

DRDO able to save over Rs 2,64,000 cr due to indigenous research in 5 years: Parlt panel

NEW DELHI, Dec 10 (PTI)

A PARLIAMENTARY panel has said the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has been able to save an amount of Rs 2,64,156 crore because of its own "indigenous research" over the last five years.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence in a report presented in Parliament on Tuesday also said that in the past and current year, "crucial milestones in developing next-generation hypersonic technologies and missiles have been achieved" by the DRDO.

The committee congratulated the DRDO for its "various feats" and said the agency will "continue its successful stride" in the fields of various complex and critical technologies to strengthen

Higher edn becoming costlier; study loans not reaching poor: Panel

NEW DELHI, Dec 10 (PTI)

THE accessibility of educational loans has declined over time, even as the cost of higher education has gone steeply up, a Parliamentary Panel has noted, while recommending the Government not to curtail or reject loan applications.

The committee noted that the majority of students from disadvantaged, rural backgrounds, and remote areas were "perhaps" not aware of the schemes being run by the Government for education loans, despite the Department of Higher Education's several initiatives for publicity of the PM Vidyalaxmi scheme. The report painted a worrying picture of a system that, instead of closing the opportunity gap, continues to exclude large sections of aspirants. "The States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra account for the bulk of education loan borrowers. This skewed distribution of loan disbursal shows that there are gaps in implementation of the education loan schemes and there is a dire need to make efforts to raise awareness across States," it said.

indigenous defence research and development capabilities of the country, according to the report. "The Committee has also been apprised that DRDO has been able to save an amount of Rs 2,64,156 crore because of its own indigenous research during the last five years," it said.

The Government in its response has told the panel about some of the achievement of the DRDO in recent times. First long-range hypersonic anti-ship missile was successfully flight tested in November 2024, while in March 2024, the DRDO successfully tested its first Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology using Agni ballistic missile. This technology enables a single missile to carry and deploy multiple warheads to different targets, it said.

Electrical environment near Moon's surface in south more active: ISRO



BENGALURU, Dec 10 (PTI)

THE electrical environment near the Moon's surface in the south polar region is far more active than previously understood, ISRO said on Wednesday, based on an analysis of Chandrayaan-3 lander data.

The Chandrayaan-3 data, obtained between August 23 and September 3, 2023, provided critical ground truth on the Moon's plasma environment.

In a statement, ISRO said: "Analysis of the Chandrayaan-3 lander data has yielded significant and first-of-its-kind results on the plasma environment near the Moon's surface at southern higher latitudes, revealing that the electrical environment near the Moon's surface in the south polar region is far more active than previously understood."

In physics, plasma is often called the fourth state of matter, consisting of a mixture of charged particles, including ions and free electrons. Despite being electrically neutral overall, plasma is highly conductive and responds strongly to electromagnetic fields. "The Moon's thin plasma environment, or lunar iono-

sphere, is governed by several major processes. Solar wind, a continuous stream of charged particles ejected from the Sun's upper atmosphere, constantly impinges on the Moon's surface," ISRO said.

This, along with the photoelectric effect—where high-energy photons from the Sun knock out outer-shell -- electrons from atoms on the surface and in the sparse atmosphere, causing ionisation—is the primary mechanism for generating plasma.

The lunar plasma is further influenced by the deposition of charged particles originating from the Earth's magnetosphere when the Moon passes through that region, typically for 3 to 5 days during 28 days, resulting in a constantly changing and dynamic electrical environment near the surface, ISRO said.

The results, obtained by the Radio Anatomy of the Moon Bound Hypersensitive Ionosphere and Atmosphere – Langmuir Probe (RAMBHA-LP) instrument onboard the Vikram lander of Chandrayaan-3, mark the first-ever direct measurements of lunar plasma at such low altitudes, it added.

IMF urges China to address economic imbalances as trade surplus hits \$1 trillion

HONG KONG, Dec 10 (AP)

THE head of the International Monetary Fund has urged China to fix its economic imbalances, saying the country of 1.4 billion people is too big to rely on exports for its growth. China's global exports have been rising while shipments to the United States have contracted after President Donald Trump hiked taxes on imports from China and many other countries.

Earlier this week, Beijing reported its trade surplus for 2025 had already exceeded a record \$1 trillion. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said the heavy reliance

on exports risks provoking more moves by its trading partners to curb imports from China.

"(China's) continuing to depend on export-led growth risks furthering global trade tensions," Georgieva told a press conference on Wednesday. "China is now too big to rely on exports as a source for growth and (it has) a large domestic market that can be a big aspiration for growth in the years to come."

At a high-level meeting in October aimed at drawing up plans for the next five years, China's leaders highlighted the need to boost domestic consumption. The ruling Communist Party has long sought

to rebalance the economy away from heavy dependence both on exports and on massive investment in infrastructure. But the COVID-19 pandemic intervened, along with a prolonged downturn in the real estate market that has slowed activity for that once powerful engine for growth. Meanwhile, Beijing has pushed hard to expand manufacturing in high-tech industries, struggling to rein in excessive capacity in some areas such as automaking.

Morgan Stanley recently predicted that by 2030, China's market share in global exports could reach 16.5%, up from about 15% currently, supported by its advanced manufac-

turing and high-growth segments like robotics, electric vehicles and batteries.

Georgieva was visiting Beijing for an annual economic forum involving the heads of major international organisations. The IMF also was concluding its annual review of China. Softening domestic consumption and demand in China has contributed to a weakened yuan versus the dollar and other currencies. That has made China's exports cheaper compared with those of other countries, reinforcing trade imbalances. The IMF said comprehensive policies are needed to encourage Chinese people to spend more.

US receives best ever offers from India: USTR

NEW DELHI, Dec 10 (PTI)

US TRADE Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer has said the US has received "best" ever offers from India on the proposed trade agreement amid commencement of two-day talks here between the two countries.

Speaking at a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on Tuesday in Washington, Greer said that there is resistance in India to certain row crops and other meat and products. Row crops in the US include corn, soybeans, wheat and cotton. "They have been very difficult nut to crack but they have been quite forward leaning the type of offers that they have been talking to us about have been the best, we have ever received as a country, so I think that is a viable alternative market," he said.

These remarks are important as both sides are trying to conclude the first phase of the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA). He said that the US team is in India for the trade talks. US Deputy Trade Representative Rick Switzer is leading the US team here for the negotiations. On the first day here on Wednesday he held discussions with Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal. Both reviewed the ongoing negotiations for the agree-



US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer

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ment. The talks are aimed at finalising a mutually beneficial trade pact.

"The two sides exchanged views on matters related to India-US trade and economic ties, including on the ongoing negotiations for a mutually beneficial Bilateral Trade Agreement," the

department of commerce said in a social media post. The talks are important as the Trump administration has imposed a steep 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods entering American markets.

The Indian industry and exporters are eagerly waiting for conclusion of the negotiations and announcement of the deal as the high import duties are hurting their shipments to America. Though they are exploring other markets to maintain their export profits, the US is a key destination for them as it accounts for about 18 per cent of the country's exports.

First, the US imposed 25 per cent duty on Indian goods stating trade deficit concerns with India, which stood at around USD 46 billion in 2024-25. Additional 25 per cent penalty was imposed later on India for buying Russian crude.

India has stated that resolution of these tariffs would be key to firm up the first phase of the trade deal.

As part of the pact, the US is seeking duty concessions on agri products like almonds, corn and apples, and industrial goods. India has strongly opposed any concessions on agri and dairy sectors. India has stated that it will not compromise the interests of farmers and MSMEs.

India doubles its online public services; 105% growth recorded in two years: Govt

NEW DELHI, Dec 10 (PTI)

INDIA has more than doubled the number of Government services available online in the past two-and-a-half years, the Government told the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Responding to a question, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh said that the number of e-services offered by States and Union Territories rose from 11,614 in April 2023 to 23,919 in October 2025 — a 105 per cent jump — under the National e-Governance Service Delivery

Assessment (NeSDA) Way Forward initiative.

NeSDA is a national framework developed by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in 2019 to evaluate how well States, UTs and Central ministries deliver their online services. It acts as a benchmarking tool to encourage improvements in digital governance across seven key sectors.

The Minister added that the share of mandatory services available online also went up from 66 per cent to 80 per cent during the same period.

FROM THE PARLT



To make digital access easier, 10 States and Union Territories now offer over 90 per cent of their services through a single unified portal, while six have moved all their services (100 per cent) to

one platform.

Women's share in civil services up

THE proportion of women qualifying for the Civil Services Examination (CSE) has increased from 24 per cent in 2019 to 35 per cent in 2023, the Government told Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Engineering graduates consistently accounted for more than 50 per cent of successful candidates, data presented by Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra

Singh showed.

Responding to a question, the Minister presented five-year data showing a steady rise in the number of female candidates in the final merit list — from 220 out of 922 candidates in 2019 to 397 out of 1,132 in 2023. At the same time, engineering stream candidates continued to dominate the merit list, with 554 engineers recommended in 2023, far outnumbering those from humanities (368), science (137), and medical science (73). The data shows that engineering graduates formed the largest cohort every year from 2019 to 2023.