



# THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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## ALL SET FOR THE BIG DAY IN BANGLADESH

Election officials check ballot boxes and voting materials after collecting them ahead of polls, in Dhaka, on Wednesday. Polls in Bangladesh on Thursday will be held under an unprecedented political landscape, following the sudden exit of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina after a mass upsurge in 2024, reports Bayezid Milky, senior journalist based in Dhaka | P15

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### தமிழ்நாட்டு மாணவர்கள் தரணியை வென்றிட

# 10,00,000 மழக்கணிகிகள் வழங்கும் திட்டம்

## தமிழ்நாட்டின் வளர்ச்சியை பயணத்தில் ஒருவரையும் பின்தங்க விடமாட்டோம் !!



### வெல்வோம் ஒன்றாக!

Sitharaman says full 41% share of divisible taxes transferred to states as mandated by the Finance Commission

## States to get more than ₹25 lakh cr in FY27: FM

PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday rejected allegations levelled by several Opposition-ruled states that the Centre was not transferring states' share from the divisible pool of taxes.

The Union finance minister, in her reply to the Budget discussion in the Lok Sabha, said that the Centre has transferred the full 41% share of divisible taxes to the states as mandated by the Finance Commission.

"The states should check if the entire net proceeds, which form the divisible pool, i.e., removing cess and surcharge from gross tax revenue, are received by them. There is no need to discuss the gross tax revenue," the minister said.

The FM said the Centre has allocated ₹25.44 lakh crore to states in FY27. "This much money will go to the states. This entails an increase of ₹2.70 lakh crore from FY26," Sitharaman said.

Commenting on the transfer of cess and surcharges, she clarified that these are collected for a purpose and if states can come with proposals on health, education, roadways, they will get the funds. "Cess and surcharge are given to the states for development work in various sectors. This is separate from the 41% of funds allocated to the states."



Debunking allegations that the government was not approving credits to the states, the finance minister stated the total credit has grown 13.8% in the current financial year.

She pointed out that headline capital expenditure stands at ₹12.2 lakh crore while the effective capital expenditure, including grants to states, totals ₹17.1 lakh crore, amounting to 4.4% of GDP.

In her reply, the FM also chose to give a point-by-point rebuttal to LoP Rahul Gandhi's allegations. Lighting into the Congress leader, she said it was the UPA government which "sold" the interests of farmers to the WTO.

## Bharat Mata has been sold, alleges Rahul

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

AFTER being repeatedly blocked from quoting ex-Army Chief General M M Naravane's unpublished memoir in the Lok Sabha last week, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday mounted a sharp attack on the government over the India-US trade deal framework, accusing the Modi administration of having "sold off the nation" and terming it as a "wholesale surrender".

Participating in the debate on the Union Budget, Rahul said he does not believe that any Indian PM, including Narendra Modi, would agree to such a deal unless there is a "chokehold" on him. "Why has he sold India? Because the US is choking him. They have a grip on his neck."

Rahul asserted that the trade agreement had undermined farmers' interests, destroyed the textile sector, and handed India's energy security to the US. Calling it a surrender of the future

of 1.5 billion Indians, he said it was driven by the need to protect the BJP's financial architecture, which he said is facing scrutiny in the US. "The US will decide who we buy oil from. They will monitor," Rahul claimed.

He accused the government of opening the door to mechanised American farms, thereby crushing India's small farmers, and called the move disgraceful, saying that no PM before had done such a thing, nor would any after him. "How can you come to this House and defend this? Are you not ashamed of selling India? You have sold our mother — Bharat Mata," he said.



The House saw heated exchanges after Rahul referred to minister Hardeep Puri and industrialist Anil Ambani in connection with mentions in the Epstein files. Minister Kiran Rijiju dismissed them as unsubstantiated and demanded that Rahul authenticate them, to which the latter said he was prepared to do so.

## CM: Won't share power; DMK-Cong pact intact

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

REJECTING the demand for a share in power from a section of Congress leaders in the DMK-led alliance in Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister M K Stalin on Wednesday asserted that there is no question of sharing power with allies, but the alliance with Congress would remain intact. "Power sharing with alliance partners won't work in Tamil Nadu. We know that and they (Congress) also know that well," he said.

Stalin's comments came a day after the party announced that it would begin seat-sharing talks with its "friendly parties" from February 22 for the polls. Congress leadership earlier on Tuesday had expressed disappointment over delay by the DMK in initiating seat-sharing talks with allies.

Speaking at an interaction during a roundtable hosted by a private television channel in Chennai on Wednesday, Stalin said that his

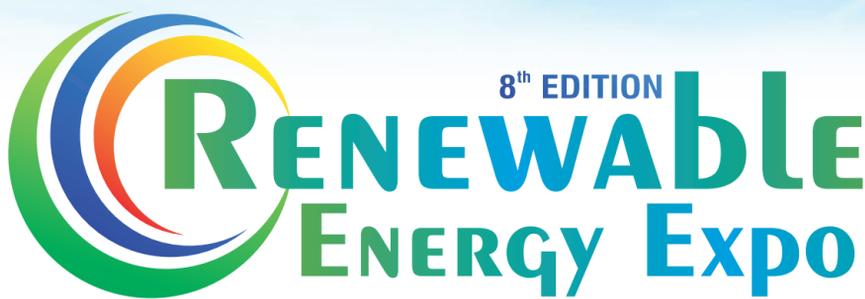
### TNCC prez 'respects' it, MP taunts DMK

K Selvaperunthagai (TNCC president) said the CM has clearly stated DMK's stand, and Congress respects it. Congress MP Manickam B Tagore, however, said whether TN will have a coalition govt or not would be decided by the people. "Not implementing people's mandate in 2006 was party's mistake," he added | P4

equation with Rahul Gandhi was cordial. "As far as Rahul is concerned, he sees me as an elder brother. I, too, regard him as a brother. I am saying this beyond politics. He considers me as his own family, and I feel the same way about him."

To a question on whether the DMK-Congress alliance would fight the poll together, Stalin responded that the alliance would continue. P7

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### In Tamil Nadu's march to prosperity, we shall leave no one behind!

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