

**IN BRIEF**  
**Sakthivel takes charge as AEPC chairman**

NEW DELHI: Apex body for apparel exporters, AEPC, on Tuesday said A Sakthivel has taken charge as its chairman. He has replaced Sudhir Sekhri. Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) said that Sakthivel has become the chief for the fifth time. He is also the founder of Poppy's Knitwear Pvt Ltd, a leading knitwear export firm. Sakthivel has played a key role in transforming Tiruppur into a global knitwear hub, with exports from the region growing from a modest Rs 15 crore in 1984 to Rs 45,000 crore in 2024-25, it said.

**Max Healthcare deal UK with firm**

NEW DELHI: Max Healthcare on Tuesday said it has partnered with UK-based The Learning Lab for advancing innovative healthcare capacity-building programmes and fostering joint research initiatives. The two partners have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the collaboration, Max Healthcare said in a statement. The Learning Lab is a clinically led spinout of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, dedicated to reimagining healthcare education through innovative, evidence-based learning, it added. Under the partnership, the two organisations will co-create training modules tailored to the needs of healthcare professionals working in tertiary and specialised care settings, the statement said.

**Juneja takes charge as CLE chief**

NEW DELHI: Apex body for leather exports, CLE, on Tuesday said Ramesh Juneja has assumed the charge as its Chairman. He has replaced Kanpur-based exporter R K Jalan. Juneja, who was earlier the vice-chairman of the Council for Leather Exports (CLE), is the promoter of Kolkata-based JC Group. During the April-November 2025 period, India's leather and footwear exports stood at USD 3.3 million, registering a growth of around 1 per cent year-on-year. India's leather and footwear exports are largely concentrated in two major markets -- the European Union (55 per cent) and the United States (22 per cent).

**Stop collusive bidding: CCI**

NEW DELHI: Fair trade regulator CCI has directed two Ludhiana-based firms to cease and desist from anti-competitive practices after finding them guilty of collusive bidding in a defence procurement tender. The proceedings came from a reference filed by the CP Cell of the Master General of Ordnance Branch, Directorate General of Ordnance Services, under Section 19(1)(b) of the Act. The reference alleged that Ludhiana-based firms -- KKK Mills and Sankeshwar Synthetics Pvt Ltd -- entered into an agreement resulting in collusive bidding in the tender for procurement of underpant woollen. KKK Mills is a partnership firm while Sankeshwar Synthetics is a private limited company.

**Annapurna's 75% stake in Andri Agro**

KOLKATA: Packaged food manufacturer Annapurna Swadisht Ltd on Tuesday announced that it would acquire a majority stake in West Bengal-based Andri Agro Foods Pvt Ltd for a total enterprise value of Rs 15 crore. The company has entered into an agreement to acquire 75 per cent of the equity share capital in AAFPL. Post-acquisition, Andri Agro Foods will become a subsidiary of ASL, a company statement said. The move is aimed at strengthening ASL's product portfolio and enabling its entry into the soya-based food products market both in India and overseas.

**DELL BETS ON INDIA AS KEY HIGH-GROWTH MARKET**

On track with its growth roadmap, Dell has expanded its physical footprint in the country, with operations spanning over 400 cities. The company's retail network includes more than 540 Dell Exclusive Stores, 850+ large-format retail outlets, and over 5,000 multi-brand outlets



NEW YORK

IDENTIFYING India as one of its most strategic and high-growth markets globally, American tech giant Dell Technologies is betting on the country's scale, young demographic, and rapid digital adoption to drive the next era of intelligent computing. The company, which has been manufacturing in India for over 18 years, said local manufacturing capabilities and a deep-rooted presence across the ecosystem underpin its long-standing focus on the market. "India is one of Dell Technologies' most strategic and high-growth markets globally, driven by its scale, young demographic profile, and accelerating digital adoption. We do not just view it as a

growing opportunity but as a long-standing focus market," Raj Kumar Rishi, Vice President and General Manager, Consumer Business (Asia Pacific and Japan), Dell Technologies, said. Rishi noted that from a product standpoint, the company sees strong potential in the democratisation of AI-powered computing, especially among students, first-time users, and younger consumers, and added that expanding access to these intelligent devices is critical to narrowing digital divides and supporting long-term economic and social development, which remains a key priority for the firm in India. On track with its growth roadmap, Dell has expanded its physical footprint in the country, with operations

spanning over 400 cities. The company's retail network includes more than 540 Dell Exclusive Stores, 850+ large-format retail outlets, and over 5,000 multi-brand outlets. As part of its experience-led strategy, Dell is also investing in category-specific spaces, such as Alienware gaming stores in Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru. "Dell Technologies has been scaling operations in India through a strong combination of physical expansion, capability building, and a customer-first go-to-market strategy. The (category-specific) locations go beyond traditional retail by offering immersive environments, cutting-edge technology, and community-focused engagement for gamers," Rishi said.

**UP cabinet approves sops for semiconductor firms**

LUCKNOW: The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet on Tuesday approved incentives to attract semiconductor companies willing to invest Rs 3,000 crore or more in the state, aiming to boost high-end manufacturing and generate large-scale employment. Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said 14 proposals were placed before the Council of Ministers, of which one was deferred while 13 received approval. Khanna said the state's semiconductor policy, introduced in January 2024, envisages case-by-case incentives for companies making large investments. These include interest subsidy, employee cost reimbursement, GST exemptions for 10 years, and power tariff subsidy of up to Rs 2 per unit for a decade. He added that 100 per cent reimbursement of EPF contributions for Uttar Pradesh-based professionals, capped at Rs 2,000 per month, along with concessions in water charges, would also be provided. "The objective is to attract major global players in the semiconductor sector and position Uttar Pradesh as a preferred investment destination," Khanna said, noting that the industry is currently dominated by the US, Europe, Japan and Taiwan.

Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta said the state was witnessing growing interest from multinational companies and that SOPs for Global Capability Centres (GCCs) were also approved. He said 21 companies have already started investments in the current financial year, which would generate significant direct and indirect employment.

**BIS must develop new standards fast, says Minister Joshi**

Minister highlighted that the Modi government brought a new BIS Act 2016, which established the bureau as the national standards body of India. The Act provides for high quality products and services to consumers by preventing the manufacturing and import of substandard products



ted to ensuring that every citizen of India has access to safe, reliable and high-quality products and services." He noted that the BIS role is very important in achieving this objective. "The BIS Mark has become a symbol of trust across multiple sectors, promoting growth in agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. BIS has been instrumental in shaping the country's quality landscape. Since its inception in 1947, the BIS has evolved into a robust institution that formulates, implements and promotes the standards across the diverse sectors," Joshi observed. The minister highlighted that the Modi government brought a new BIS Act 2016, which established the bureau as the national standards body of India. The Act provides for high quality products and services to consumers by preventing the manufacturing and import of substandard products.

**India-Russia maritime cooperation likely to create new trade routes**

NEW DELHI

RECENT agreements for expanded maritime cooperation with Russia will increase the global maritime presence of India and will have a positive impact in areas including shipbuilding, Arctic capable maritime activities and new trade routes, a report has said.

The report from Maritime fairtrade said the partnership is expected to strengthen ties with Russia and facilitate smoother logistical operations, improving trade flows and promoting economic growth for both nations.

New trade routes will be formed between the Indian



Ocean and the Russian Far East and economic growth will flourish by linking India's shipbuilding capabilities with Russia's experience and resources, it said. India and Russia have held high-level discussions

**Automobile retail sales up 7.71% in 2025, says FADA**

After a subdued start, sales picked up due to revision of GST rates, says dealers association

**ON GROWTH TRACK**

- Passenger vehicle sales registered 9.7% growth in 2025
- A total of 44,75,309 units sold compared to 40,79,532 in 2024
- Two-wheeler sales also grew by 7.24% at 2,02,95,650 units
- Three-wheeler sales stood at 13,09,953 units, up 7.21%.

NEW DELHI

RETAIL sales of vehicles across categories in India in 2025 grew by 7.71 per cent at 2,81,61,228 units as compared to 2,61,45,445 in 2024, with GST 2.0 helping overcome a subdued start to the year, Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations said on Tuesday.

Passenger vehicle (PV) retail sales stood at 44,75,309 units in 2025 as against 40,79,532 units in 2024, a growth of 9.7 per cent, Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said in a statement. Similarly, two-wheeler



(2W) sales also grew by 7.24 per cent at 2,02,95,650 units last year as compared to 1,89,24,815 units in 2024. In 2025, three-wheeler retail sales were at 13,09,953 units as compared to 12,21,886 units in 2024, up 7.21 per cent. Commercial vehicles (CV) retail also witnessed a growth of 6.71 per cent at 10,09,654 units in 2025 as against 9,46,190 units in 2024. Commenting on the performance, FADA President CS Vigneshwar said 2025 was a tale of two halves -- January to August remained subdued despite supportive macro cues such as direct-tax relief in the Union Budget and RBI's cumulative rate

easing through 2025. During this phase, customers stayed value-conscious and financier approvals remained selective in pockets, resulting in uneven conversions across markets. "The turning point came from September onwards, when the landmark GST 2.0 rate rationalisation, including meaningful reductions for mass segments like small cars, two-wheelers (up to 350cc), three-wheelers and key commercial categories, improved affordability and lifted sentiment, leading to a clear upshift through September-December," Vigneshwar said. He further said 2025 also reinforced the transition that is underway

On the outlook, FADA said over the next three months, the retail outlook remains decisively upbeat as its survey showed 74.91 per cent of dealers expecting growth

in terms of electrification with EV share moving up in 2W, PV, CV and remained dominant in 3W, while CNG strengthened its presence in PV and CV, signalling a more diversified mobility mix. "Overall, CY25 closes on a celebratory note, stronger demand visibility, healthier enquiry pipelines and a more confident consumer, as we step into 2026," Vigneshwar noted. On the outlook, FADA said over the next three months, the retail outlook remains decisively upbeat as its survey showed 74.91 per cent of dealers expecting growth. "Demand should stay supported by the post-GST 2.0 sentiment, a packed calendar of festivals and the marriage season, and typical financial-year-end buying," it added.

**IEW to focus on boosting energy security**

NEW DELHI

THE Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said on Tuesday that the 'India Energy Week (IEW) 2026' will return to Goa from January 27-30, bringing together ministers from across the world, global CEOs, policymakers, financial institutions, academia and technology providers at a critical juncture for the global energy sector.

As the first major international energy gathering of the year, 'IEW 2026' will focus on strengthening energy security, catalysing investment and advancing practical and scalable pathways for decarbonisation. "IEW 2026 will serve as a key platform for dialogue and cooperation. Building on the momentum of previous editions, the event is expected to welcome participants from over 120 countries," according to an official statement. The 2025 edition saw participation from over 68,000 attendees, 570 exhibitors and 5,400 conference delegates, with 100 conference sessions featuring more than 540 global speakers. The 2026 edition will expand further, reinforcing IEW's position among the world's leading energy dialogue platforms.



Hosted by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and jointly organised by the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIP) and dmgs events, IEW 2026 provides a neutral and globally connected forum for cooperation on energy security, affordability and sustainability. Delegations from the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Asia-Pacific region are expected to participate, underlining India Energy Week's growing role in global energy diplomacy. According to the International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook 2025, India alone is projected to account for more than 23 per cent of global incremental energy demand by 2050, largest for any country.

"IEW 2026 will serve as a key platform for dialogue and cooperation. Building on the momentum of previous editions, the event is expected to welcome participants from over 120 countries," according to an official statement

**Use CSR spending on tackling malnutrition: Goyal**

NEW DELHI

COMMERCE and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday called upon corporates to direct their CSR spending towards combating malnutrition, describing it as crucial for India's future and their own business interests.

Speaking at the National CSR Conclave on 'Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Nutrition Security and Malnutrition Mitigation', organised by the NDDB Foundation, Goyal said a malnutrition-free India is essential for achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047.

"A holistic approach is required to make the country free from malnutrition. Malnutrition can be prevented



during pregnancy and the child growth stage itself," he said, highlighting the scope of CSR work in this area. The minister emphasised that CSR activities focused on preventing malnutrition would yield better returns on investment. "It is not charity, you are investing in future profits of your company. If you link your activities with malnutrition, you are doing good for yourself. Corporates are helping themselves, creating new markets, new labour, new employees, and new consumers of the future," he said.

**White-collar hiring register 13% growth in Dec: Report**

Hiring in BPO and IT-enabled services sectors also show a growth in final quarter

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S white-collar job market ended 2025 on a strong note, with hiring activity rising 13 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in December, a new report said on Monday.

The robust finish made the October-December period the strongest quarter of the year, recording a 9 per cent annual growth and setting a positive tone for the job market in 2026, according to data compiled by Naukri



JobSpeak. Hiring in hospitality jumped 29 per cent in December, while insurance recorded a 34 per cent rise

**POSITIVE TREND**

- Oct-Dec quarter recorded a 9% growth in job market
- Hiring in hospitality jumped 29% in December
- Jobs in insurance sector recorded a 34% rise
- BPO and IT sector staged a recovery in final quarter

and real estate grew by 21 per cent, the report said.

The BPO and IT-enabled services sector, which had struggled early in the year, also staged a solid recovery by the final quarter. Non-metro cities played a key role in this growth, with places like Jaipur and Ahmedabad seeing a surge in hiring activity, especially in BPO and entry-level roles. High-paying jobs also saw notable traction. Roles offering salaries of over Rs 20 lakh per annum grew 27 per cent overall, with cybersecurity emerging as a clear standout. Freshers continued to

benefit from this broad-based recovery. Entry-level hiring rose 18 per cent by the end of the year, largely driven by non-IT sectors. Hospitality and insurance led the way, each recording over 50 per cent growth in fresher hiring, followed by BPO and real estate. Smaller cities such as Kochi, Coimbatore, Jaipur and Ahmedabad were major contributors, as per the report. The report also noted a rise in hiring by unicorns, which grew 21 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in December. Southern cities like Chen-

nai and Hyderabad emerged as key hubs, supported mainly by strong recruitment in internet and e-commerce companies. Commenting on the trend, Dr. Pawan Goyal, Chief Business Officer at Naukri, said the consistent strength in non-tech sectors throughout 2025 shows that the shift in hiring patterns is now firmly established. "The steady increase in entry-level roles across these sectors is encouraging for fresh graduates as the country steps into 2026 with renewed optimism in the job market," he added.