# Major overhaul in Agnipath scheme

## Two-year extension for Agniveers, Govt opens pathway to permanent recruitment



Chief of Defence Staff General NS Raja Subramani during a press briefing in New Delhi on Wednesday. (PTI)



NEW DELHI, Nov 4 (PTI)

IN A major overhaul of the Agnipath scheme, the Government on Wednesday announced that Agniveers set to exit the military at the end of their four-year tenure will be given an additional two-year extension period and subsequently offered permanent recruitment, subject to meeting specific eligibility criteria and individual consent.

The decision was announced by Chief of Defence Staff General N S Raja Subramani, shortly after the Union Cabinet approved the changes in the military recruitment scheme as recommended by the three services.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said, the move is part of "long-term structural reforms" of the Defence Forces aimed at creating "a younger, fitter, technologically equipped and future-ready military".

Under the Agnipath scheme rolled out in June, 2022, soldiers were recruited for a four-year term, with a provision to retaining only 25 per cent of them in regular services. The changes in the scheme were brought in just over three weeks before around 18,000 Agniveers were to exit the Armed Forces.

"Today is a very significant day for the Indian Defence Forces and for Agniveers. The Cabinet has created a pathway for all Agniveers to be absorbed into the defence forces," the Chief of Defence Staff said, addressing a press conference alongside Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

At present, over 3,00,000 soldiers recruited under the Agnipath scheme are operating in the military.

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) described the Government's decision as the opening of a "pathway" for all Agniveers, ensuring almost all of

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# New IAF chief Dixit calls upon Vice President Radhakrishnan



NEW DELHI, Nov 4 (PTI)

THE new Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, called upon Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Wednesday.

"Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, called on Vice President C P Radhakrishnan at Uprashtrapati Bhavan," the Vice-President's office said in a post on X.

The air officer assumed charge as the 29th Chief of Air Staff on October 31, succeeding Air Chief Marshal A P Singh, who superannuated the same day.

Restoring the Indian Air Force's sanctioned fighter squadron strength, accelerating indigenous programmes like the Tejas and the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft, and strengthening tri-services synergy will be his top priorities, the Air Chief Marshal said on Sunday.

# India's manufacturing sector clocks robust growth: Ministry

NEW DELHI, Nov 4 (IANS)



INDIA'S registered manufacturing sector has recorded a robust 7.25 per cent growth in the gross value of plant and machinery in the year 2024-25 over the previous year, according to data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Wednesday.

During FY2024-25, the registered manufacturing industry experienced notable expansion, driven by upward trends across key economic metrics, including capital investment, production output, Gross Value Added (GVA), workforce numbers, and compensation in comparison to the prior year, an official statement said.

The manufacturing corporate sector, having a share of more than 89 per cent in total gross value added (GVA), has reported growth in the number of factories in operation and total persons engaged by 3.45 per cent and 7.57 per cent, respectively and GVA growth of 9.28 per cent over the previous year.

The top five industries -- food products, textiles, basic metals, motor vehicles, and wearing apparel taken together, have contributed more than 41 per cent of the total manufacturing employment of the country during 2024-25.

Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh have emerged as the top 5 States in respect of GVA, having a share of more than 54 per cent of the total manufacturing GVA of the country in 2024-25.

# Cabinet clears expansion of Fast Track Courts from 779 to 850

NEW DELHI, Nov 4 (IANS)

IN A bid to reduce the pendency of rape and child sexual offence cases, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved the continuation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), including exclusive POCSO courts, for another five years till March 31, 2031, with a total financial outlay of Rs 3,788.04 crore.

The scheme aims to ensure speedy trials of pending cases relating to rape and offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, while reducing the pendency of such cases across the country. The total financial outlay of Rs 3,788.04 crore includes a central share of Rs 2,353.15 crore and a State/Union Territory share of Rs 1,434.89 crore. The central share will be funded from the Nirbhaya Fund.

Under the extended scheme, the Government plans to increase the number of functional FTSCs from the existing 779 to 850 across participating States and Union Territories, with additional districts to be identified on the basis of the pendency of rape and POCSO cases.



## Rs 2,814 cr scheme to promote critical mineral processing

The Government on Wednesday approved a Rs 2,814 crore scheme to promote processing of critical minerals such as lithium and nickel.

**PM MODI HAILS CABINET APPROVALS:** IN A major push toward self-reliance in the energy transition and advanced manufacturing sectors, the Union Cabinet has approved the 'Capex Support Scheme to Promote Critical Mineral Processing' with a total financial outlay of Rs 2,814 crore over five years.

Addressing the strategic necessity of domestic infrastructure in a post on X, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised that India cannot afford to depend on foreign nations for the refined materials that power the nation's future. "Do you feel India should depend on other countries for processing the critical minerals that power our future? I certainly don't!

## Rs 14,500 crore scheme for 92 GWh battery energy storage systems

The Union Cabinet approved Rs 14,500 crore in viability gap funding for 92 GWh of grid-scale energy storage systems between FY27 and FY31. This development is significant given India's ambitious target of 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030. The scheme is aimed at supporting the development of 92 GWh storage capacity across three technologies -- Battery Energy Storage System (30 GWh), Pumped Storage Projects (60 GWh) and Emerging Storage Technologies (2GW), Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in a media briefing here.

## Rs 4,371 cr scheme for statistical ecosystem

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a scheme to transform India's official statistical ecosystem, entailing an outlay of Rs 4,371.1 crore.

The Viksit Bharat Initiative for statistical transformation, analytics and research (VISTAR) scheme spans five years till 2030-31.

# Trump admits Iran war impacted midterm elections but says he had to do it

WASHINGTON, Nov 4 (AP)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Wednesday acknowledged that the Iran war impacted the midterm elections, suggesting voters were frustrated by surging gas prices that have been a byproduct of the eight month-old conflict.

He, however, said that the war was something he had to do.

"The Iran thing we had to do, and we continue to do it," Trump told reporters.

Earlier, he struck a conciliatory tone, suggesting he could work with the Democrats, but he also warned of gridlock ahead as he threatened to use the power of the presidential veto to strike down their agenda.

"I don't want to be just sitting there for two years vetoing everything," he told Politico.

But the fallout for Republicans was raw and was only beginning.

**VICE PRESIDENTJD VANCE CITES IRAN WAR FOR REPUBLICANS' LOSSES:** JD Vance blamed war in Iran for Republican midterm losses.

In a lengthy online post, the Vice President seemingly sought to distance himself from election results seen as a referendum on Trump that featured big Republican losses across the country.

"The reason we lost is the war," Vance wrote, adding, "If you'd like to argue it was worth it, that losing the Senate for the next 6 years was worth it, then do so. Argue it was a worthwhile cost to pay. Agree or disagree, that's at least honest."

In a nationwide romp, Democrats ousted Republicans from coast to coast, with many surprising places in between, as voters rejected the President's party for the promise of something different for the country.

Their majorities will be padded by wide margins in both the House and the Senate.

The results set up a divided Government, with Congress poised to reassert itself as a coequal branch ready to challenge President Donald Trump and reverse course after two years of unified GOP control.

## Trump is still your President: White House shares pointed PSA amid US midterm election results

WASHINGTON, Nov 4 (ANI)

AS THE 2026 US midterm election results unfold in the favour of Democrats, the White House has shared a pointed public service announcement (PSA), reminding Americans that Donald Trump continues to hold the presidency regardless of the outcome of the congressional elections.

In a post on X on Wednesday (local time), the White House shared an image of Trump carrying the caption, "PSA: Trump is still your President", accompanied by the message, "Thank you for your attention to this matter."

The post appeared amid the unfolding midterm results, which will determine the composition of the US Congress and could reshape the political landscape during Trump's presidency.

With the PSA-style message, the White House drew attention to the distinction between the midterm elections, which determine congressional representation, and the presidential term, which is not up for election in 2026.

## How a Democratic win could affect global markets and India's outlook

NEW DELHI, Nov 4 (IANS)

THE US dollar index and Treasury yields fell sharply as investors increasingly priced in a Democratic sweep in one of the most closely watched US midterm elections, with experts on Wednesday saying the outcome could influence oil prices, tariff policies, regulation of major industries and the broader geopolitical outlook, including for India.

According to analysts, a stronger Democratic showing could ease concerns over oil prices if pressure mounts on US President Donald Trump to step back from the Iran conflict.

For India, the implications are seen as more geopolitical than directly market-related.

Lower crude prices, a weaker US dollar and softer Treasury yields would be beneficial for the Indian economy by easing pressure on the rupee, improving foreign investor sentiment and reducing borrowing costs.

Uncertainty around US trade policy remains a concern with India's proposed trade agreement with the United States still unresolved as the market experts said the election outcome is unlikely to materially improve the prospects of a near-term deal.

However, any impact may be limited as Trump continues to retain significant executive powers over foreign policy decisions.

Meanwhile, financials, energy companies and parts of the technology sector could face near-term pressure amid expectations of greater regulatory scrutiny and the possibility of higher taxes in the future, according to them.

They further noted that the energy sector may face additional headwinds if elevated crude prices begin to retreat.

In addition, a Democratic-controlled Congress could also increase oversight of Trump's tariff policies and challenge their implementation through legislation.

However, the experts do not expect a rapid rollback of tariffs as the President maintains considerable authority over trade measures.

The AI sector is likely to remain a key investment theme with analysts at leading global Morgan Stanley expecting AI-related spending and data-centre expansion to continue.

However, Governments could play a larger role in shaping future infrastructure development and regulatory decisions.

The key takeaway for global markets will be the scale of any Democratic victory as it could provide an early indication of shifting political sentiment ahead of the 2028 US presidential election, according to experts.