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# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## Topics Covered

- GDS growth quickens to five-quarter high of 7.8%
- India to be 3rd largest economy: PM , weeks after Trump's swipe
- Eight states propose a cess on sin, luxury goods above proposed GST rate of 40%
- With Godavari in spate, A.P officials issue flood warning
- Ice Age –era dragon fly rediscovered
- In an unstable world, energy sovereignty is the new oil
- India & China must collaborate for stable world economic order
- Russian President set to visit India in December
- SC returns to full strength of 34 with two new judges
- Navy reaffirms commitment to security in Indian Ocean
- Women biotech scientists await funds for research

## GDS growth quickens to five-quarter high of 7.8%

# GDP growth quickens to five-quarter high of 7.8%

Manufacturing, construction, and services sectors propel growth, defying RBI predictions; the momentum will continue, says CEA Anantha Nageswaran, seeking to allay fears over U.S. tariffs

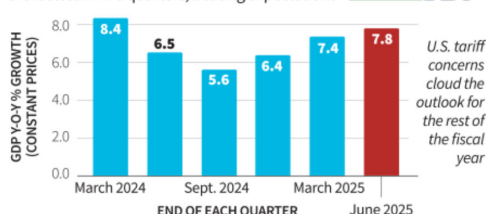
**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**  
NEW DELHI

India's economic growth rate in the first quarter (April-June) of the current financial year quickened to a five-quarter high of 7.8%, driven by strong performances by sectors such as manufacturing, construction, and services, government data showed.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, as shown by data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Friday, was previously quicker during January-March 2024. The 7.8% growth recorded in Q1 of this financial year was higher than the 6.5% predicted by the Reserve Bank of India as recently as August 6.

### Present perfect, future tense

India's economy grew **7.8%** in April-June 2025, the fastest in five quarters, beating expectations



The government also sought to ease worries about growth slowing in the coming quarters as a result of the 50% tariffs imposed by the U.S. on its imports from India. "We do see the momentum continuing," Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran said during a press briefing following the release of the data.

"There will be some impact on domestic spending because of uncertainties in the export sectors, which are affected because of exposure to the U.S."

"But we do expect the impact on demand to be of a very modest nature," Mr. Nageswaran added. "Overall aggregate demand growth in the economy should hold up specifically

### Rupee crashes to an all-time low of 88.09 against USD

**MUMBAI**  
Rupee fell to ₹88.09 against the U.S. dollar, responding to the additional tariffs imposed by the U.S. The domestic currency may depreciate further to ₹89.5-₹90 in the coming weeks, analysts said. » **PAGE 11**

because of the government's decision to lower the indirect tax rates."

The CEA also expressed confidence that the temporary dip in consumer demand in the run-up to the GST Council meeting would reverse itself well before the festival season.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» **PAGE 8**

## India to be 3rd largest economy: PM, weeks after Trump's swipe

### India to be 3rd largest economy: PM, weeks after Trump's swipe

**Kallol Bhattacharjee**  
NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of trade-related uncertainties with the United States, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday made a strong case for investing in India, declaring that the Indian economy will "very soon" be the third largest economy in the world.

Addressing the India-Japan Economic Forum in Tokyo, Mr. Modi said that most Japanese companies find India attractive, adding that India is a "springboard" to access the Global South. Welcoming the visiting Indian Prime Minister, Japan announced a private investment target of ¥10 trillion for India over the next decade.

"Japanese companies have invested more than \$40 billion in India. In the last two years alone, there has been private investment of \$13 billion. JBIC



Narendra Modi with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba during the India-Japan Economic Forum in Tokyo on Friday. PTI

(Japan Bank of International Cooperation) says India is the most 'promising' destination. JETRO (Japan External Trade Organisation) says 80% of companies want to expand in India, and 75% are already profitable," the Prime Minister said. "Which means, in India, capital does not just grow, it multiplies."

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 8

## Eight states propose a cess on sin, luxury goods above proposed GST rate of 40%

### Eight States propose a cess on sin, luxury goods above proposed GST rate of 40%

Non-BJP ruled States to submit note to GST Council during meet scheduled for September 3, 4; warn that Centre's GST rate rationalisation proposal will reduce States' revenues by 15%-20%; seek guaranteed compensation for five years 'to provide stability required for medium-term fiscal planning'

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

A group of eight States has proposed a cess to be levied on sin and luxury goods in addition to the proposed 40% Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate, in a bid to protect the States' revenues.

Without such a cess, the revenue losses from the Centre's proposed rate rationalisation, which they estimated as at least 15%, would "drastically" hamper their expenditure on development, the States warned.

The Centre has proposed removing the 12% and 28% tax slabs and moving the vast majority of items in these slabs to 5% and 18%, respectively. It has also proposed a 40% rate for a few sin and luxury items.

Sin goods include items such as tobacco, cigarettes, and gutka, while high-value cars and high-end services, such as business class and first class flight tickets, are categorised as luxury items.

The Finance Ministers of Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and West Bengal met in New Delhi on Friday and drafted a note, accessed by *The Hindu*, in which they laid out their concerns and proposals.

The note will be submitted to the GST Council dur-



Finance Ministers of various States at a meeting on the GST rate rationalisation, in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

ing its meeting scheduled on September 3 and 4.

#### 'Severe impact'

"The first and foremost concern is the severe impact on State revenues," the note said.

It added, "States depend heavily on GST as their principal source of revenue; whereas the Centre has a far broader revenue base with substantial inflows from direct taxes, large dividends from public institutions, customs & excise duties, cesses and surcharges."

The note also said that GST revenue accounts for only 28% of the Centre's tax revenue, but half of the states' own tax revenues, underscoring their dependence on this revenue stream.

The eight States which drafted the note — all ruled by non-BJP parties — said

they anticipate a revenue reduction of between 15% and 20% if the rationalisation of rates is carried out.

"Such a revenue shock cannot be absorbed by the States without drastically reducing developmental expenditure," read the draft prepared by the eight Finance Ministers.

The note added that the States should be compensated on the assumption of a 14% annual growth in their GST revenues.

#### 'Periodic review'

"Revenue protection must be guaranteed for a minimum of five years," the note said. "This duration is necessary to provide States with the stability required for medium-term fiscal planning. Beyond this period, the arrangement may be reviewed periodically in line with GST growth and buoyancy."

### Oppn. States consider likely dip in revenue; Telangana Dy. CM estimates ₹7,000-crore deficit

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD/CHENNAI/  
CHANDIGARH

Telangana Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Friday said that the State's revenue would be hit by over ₹7,000 crore due to the Central government's proposal to rationalise the Goods and Services tax (GST).

Raising strong objections against the Centre's "unilateral" move at a meeting, Mr. Vikramarka, who is also Telangana's Deputy Chief Minister, said that his State stands to lose at least ₹5,100 crore from rate cuts, and nearly ₹7,000 crore, if all losses were considered, including 15% GST revenues from the rationalisation. He added that Telangana was willing to support reforms if a compensation framework were created to protect States' revenues, allowing them to continue their welfare and development programmes.

In a social media remark following a consultation of the Finance Ministers of eight Opposition-ruled States in New Delhi, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin stated that the GST



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman meeting Telangana Dy. CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka (first from right) on Thursday. FILE PHOTO

reforms cannot serve the people without protecting State revenue. "While welcoming the intent of reform, we stressed that any reduction must not erode State revenues that sustain welfare programmes and infrastructure. We urge that the benefits of lower rates must directly reach common people," he said.

#### Draft framed: Stalin

He added, "A consensus draft has been framed and will be placed before the GST Council, seeking support from all States and the Union government to safeguard revenue interests and ensure fair outcomes."

Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema asked the Centre to pro-

vide adequate compensation to States to prevent financial instability that may arise if the Centre's proposal is implemented.

He added that GST was rolled out in July 2017, and the principle of revenue neutrality was central to its design. However, after the GST's implementation, States have faced significant revenue losses.

"Following the implementation, Punjab had to bear a loss of around ₹1.11 lakh crore, though the State received 760,000 crore when the compensation cess was active. To date, no step has been taken by the Centre to compensate the remaining loss amounting to Punjab," the Punjab Minister added.





With Godavari in spate, A.P officials issue flood warning

## With Godavari in spate, A.P. officials issue flood warning

Water level likely to rise further; moderate to heavy rain expected in north coastal regions; low-lying areas face risk of inundation; rice and pulses being distributed to tribal habitations

**Rajulapudi Srinivas**  
ELURU

**T**he Irrigation Department officials in Andhra Pradesh issued the first flood warning for Godavari river as water level at Bhadrachalam in Telangana crossed 44 feet on Friday night.

Due to heavy rain in the catchment areas, the water level is rising and it may increase further, the Central Water Commission (CWC) officials said. Various departments, including the Revenue, police, health, and Panchayat Raj, as well as the ITDA, AP-Transco, the National Disaster Response Force, and the State Disaster Response Force, have been put on high al-



**Filled to the brim:** With heavy rain in many areas, Prakasam Barrage on the Krishna in Vijayawada has got good inflow. K.V.S. GIRI

ert," said an officer.

Eluru Collector K. Vetri Selvi said a three-month supply of rice, pulses and other essentials has been distributed in the Agency areas dominated by tribal communities. Speaking to

*The Hindu* on Friday, Jangareddygudem Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) M.V. Ramana said the flood level is likely to reach the second warning level (48 feet) on Saturday. "The officers have been instructed

to evacuate people from the low-lying areas, if possible," Ms. Ramana said.

"At 8 p.m., the water level stood at 43.30 feet, and 9.46 lakh cusecs of water was released downstream," officials said.

Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) Managing Director Prakhar Jain said at Prakasam Barrage on the Krishna River, the inflows and outflows were maintained at 3,38,572 cusecs.

APSDMA officials said moderate to heavy rainfall was likely to occur in north coastal districts- Alluri Sitharama Raju, Parvatipuram-Manyam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam in the next 24 hours.

Ice Age –era dragon fly rediscovered

## Ice Age-era dragon fly rediscovered

Elusive species *Crocothemis erythraea* spotted in high-altitude regions of southern Western Ghats; it has previously been overlooked owing to its resemblance to *Crocothemis servilia*

**Sarath Babu George**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

**O**donatologists have reconfirmed the presence of the elusive dragonfly species *Crocothemis erythraea* in the high-elevation regions of the southern Western Ghats. The species had previously been misidentified or overlooked in this region due to its close resemblance to the more widespread lowland species *Crocothemis servilia*.

The genus *Crocothemis* in India includes two known species – *C. servilia* and *C. erythraea*. While *C.*



**Lost and found:** *Crocothemis erythraea*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

*servilia* is common across lowland areas, *C. erythraea* is known from high-elevation habitats in parts of Europe and Asia, including the Himalayas.

According to Kalesh Sadasivan, the lead author of the present study

published in the *International Journal of Odonatology*, photographs of a potential *C. erythraea* specimen were taken from the Munnar high ranges during an annual faunal survey in 2018. These records were cited in a

2021 monograph on Kerala's odonata fauna, but later removed from subsequent checklists following skepticism over the species' identification by other researchers.

This prompted multiple field expeditions between 2019 and 2023 in high-altitude sites across the Western Ghats.

The study confirmed that the Western Ghats hosts both the species.

The researchers explain that *C. erythraea* colonised southern India during the Pleistocene Ice Age, when cooler climatic conditions allowed temperate fauna to extend their range southward.





## In an unstable world, energy sovereignty is the new oil

### In an unstable world, energy sovereignty is the new oil

India imports over 85% of its crude oil and more than 50% of its natural gas. This is not just an economic figure. It belongs in our national risk register. As conflict zones multiply, sea lanes narrow and supply chains fragment, every imported barrel becomes a liability.

In this landscape, Russian oil has become India's biggest swing factor. Since 2022, Russia has emerged as the country's single largest supplier, accounting for roughly 35%-40% of total crude imports in 2024-25 – up from barely 2% before the Ukraine war. While discounted barrels have offered temporary relief to the import bill, the heavy concentration also underscores the vulnerability of relying too much on one geopolitical partner. Diversification, not substitution, is the real currency of sovereignty.

In FY2023-24, India's merchandise imports stood at \$677 billion. Of this, crude oil and natural gas alone accounted for nearly \$170 billion, or over 25% of the total import bill. This outflow of foreign exchange pressures the rupee, inflates the trade deficit, and compromises macroeconomic stability.

In June 2025, the world narrowly avoided a full-blown regional conflict following tensions between Israel and Iran. Had that flashpoint ignited, over 20 million barrels a day of global oil flows would have been threatened. Brent crude prices, already sensitive, could have breached the \$103 a barrel mark within days. The war did not begin, but the world came close enough to remember just how fragile its energy lifelines are.

**Flashpoints that changed the world**  
Global energy security has been reshaped by unforeseen shocks. There are five defining moments.

First, the 1973 oil embargo. The Arab oil embargo against the United States and allied nations caused crude prices to quadruple, and exposed the West's overdependence on the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. But it catalysed the creation of strategic petroleum reserves, efficiency mandates, and diversified sourcing strategies.

Second, the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster. A tsunami-induced nuclear meltdown in Japan triggered a global crisis of confidence in nuclear power. However, with emissions rising due to increased coal and gas use, nuclear energy is again regaining favour.

Third, the 2021 Texas Freeze. Extreme cold froze gas pipelines and disabled wind turbines in energy-rich Texas. The event underscored the limits of systems built for cost efficiency rather



**Shrikant Madhwar Valodia**

is former Chairman, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., an Energy Policy Adviser, an institutional leader and an advocate for resilient transitions

than resilience and the importance of diversified and weather-hardened infrastructure.

Fourth, the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war. Europe's reliance on Russia for over 40% of its gas ended abruptly when Russia weaponised energy. The continent faced record liquefied natural gas prices and a coal revival. It was a stark lesson: no energy strategy is sovereign if it is single-sourced.

Fifth, the 2025 Iberian Peninsula Blackout. Spain and Portugal suffered a grid collapse due to over-reliance on intermittent renewables without sufficient dispatchable backup. The lack of inertia in the grid exposed the risks of phasing out conventional capacity too rapidly. These events remind us that every major pivot in global energy thinking has followed a breakdown. What we face now is the opportunity to pivot by foresight rather than by force – and the Israel-Iran ceasefire is that opportunity.

Despite the rhetoric of global energy transition, the real picture is sobering. Fossil fuels still meet over 80% of global primary energy demand. More than 90% of transportation runs on hydrocarbons. Solar and wind, though scaling fast, are still under 10% of the global energy mix. Exploration investments in oil and gas have fallen sharply even as demand remains high. The result is a structurally tight supply that is vulnerable to even minor shocks.

**Energy realism must guide the transition**

Energy realism does not reject transition. It enables it. It means understanding that transitions are pathways, not switches. The lesson from all these flashpoints is clear: Energy security is no longer a climate policy discussion. It is a survival strategy.

India must now decisively move toward an energy sovereignty doctrine that is anchored in domestic capacity, diversified technology, and resilient systems. It has five foundational pillars.

First, coal gasification and unlocking indigenous energy. India has over 150 billion tonnes of coal reserves. For decades, high ash content made them unattractive. But with technological advances in gasification and carbon capture, this domestic resource must be leveraged to produce syngas, methanol, hydrogen and fertilizers. We must overcome the ash barrier with innovation.

Second, biofuels or where rural empowerment meets national security. The ethanol blending programme has already reduced crude imports and transferred over \$92,000 crore to farmers. It has also delivered substantial savings in foreign exchange savings. With E20 on the horizon, annual income to the rural economy may grow

further. Through the Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) scheme, hundreds of compressed biogas (CBG) plants are generating clean fuel and producing bio-manure rich in 20%-25% organic carbon. This can restore North India's degraded soils, where organic carbon has fallen to 0.5%, versus a healthy level of 2.5%. Improving soil health also enhances water and fertilizer retention, reducing runoff and pollution.

Third, nuclear or a zero-carbon base-load for a dispatchable future. India's nuclear footprint has remained stagnant at 8.8 GW for too long. We must revive the thorium road map, secure uranium partnerships and localise Small Modular Reactor technologies. In a grid dominated by renewables, nuclear provides the dispatchable backbone.

Fourth, green hydrogen, or 'own the tech, secure the chain'. India's target of five million metric tonnes a year by 2030 must be matched by localised electrolyser manufacturing, catalyst development and storage systems. The goal is not just green hydrogen. It is sovereign hydrogen.

Fifth, pumped hydro storage or the inertia backbone. Pumped hydro is durable, proven, and essential for grid balancing. It complements renewable energy and provides the inertia missing in wind and solar-heavy systems. India must use its topography to create the storage infrastructure of the future. Until a few years ago, India sourced over 60% of its crude oil from West Asia. That figure is now below 45%, as per S&P Global Commodities at Sea. This is not a short-term workaround but reflects a deliberate long-term shift in India's sourcing strategy.

**The age of sovereignty**

The Israel-Iran ceasefire offers India a rare chance to act without the scars. India must lead with energy realism – not as a fallback but as the foundation of resilience and sovereignty. It has diversified its sources, reduced dependence on Hormuz, and buffered better than ever. Now is the time to deepen that shift as the next crisis may not give it the courtesy of a warning.

The 21st century will not be defined by new oil discoveries. It will be defined by nations that can secure, store, and sustain their energy without fear or favour. India's strategy must blend ambition with realism. The five pillars – coal gasification, biofuels, nuclear, green hydrogen and pumped hydro – are not secondary to the energy transition. They are its sovereign spine. Tomorrow's most precious resource is not oil. It is uninterrupted, affordable, and indigenous energy. This is the time to build it.

## India & China must collaborate for stable world economic order

### 'India and China must collaborate for stable world economic order'

Amicable ties amid the two largest nations on earth can have a positive impact on regional and global peace and prosperity, says Prime Minister

**Press Trust of India**  
TOKYO

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said it was important for India and China to work together to bring stability to the world economic order as he asserted that New Delhi is ready to advance bilateral ties from a strategic and long-term perspective based on mutual respect, interest and sensitivity.

In an interview with the *Yomiuri Shimbun* published during his ongoing visit to Japan, Mr. Modi also asserted that stable, predictable, and amicable bilateral relations between India and China, as two neighbours and the two largest nations on earth, can have a positive impact on regional and global peace and prosperity.

Asked about the importance of improving relations with China at this time, the Prime Minister said, "At the invitation of President Xi Jinping, I will be travelling to Tianjin from here to take part in the SCO Summit. Since my meeting with President Xi in Kazan last year, steady and positive progress has



**Warm welcome:** Japanese artists greet Narendra Modi upon his arrival at a hotel in Tokyo, Japan, on Friday. *ANI*

### 'China taking advantage of slump in Indo-U.S. ties'

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday alleged India was being "forced" to normalise its relations with China, largely on their terms, which is "trying to take advantage of the

downturn in Indo-U.S. ties". "China's *jugalbandi* with Pakistan during Operation Sindoor – revealed by our own military establishment – has been forgotten," Congress's general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X.

been made in our bilateral ties".

Mr. Modi said that in the BRICS alliance, India was actively engaged in working towards the benefit of the Global South.

India attaches high importance to its engagement

with BRICS, which has emerged as a valuable forum for consultation, and cooperation and has helped promote mutual understanding on a specific set of issues of common interest to emerging economies, he said.



## Russian President set to visit India in December

### Russian President set to visit India in December: Kremlin

**Agence France-Presse**  
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin will pay an official visit to India in December, the Kremlin said on Friday, as ties between the countries grow closer after the United States imposed tariffs on New Delhi over its purchases of Russian oil.

Mr. Putin will also meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a summit in China on Monday, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov told reporters.

U.S. President Donald Trump has imposed tariffs on Indian goods as 'punishment' for New Delhi's massive purchases of Russian oil, part of a campaign to pressure Moscow into ending its offensive in Ukraine. Russia is also one of India's top arms suppliers, and the warm ties between the two countries date back to the Soviet era.

Ukraine's Western allies



Vladimir Putin

have sought to cut Russia's export earnings since Moscow launched its military assault in February 2022.

But Russia has been able to redirect energy sales away from Europe to countries including India and China, ensuring the multi-billion-dollar flow of funds.

Mr. Putin has significantly curtailed his foreign travel amid the offensive on Ukraine, for which he was slapped with an International Criminal Court arrest warrant. India is not a party to the ICC and therefore not obligated to detain Mr. Putin.

## SC returns to full strength of 34 with two new judges

### SC returns to full strength of 34 with two new judges

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai on Friday swore in Justices Alok Aradhe and Vipul M. Pancholi as judges of the Supreme Court.

With their appointment, the court returned to its full sanctioned strength of 34 judges, which will continue until the retirement of Chief Justice Gavai on November 23.

Justice Pancholi is in line to become Chief Justice of India under the seniority norm from October 3, 2031, till his retirement on May 27, 2033.

His appointment process witnessed a rare dissent from one of the Collegium members, Justice B.V. Nagarathna, who noted that Justice Pancholi was ranked 57th in the all-India High Court judges' seniority list and that several meritorious judges senior to him could be considered for elevation.

In her dissent, Justice



Justice Alok Aradhe and (right) Justice Vipul M. Pancholi

Nagarathna wrote that his appointment would be "counter-productive" to the administration of justice and that the credibility of the Collegium was at stake.

However, the Collegium, by a 4:1 majority, recommended Justices Pancholi and Aradhe on August 25. Their appointment to the top court was notified within 48 hours, on August 27.

Justice Pancholi was born on May 28, 1968, in Ahmedabad and was confirmed as a Permanent Judge of the Gujarat High Court in June 2016. He was transferred to the Patna

High Court in July 2023 and appointed its Chief Justice on July 21.

Justice Aradhe, ranked third among High Court Chief Justices, has his parent High Court in Madhya Pradesh, while Justice Pancholi, ranked 19th among High Court Chief Justices, has his parent High Court in Gujarat.

Justice Aradhe, born in April 1964, was appointed an Additional Judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court in December 2009 and a Permanent Judge in February 2011. He was appointed Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court on January 21 this year.



## Navy reaffirms commitment to security in Indian Ocean

### Navy reaffirms commitment to security in Indian Ocean

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The emerging leaders panel discussion under the aegis of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) was conducted at Southern Naval Command in Kochi from August 27 to 28.

Delegates from 19 member-countries participated, providing an inclusive platform for young naval leaders to exchange ideas and deliberate on the future of maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Vice-Admiral V. Srinivas, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, delivered the keynote address, reaffirming the Navy's commitment to dialogue, trust and cooperative security in the IOR.

The event comprised four sessions. The opening session examined the 'Strategic Importance of the IOR and Challenges from



**Exchanging ideas:** The emerging leaders panel discussion was conducted at the Southern Naval Command, Kochi. PIB

the Perspective of Young Officers', focusing on maritime trade security, climate change, geopolitical dynamics, and innovative solutions for safeguarding IOR. The second session explored the role of AI-enabled systems, cybersecurity, reconnaissance and space-based surveillance in maritime operations.

Day two featured discussions on the 'Future Role of IONS in Fostering Collaboration Towards Maritime Security', with emphasis on interoperability, joint

exercises and professional exchanges. The concluding session, 'Harnessing Training Capabilities Amongst IONS Countries - Future Road Map', addressed pooling of resources, strengthening training linkages and developing common frameworks to enhance preparedness.

The discussions concluded with consensus on enhancing maritime domain awareness, advancing technological partnerships, and expanding shared training initiatives.

## Women biotech scientists await funds for research

### Women biotech scientists await funds for research

**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

Almost five months after being selected for the DBT Biocare programme, an initiative by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) to encourage women scientists, none of the 75 chosen candidates have received the funds promised nor salaries.

The DBT, which is under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), has been running the Biocare programme since 2011.

It is mainly meant for the career development of unemployed women scientists for whom it will be the first extramural research funding sanctioned by the government.

A doctoral woman researcher selected under the programme is eligible for a ₹60 lakh grant for three years. This also includes a salary component of ₹75,000 a month.

From 2020 to 2024, on



Biocare programme has been running since 2011.

average annually, nearly 50 women scientists have been beneficiaries of the programme, according to the response to a question in the Rajya Sabha in March this year.

#### 'No response'

This year, 75 women scientists were chosen for the programme on March 30, following which they are expected to begin their research projects.

However, one of the selected scientists said that in the absence of the required

sanction letters or funds, they were unable to commence their research.

"For the past five months, we have been writing to the DBT regarding the release of funds. Initially, we were told that this would be released within a month but now nobody is responding to our calls. One of the conditions for this grant is that we cannot avail ourselves of research funds from any other project, so some of us have quit even international post-doctoral fellowships and are now left in the lurch," a researcher told *The Hindu* on condition of anonymity.

Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary in the DBT, told *The Hindu* in a text message that the funds would be released "in the next 10 days".

Sources in the Science Ministry said the delay was due to a change in the fund disbursal policy, effected since November 2024.