QUICKLY.

Price-fixing probe: CCI searches six paper mills

New Delhi: The Competition Commission of India has searched premises of six paper mills in an investigation into alleged price collusion in supplying paper to a government school education body, sources said on Wednesday. The CCI has been conducting searches starting Tuesday in Maharashtra in the west and Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi in the north, said the sources. REUTERS

Data Patterns' Q2 net profit up at ₹49 crore

Chennai: Data Patterns, a Chennai-headquartered Defence and Aerospace electronics company, has posted a profit after tax (PAT) of ₹49 crore for the quarter ended September, 2025, up 62 per cent from the ₹30 crore it posted in the same quarter last year. Revenue in Q2 FY26 stood at ₹307 crore (₹91 crore). For the half year FY26, PAT increased to ₹75 crore (₹63 crore) and revenue went up to ₹407 crore (₹195 crore), says a release. OUR BUREAU

'Waiving transmission levy will help balanced RE development'

UNTAPPED AREAS. Dispersed RE generation will ease pressure on transmission infra

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

The Power Ministry has informed a Parliamentary Standing Committee that withdrawing the waiver on inter-state transmission charges (ISTS) will encourage a more geographically balanced renewable energy (RE) development and will reduce pressure on the power evacuation infrastructure. The committee is of the view that transmitting RE from high producing Western and Southern areas to the rest of the country is both costly and has reduced efficiency due to energy losses on the way.

The Ministry explained that gradual withdrawal of ISTS waivers will encourage more geographically balanced RE development, as earlier due to ISTS waivers, the transmission charges were cross-subsidised and majorly borne by the hydro rich States of the North-East and hilly areas.

AVOIDING COSTS. Even States with RE potential source power from other States to avoid transmission costs REUTERS

TRANSMISSION COSTS

The current average ISTS charges are around 65 paise per unit.

As per government policy, ISTS waivers will decrease by 25 per cent annually from July 2025 till it becomes zero by June 2028, barring offshore wind, pumped storage and green hydrogen production.

Even States with substantial RE potential have been sourcing from other States to shift the burden of transmission costs onto others. The affected States have been raising objections to this unfair cost-sharing structure which is increasing their consumer tariffs, the Ministry informed the panel.

JMK Research & Analytics in a March 2025 report said that stakeholders noted that ISTS waivers are contributing to an uneven concentration of RE across different States, favouring development in certain regions. Even though the differential cost of RE power generation across States is minimal (ranging from ₹ 0.02-0.40 per unit), about 88 per cent of solar and wind capacity installations are concentrated in just seven States, it added.

PROTECTING REVENUE

"This concentration pressures the government to invest significantly in building transmission infrastructure. Waiving ISTS transmission charges for even 1 GW of RE capacity results in over ₹9,500 crore in foregone government revenue over the 25-year waiver period.

"The committee expects the Ministry and other central agencies to promote the development of solar energy in areas having low solar capacity *vis-à-vis* potential, by hand holding such States/UTs through supportive policies," it has recommended.

Cabinet nod for rationalisation of royalty rates of 4 critical minerals

Our Bureau
New Delhi

To boost production of critical minerals, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved rationalisation of royalty rates of graphite, caesium, rubidium, and zirconium

In graphite, there will be two categories — for graphite with 80 per cent or more fixed carbon, the rate will be 2 per cent of ASP (average sale price) on *ad valorem* basis and for graphite with less than 80 per cent fixed carbon, royalty rate will be 4 per cent. In case of caesium, the rate would be 2 per cent of ASP, calculated on the amount of caesium metal in the ore produced. The same rate will be applicable for rubidium, while it will be 1 per cent for zirconium, a government statement said.

"This decision will promote auction of mineral blocks containing caesium, rubidium and zirconium and associated critical minerals found with them, such as lithium, tungsten, REES, niobium etc," the statement said. Fixing of royalty rates of graphite on *ad valorem* basis will proportionately reflect the change in prices of the mineral across grades. "Increase in indigenous production of these minerals would lead to reduction in imports and supply chain vulnerabilities and generate employment opportunities in the country," the statement added.

SIGNIFICANCE

Graphite, caesium, rubidium and zirconium are important minerals for high-tech applications and energy transition. Graphite and zirconium are also among the 24 critical and strategic minerals listed in the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.

Graphite is a crucial component in electric vehicle (EV) batteries. However, India imports 60 per cent of its requirement of graphite.

Zirconium is used in various industries, including nuclear energy, aerospace, healthcare and manufacturing, due to exceptional corrosion resistance and high temperature stability.

Caesium is mainly used in high-tech electronic sector, particularly in atomic clocks, GPS systems, other high-precision instruments, medical instruments, including in cancer therapy.

Rubidium is used in making specialty glasses used in fibre optics, telecommunication systems and night vision devices.

The Centre issued NIT on September 16, 2025, for the sixth tranche of auction of critical mineral blocks.

This contains five blocks of graphite, two blocks of rubidium, and one block each of caesium and zirconium. Today's approval of the Cabinet on rate of royalty will help the bidders to rationally submit their financial bids in auction.

India GCCs to add 4 million jobs by FY30: TeamLease Report

Our Bureau
Bengaluru

India has cemented its position as the world's leading hub for GCCs, driven by a strong digital talent pool, but is challenged by complex compliance requirements. According to a TeamLease report, the country now hosts over 1,800 GCCs — over half of the global total — employing 1.9 million professionals and generating $64.6 billion in export revenue in FY25.

The sector's rapid growth is expected to continue, with projections of up to 4 million new jobs by FY30, led by demand for AI, cloud, data engineering, and cybersecurity skills.

A report by TeamLease, titled *GCCs in India: Cultivating Capability, Ensuring Compliance*, reveals that India added over 220 new centres between FY23 and FY25, marking a 14 per cent rise in just two years. This expansion is translating into largescale employment generation, with the GCC sector now supporting 10.4 million jobs — 2 million direct, 1.8 million allied, and 6.5 million induced.

Mid-sized centres employ over 210,000 professionals while salaries across the sector are 25–30 per cent above the national average.

The workforce mix is evolving too, with 20–22 per cent entry-level employees, 75–77 per cent mid-level specialists, and around 2.5 per cent in leadership roles.

KEY PILLAR

Neeti Sharma, CEO, TeamLease Digital, said, "India's GCC ecosystem is emerging as a key pillar of formal employment and skill development. It is projected to create between 2.8 and 4 million jobs by FY30, reflecting the sector's growing depth and resilience. Around 14–22 per cent of new hires will be freshers equipped with digital skills in AI, cloud, and data engineering, while mid-level professionals will make up 76–86 per cent of the workforce. This evolving talent mix is driving innovation, advancing product development, and positioning India as a global hub for specialised digital capabilities."

The report notes that mid-market GCCs—particularly those in tier-2 cities—are playing an increasingly central role in India's capability story. These centres combine high-end digital functions with strong regional talent pipelines, supported by policy measures aimed at decentralised growth. The Union Budget 2025 proposal to introduce a National Framework for promoting GCCs in Tier-2 cities is expected to give further momentum to this shift.

Navy Chief Admiral Tripathi begins 6-day visit to US to boost maritime ties

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi on Wednesday began a six-day visit to the US aimed at strengthening naval cooperation and advancing the shared vision of a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

During the November 12–17 visit, Admiral Tripathi will hold talks with senior American defence officials, including Admiral Samuel J Paparo, Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command, and Admiral Stephen T Koehler, Commander of the US Pacific Fleet. He will also visit key American naval institutions and operational commands. According to the Indian Navy, the visit will provide an opportunity to review ongoing maritime cooperation, enhance operational linkages, and improve information-sharing mechanisms between the two navies.

"The visit underscores the Indian Navy's commitment to deepening cooperation with the US Navy and strengthening the enduring maritime partnership based on mutual trust and shared values," the Navy said in a statement. Officials said discussions will also cover shared priorities in the Indo-Pacific and collaboration within multilateral frameworks such as Milan and the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Milan, hosted biennially by India, is a major multilateral naval exercise that will next be held in February, with participation by over 50 countries.

GBL, ICT Mumbai launch pilot plant to convert CO_2 into clean fuel alternative

Anupama Ghosh
Mumbai

Godavari Biorefineries Ltd has inaugurated a pilot plant in Sakarwadi, Maharashtra, to test a technology that converts carbon dioxide into dimethyl ether (DME), a fuel that can substitute liquefied petroleum gas and diesel. The project, developed in partnership with the Institute of Chemical Technology Mumbai, marks the first one-step process globally to produce DME directly from CO_2 and hydrogen.

The pilot plant will process 10 litres of DME per day over the next three months to collect operational data and optimise the laboratory-scale technology for commercial application. "This is an innovation which we are partnering," said Samir Somaiya, Chairman and Managing Director of GBL, during a media round table on November 10. The technology not only enhances India's energy security but also supports its climate mitigation goals. GBL's biorefineries currently emit about 440 tonnes of CO_2 daily from ethanol production. "In our case, CO_2 is generated during bio-ethanol manufacturing. But since the CO_2 emitted is the same carbon that was originally absorbed by sugarcane during cultivation, the cycle effectively balances itself, that's why we describe our process as net zero."

CARBON IMPERATIVE

GD Yadav, former Vice-Chancellor of ICT Mumbai and the project's lead researcher, stressed the urgency of tackling carbon emissions. "We currently emit around 40 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year," he said. "To achieve net zero and limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C by the end of this century, emissions must fall below 10 billion tonnes. In other words, we need to remove nearly 30 billion tonnes of CO_2 from the atmosphere."

The collaboration recently received the KV Mariwala Award for Effective Chemical Industry-Academia Partnership from the Indian Chemical Council on September 20, recognising the innovation's potential impact.

Maharashtra jewellery policy eyes ₹1-lakh cr investments

Press Trust of India
Mumbai

The Maharashtra government announced the Gems and Jewellery Policy 2025 on Wednesday, to attract investments of ₹1 lakh crore and create 5 lakh new jobs in the sector over the next five years.The policy envisages financial incentives of an estimated ₹1,651 crore during the 2025-30 period, with an additional ₹12,184 crore allocated for the subsequent 20 years (2031-2050), bringing the total outlay to ₹13,835 crore, according to a government resolution issued by the Industry Department. The policy is valid for five years or until a new plan is introduced, it said.

The government has allocated ₹100 crore in budgetary provisions for the current financial year 2025-26 under a dedicated mandatory head for policy implementation, according to the order.Maharashtra's gems and jewellery sector contributes 18 per cent to India's total gross value addition in the industry, positioning the State as a leading hub for gems and jewellery in the country, the resolution stated.

Key infrastructure projects include the India Jewellery Park Mumbai, spread over 21 acres in Navi Mumbai's Mahape industrial area, which is expected to generate over 1 lakh jobs with an estimated investment of ₹50,000 crore, the resolution said.