring that new battery plants are designed to accommodate both lithium-ion and sodium-ion production with minimal retrofitting from the very beginning. From a regulatory standpoint, standards, safety codes, and certification pathways must be updated to explicitly include sodium-ion batteries, enabling faster commercialisation and deployment.

EV manufacturers should be encouraged through procurement policies, pilot programmes, and regulatory nudges to type-test and approve vehicle platforms using sodium-ion batteries alongside lithium-ion options. This dual-approval strategy would allow rapid substitution in response to supply disruptions or cost fluctuations.

Finally, targeted public funding for R&D, demonstration projects, and early deployments, particularly in grid storage, two- and three-wheeler EVs, and stationary applications, can help build market confidence.

By aligning industrial policy, regulation, and market incentives, India can foster a fair, resilient, and future-ready battery ecosystem in which sodium-ion batteries play a central role.

*Jaideep Saraswat leads the Electric Mobility vertical at Vasudha Foundation where he focuses on addressing key barriers to EV adoption and advancing sustainable mobility solutions; Nikhil Mall is also part of the Electric Mobility vertical contributing to research, stakeholder engagement, and initiatives that promote the transition to clean transportation*

THE DAILY QUIZ

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

## Here is a quiz on some influential figures and key events that happened today

Sindhu Nagaraj

**QUESTION 1**

Elizabeth II ascended the throne of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland this day, following the death of her father, King George VI. She became the longest-reigning monarch in British history in 2015. In which year did she ascend the throne?

**QUESTION 2**

The President of the U.S. was born on this day in 1911. In his first term as President, he began implementing a policy involving economic deregulation and cuts in both taxes and government spending. Name him.

**QUESTION 3**

This Jamaican singer was born on this day in 1981. Considered one of the pioneers of reggae, he fused elements of reggae, ska, and rocksteady, and was renowned for his distinctive vocal and songwriting style. Identify him.

**QUESTION 4**

Eva Braun was born on this day in 1912. She was the wife of which famous political figure from history?



**Visual Question:** Identify this French filmmaker who was born on this day. He is widely regarded as one of the founders of an art movement in France. What was it? WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

**QUESTION 5**

This Hungarian-American socialite and actor was born on February 6, 1917. Her most famous film was Moulin Rouge. Who was she?

**Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:** 1. On February 5, 1958, the U.S. Air Force lost a hydrogen bomb named 'Tybee' and never recovered it. What is the U.S. military's term for such events? **Ans: Broken Arrow incidents**

2. In 1968, a U.S. B-52 aircraft carrying four thermonuclear bombs crashed onto the sea ice off the coast of ____. **Ans: Greenland**

3. After the Soviet Union collapsed, a former Russian national security advisor named X said the Russian military had lost track of roughly 100 "suitcase-sized" nuclear devices. **Ans: Alexander Lebed**

4. In 1974, the CIA attempted a secret $800-million recovery mission called Project Y. Name Y. **Ans: Azorian**

5. In 1965, the CIA and Indian Intelligence tried to install a plutonium-powered monitoring device atop _____ ____. Fill in the blanks. **Ans: Nanda Devi**

Visual: Name these islands. **Ans: Falkland Islands**

**Early Birds:** Tamal Biswas | Tito Shiladitya | Arun Kumar Singh | Lalchand Bhutani | Sukdev Shet

## Word of the day

**Specious:** plausible but false

Synonyms: deceptive, incorrect, ambiguous

Usage: *What seemed like solid evidence turned out to be specious.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/speciouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /spi:ʃəs/

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