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EV Subsidy or Private Enrichment?

While hearing a long-running air quality case in Delhi-NCR, the Supreme Court of India recently cautioned against relying on a single technology such as electric vehicles (EVs) without evaluating carbon impact, economic costs, and public benefit. This observation is timely, as India's EV policy raises questions about efficiency, fairness, and fiscal priorities.

India's EV push aims to reduce oil imports and emissions, but outcomes remain modest. Despite nearly ₹30,000 crore in subsidies over three years — through purchase incentives, tax cuts, and fee waivers — electric cars still account for only about four percent of new sales. Public subsidies divert scarce resources from critical sectors like healthcare, education, and public transport. Combined benefits often cover 35-60 percent of vehicle prices, effectively underwriting private consumption. Studies, including one by Harvard Law School, show such subsidies mainly benefit affluent households.

Globally, countries such as Germany, United Kingdom, United States, and China are reassessing subsidy models, shifting focus to infrastructure. In India, weak charging networks remain the biggest barrier. Redirecting funds to charging infrastructure, enforcing scrappage, promoting cleaner fuels, and phasing out diesel vehicles could deliver faster and more equitable gains. The key policy question is how public money can maximise environmental outcomes and public good.

Pradeep S Mehta
Editor

Abridged from an article that appeared in The Financial Express on February 11, 2026. The same can be accessed at: <https://tinyurl.com/2r6kfkap>

Message for our Readers

The 22nd edition of the National Affairs Monthly Brief contains selected published news or comments on trade, regulatory, and governance issues.

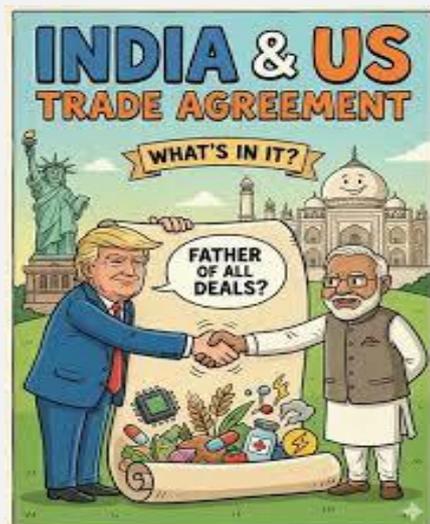
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India-US Trade Pact: 'Father of all Deals'

It's finally here! After many ups and downs, India and the US have agreed on a trade deal that slashes American tariffs on Indian goods to 18 percent from 50 percent. In turn, according to US President Donald Trump, India has agreed to stop purchasing Russian oil and will commit to buying more than US\$500bn worth of US energy, technology, agricultural products, coal and other goods.



India's ESG Rules are Redefining Corporate Accountability



India's corporate sector is entering a new regulatory era, as environmental, social and governance (ESG) norms shift from voluntary disclosures to enforceable standards, driven by the shift to a low-carbon economy and heightened transparency requirements. With the SEBI tightening reporting rules and expanding accountability across value chains, sustainability is not peripheral anymore.

- [Modi in Jerusalem: Strategic Ties to Political Alignment](#)
KBS Chronicle, February 26, 2026
 - [India-Africa Ties deepen amid Shifting Global Order](#)
Times of India, February 23, 2026
 - [PM Modi Launches Namu Bharat, Meerut Metro to Boost Connectivity](#)
First Post, February 22, 2026
 - [Corruption Perception Index 2025: India's Rank and Top/Bottom Countries](#)
Manisha Waldia, Jagran Josh, February 13, 2026
 - [Trade Pathway to Stronger India-EU Relations](#)
www.euindia.org, February 05, 2026
 - [Budget 2026: Push for Modern Sustainable Textiles](#)
Sayantan Halder, Down to Earth, February 02, 2026
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TRAI Signals Changes Before Spectrum Sale to Boost Competition

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has proposed major changes to the upcoming spectrum auction framework to boost participation and competition. It recommends auctioning all available low-, mid-, and high-band spectrum, easing entry norms for new players, and offering incentives for the 600 MHz band. The proposals were submitted to the Department of Telecommunications.



CCI vs WhatsApp: The Data Privacy Battle



In a major digital privacy and antitrust case, WhatsApp and Meta agreed to follow CCI directions granting Indian users greater control over data sharing across Meta platforms. The Supreme Court continues hearing appeals against a ₹213.14 crore penalty and warned against “compelled consent” and “data theft,” calling forced data-sharing an abuse of dominance.

- [RBI Probes UPI Autopay Flaws, Raises Digital Trust Concerns](#)
Simar Singh, Whalesbook, February 20, 2026
- [NPCI Widens 'UPI One World' Access for Global Visitors](#)
The Hindu, February 17, 2026
- [SEBI Targets Lower Regulatory Costs, Market Impact Review](#)
Angel One, February 13, 2026
- [Probe Ordered into IndiGo Over Alleged Unfair Business Practices](#)
Times of India, February 05, 2026



New Delhi Declaration Targets 50% Cut in Road Fatalities by 2030

The New Delhi Road Safety Declaration was released at the National Road Safety Confluence held at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. Aligned with the WHO Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021-2030), the Declaration commits stakeholders to measurable, accountable action to reduce road deaths and serious injuries by at least 50 percent by 2030, with a long-term goal of achieving zero preventable road fatalities in India.



'My Village, Healthy Village' for Rural Healthcare Transformation



The Maharashtra government has approved a unique campaign titled, "My Village, Healthy Village," designed to empower rural health services and foster disease-free, self-sufficient communities. The initiative would be implemented annually across the state. A budget of approximately ₹80 crore has been approved for the implementation of this campaign.

- [RTI Amendment Petitions: Privacy and Transparency Concerns](#)
The Hindu, February 20, 2026
- [Front-of-Pack Labels to Boost Consumer Awareness](#)
Business Standard, February 16, 2026
- [CSR Spending in India Hits ₹34,909 Cr in FY24](#)
Business World, February 07, 2026
- [Encouraging Farmers to Boost Edible Oil Production](#)
Deccan Chronicle, February 06, 2026

Event

- [AI Impact Summit 2026](#)
February 16-20, 2026

Media

- [Where there's a will, there's a way: We need urgent reforms to speed up justice](#)
Livemint, February 24, 2026
By Pradeep S Mehta

Pradeep S. Mehta Appointed Professor in Practice at JECRC University

Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General of CUTS International, has been appointed Professor in Practice at the School of Humanities & Social Sciences, JECRC University. He will bring his expertise in public policy, regulation, and fair trade to mentoring students, promoting policy dialogue, and supporting applied research, strengthening industry–academia collaboration.