

India can become one of the world’s most consequential AI environments: Wipro

NEW DELHI, FEB 19: India has the opportunity to become one of the world’s most consequential environments for AI application but the country’s advantage will be defined by the choices it makes regarding where to apply, diffuse and responsibly deploy the new wave of technology to translate capability into real impact, Wipro Ltd Executive Chairman, Rishad Premji said on Thursday.

AI is once in a generation a technology that emerges which doesn’t just change “what we do, it truly changes what we must do”, he said while speaking at the AI Impact Summit.

“How we as a country, how India responds in the next few years, will shape not just our own economic trajectory, but our ability to solve problems that matter to over a billion people,” Premji asserted.

Stating that the conversation on AI has fundamentally shifted from possibility to practicality, from experimentation to adoption, and from pilots to scale impact, he said this shift matters tremendously, because technology creates value only when it is applied to solve real-world problems, responsibly and at scale.

“It means India has the opportunity to become one of the world’s most consequential environments for the application of AI, not just as a builder of the technology, but as a place where AI is tested against real-world complexity and made to work at scale,” Premji asserted.

As we look ahead, he said, “India’s advantage in AI will not be defined only by the size of our models or the scale of our infrastructure. It will be defined by the choices we make, about where we apply AI, how we diffuse it, how responsibly it is deployed and whether we can translate capability into real impact for



governments, citizens and enterprises.”

India’s advantage will come from developing talent at scale, not just people trained on AI, but people who can apply it with context, judgement and an ability to adapt to change, he added.

Citing India’s strengths why it is well-placed today to take advantage of AI, Premji cited the example of the success of UPI payments which has been adopted at mass scale.

“India also has one of the largest and fastest-growing pools of AI talent in the world. We are truly the AI and talent destination of the world. Approximately 6.5 lakh professionals in India work in AI-related roles today, and this number will double by 2027,” he noted.

Citing government initiatives to train 10 million young people in AI, along with industry partnerships with universities which are expanding access to practical, job-ready training, he said many of the foundations to build out talent are already in place.

Stating that people are giving opportunities as apprenticeships to get exposure to real-world applications, he

said, “This capability is reinforced by a vibrant innovation ecosystem. India is home, as many of us know, to the world’s third-largest technology startup base, including more than 4,000 startups in the deep tech and AI space.”

India’s advantage will come from developing talent at scale, not just people trained on AI, but people who can apply it with context, judgement and an ability to adapt to change, Premji noted.

“That is why AI fluency must extend beyond engineers, to teachers, to nurses, to administrators, to supervisors, to small business owners, among everyone else. The dividing line will not be human versus machine, it will truly be between those who adapt and those who hesitate to adapt,” he added.

Noting that technology shifts inevitably create uncertainty, but for countries that act decisively, they also create opportunity, he said, “India has embraced such shifts in the past and I believe we are really well positioned to do so again.”

Citing the example of pioneering work done by Azeem Premji Foundation on early

detection of tuberculosis using AI in a rural community in Tamil Nadu, he said it enabled early screening and faster referral, without requiring patients to travel.

“If successful, this approach can help detect TB earlier and extend the reach of healthcare into communities that need it most,” Premji said, it can help the country overcome the challenges of shortages of doctors in India, which has a national doctor-to-population ratio of roughly 1:800

“AI does not replace care, it multiplies scarce expertise infinitely.

The same last-mile challenges exist across other countries, in continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America, home to more than 4 billion people,” he added.

Solutions that work here, in India, at scale, low-cost, multilingual and resilient, can travel far beyond its own borders, Premji said, adding “If we can do that, India’s contribution can be vast, not just in building AI, but in applying it to solve problems for enterprises, for our own country and for the world at large, thoughtfully, inclusively and with impact, at scale.” (PTI)

Markets turn volatile after firm start; services, consumer durables stocks drag

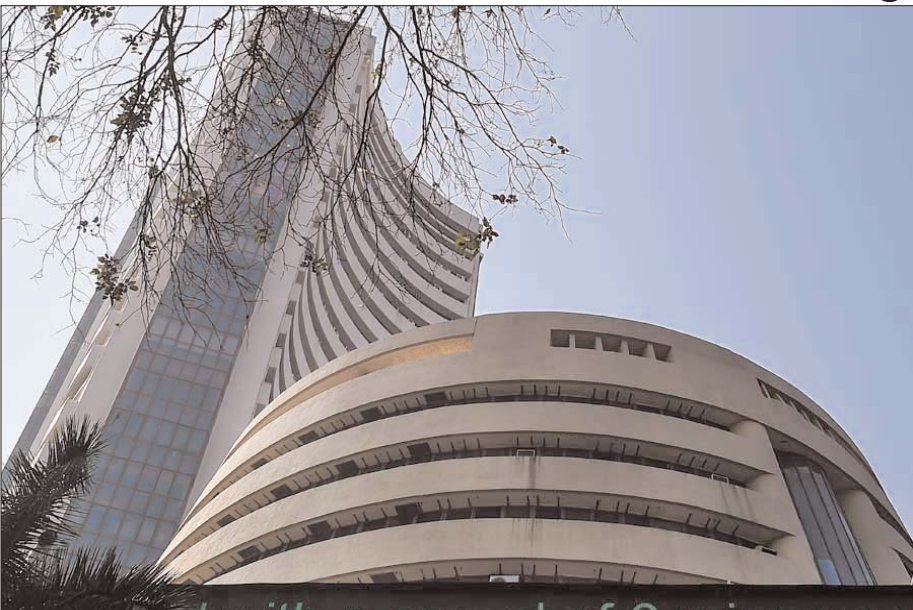
MUMBAI, FEB 19: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty began the trade on a positive note on Thursday but soon turned in the negative territory, amid selling pressure in services and consumer durables stocks.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 245.11 points, or 0.29 per cent, to 83,979.36 in early deals. The NSE Nifty went up 65.95 points, or 0.25 per cent, to 25,885.30.

However, both the benchmark indices soon pared early gains, with the Sensex quoting 131.07 points lower at 83,603.18, and the Nifty down 30.70 points at 25,788.65.

Among the Sensex constituents, IndiGo, Asian Paints, Adani Ports, Bharat Electronics Ltd, ITC, Trent, Larsen & Toubro, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank, PowerGrid, Reliance Industries, and Bajaj Finance were the laggards.

On the other hand, Infosys, HCL Technologies,



Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, Maruti Suzuki India, Hindustan Unilever, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel and NTPC were trading in the green territory.

In Asian markets, South Korea’s Kospi jumped 3 per cent, and Japan’s Nikkei 225 index gained nearly 1 per cent. Markets in Hong Kong

and mainland China remained closed for Lunar New Year holidays.

The US equities market closed higher in overnight deals on Wednesday.

Foreign institutional investors bought equities worth Rs 1,154.34 crore on Wednesday, while domestic institutional investors were also the net buyers of stocks

worth Rs 440.34 crore, according to exchange data.

Brent Crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.37 per cent to USD 70.61 per barrel.

On Wednesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 283.29 points to settle at 83,734.25, while the broader NSE Nifty gained 93.95 points to close at 25,819.35.

Embraer, Mahindra Grp plan to set up MRO facility for C-390 Millennium aircraft in India

MUMBAI, FEB 19: Brazilian aircraft maker Embraer on Thursday announced its plans to establish a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility in India, in collaboration with Mahindra Group, for C-390 Millennium aircraft after its selection in the Indian Air Force’s Medium Transport Aircraft (MTA) programme.

The proposed MRO facility, as part of its localisation strategy in the domestic market, will provide comprehensive maintenance and sustainment for the C-390 fleet, supporting high levels of operational readiness and availability, Embraer said in a statement.

The proposed facility is expected to deliver a full spectrum of services, including base and heavy maintenance, structural inspections and testing, component repair and overhaul, avionics support, and training, it added.

The initiative reinforces the companies’ joint commitment to positioning the C-390 Millennium as a strong solution for India’s future medium transport aircraft requirements.

Embaer and Mahindra Group had last October inked a strategic partnership to produce the C-390 Mil-



lennium multi-mission military transport aircraft in India.

This collaboration aims to support the Indian Air Force’s Medium Transport Aircraft (MTA) programme, with plans to establish local manufacturing, strengthening the ‘Make in India’ initiative, Embraer said.

“Embraer is committed to delivering not only a world-class aircraft but also a robust, long-term support ecosystem tailored to India’s operational and industrial requirements,” said Bosco da Costa Junior, President and CEO of Embraer Defence & Security.

The C-390 Millennium is the most modern military transport aircraft in its class, offering a payload capacity of up to 26 tonnes and higher speed and range

compared to other medium-sized military transport aircraft.

It is capable of performing a wide range of missions, including cargo and troop transport, airdrop operations, medical evacuation, search and rescue, firefighting, and humanitarian missions, the Brazilian aircraft maker said.

The aircraft can operate from temporary or unpaved runways and may be configured for air-to-air refuelling, both as a tanker and as a receiver, it said, adding that the in-service fleet has demonstrated a mission completion rate above 99 per cent, highlighting its productivity and reliability.

“A state-of-the-art C-390 Millennium MRO capability in India would ensure high aircraft availability, en-

hanced operational autonomy and a comprehensive local sustainment solution for the Indian Air Force throughout the aircraft’s lifecycle,” said Vinod Sahay, Member of the Group Executive Board, Mahindra Group.

While the primary objective of the MRO is to support the Indian Air Force fleet, Embraer said it is also evaluating the potential for India to serve as a regional MRO hub, providing sustainment services for other C-390 Millennium operators in the future.

“Embraer and Mahindra intend to expand collaboration with Indian Aerospace companies to drive higher localisation of C-390 Millennium and also to support MRO activities, reinforcing our commitment to the Government of India’s ‘Make in India’ initiative and the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat,” said Carlos Naufel, President and CEO of Embraer Services & Support.

“In addition to fleet support, this new facility could create high-skill employment and further contribute to the integration of Indian companies into Embraer’s global supply chain,” he added.

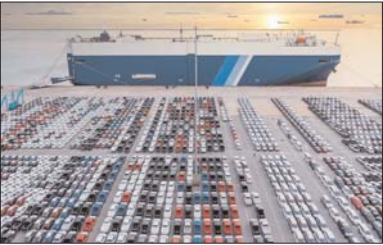
Sri Lanka vehicle imports increase with surge in Indian imports

COLOMBO, FEB 19: New vehicle registrations in Sri Lanka increased to 55,000 in January, up from 48,000 in December with imports from India seeing a 15 per cent surge, analysts JB Securities said on Thursday.

Indian-origin imports surged to 30,766 units in January, up from 26,631 units in December.

Two-wheelers accounted for the bulk of new vehicle registrations at 24,163 units, followed by three-wheelers (3,441 units), SUVs (2,100 units), and trucks (237 units), a release by JB Securities said.

Car registrations, however, declined month-on-month,



falling to 4,648 units in January from 5,007 units in December.

Three-wheeler registrations increased to 3,448 units from 3,007 units the previous month.

India’s Bajaj remained the undisputed market leader with 2,852 units, followed by TVS with 400 units.

Electric three-wheelers remained marginal, with just

29 units registered. The Chinese BYD car registrations declined to 758 units in January, from 850 units in December.

BYD became the top seller after Sri Lanka lifted car imports restrictions in early 2025.

BAW, a relatively new Chinese EV entrant, led the segment with 154 units, driven almost entirely by the E7 (151 units) – a small, low-cost model positioning itself as a potential challenger to the Maruti Alto.

During the month, there were notable high-end registrations including: one May-

bach GLS, one Porsche Macan, one Porsche Panamera, one Bentley Bentayga (SUV), three Bentley Flying Spur sedans, one Rolls-Royce Phantom EWB, two Ferrari 296 GTBs, one Lamborghini Urus (SUV), one Lamborghini Huracan (supercar).

“Owners of these ultra-luxury vehicles are making a disproportionately large fiscal contribution, paying close to 200 per cent in cumulative taxes on these imports,” it said.

This segment provides meaningful revenue support to the public finances, despite representing negligible volumes. (PTI)

NHRC Flags Misuse Of Its Name, Logo By NGOs; Directs Authorities To Take Action

NEW DELHI, FEB 19: The NHRC on Thursday said it has taken cognisance of “misuse of its name and logo” by some NGOs registered under nomenclatures which are “deceptively similar” to it, and issued notices to authorities in all states and UTs to take action within two weeks.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), in a statement, observed that continuation of such “illusory names may erode public trust, lead to misuse of mandate, possible misappropriation of funds and create confusion for public authorities” in distinguishing between a statutory body like the NHRC and NGOs. The rights panel said it had earlier expressed concern through various platforms regarding the “misuse of its name and logo” and informed authorities concerned to take action against the people behind such “du-

bious organisations”.

However, violations continue to come to its notice, the statement said.

The NHRC said it has been receiving complaints from individual complainants as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) across the country alleging violation of human rights.

“While examining these complaints, the Commission has observed that several NGOs have got themselves registered under names deceptively similar to that of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC),” the statement said.

Recently, the Commission came across an NGO registered as ‘National Human Rights Council (NHRC)’, reportedly registered with the government of Delhi in 2022. Its publicity material claims, “Registered by Govt. of NITI Aayog”, “Registered by Ministry of Corporate Affairs, India”, “Registered un-

der Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India” and association with “Andhra Pradesh Human Rights Council Association”, the statement said.

A visiting card apparently related to the said organisation also bears the inscription ‘Venkatesh, State Chairman, Karnataka,’ it said.

Considering the gravity of the matter, it has taken suo motu cognisance of the matter.

It has observed that the name adopted and the designation ‘Chairman’ is “misleading and creates confusion”, the statement said.

“Deceptive nomenclature misleads the public into believing that these organisations are either part of the National Human Rights Commission or recognised/authorised by it to deal with human rights issues,” the NHRC flagged. Therefore, the Commission has issued notices to the chief

secretaries and director generals of police of all the states and UTs to “identify such NGOs individuals misusing the name of the NHRC or using names deceptively similar to it, and to take immediate legal action within two weeks, including cancellation of registrations obtained in violation of norms,” it said.

They have also been asked to sensitise registering authorities to remain vigilant and take necessary action against defaulters.

“Additionally, in the instant matter of National Human Rights Council (NHRC), the chief secretary and the director general of police, Karnataka and the commissioner of police, Delhi have been further directed to submit reports within two weeks regarding the action taken against the NGO, having its office in Karnataka and registered in Delhi,” it said. (Agencies)

Ahead of Modi’s visit, India and Israel sign another MoU deepening defence ties

TEL AVIV, FEB 19: Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Israel later this month, an MoU was signed between India and Israel to deepen defence ties and strengthen ongoing joint activities, including future seminars and cooperative initiatives.

The International Defence Cooperation Directorate (SIBAT) within Israel’s Ministry of Defense (IMOD) have facilitated meetings between leading Indian and Israeli defence industries leading to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

SIBAT in cooperation with the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) and India’s Ministry of Defence led a seminar and B2B meetings this week between leading Indian and Israeli defence companies, the IMOD said.

“The seminar was led by SIBAT Director, Brig. Gen. (Res.) Yair Kulas, and brought together small, medium and large Israeli and Indian defence companies for substantive engagements, with the goal of deepening familiarity with India’s defense industrial ecosystem



and its updated Defense Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2026” India’s national defense procurement policy,” a statement from the IMOD said. “The event featured representatives from 30 Indian and 26 Israeli defence companies,” it said.

The Indian delegation was led by Ramesh K, Director General of SIDM, and included J P Singh, Ambassador of India to Israel, and Gp Capt. Vijay Patil, Defence Attache of India to Israel.

“Both sides expressed their

commitment to advancing the bilateral dialogue and emphasised the importance of continued cooperation between two defence industries that have stood shoulder to shoulder in times of crisis,” the statement said.

The IMOD said that the strategic seminar advances the strategic vision of Israel Ministry of Defence Director General Maj Gen (Res.) Amir Baram to broaden Israel’s defence exports and deepen strategic partnerships with key countries.

The event follows the Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting held in November last year when the two sides inked a landmark agreement to enhance defence, industrial and technological cooperation, enabling sharing of advanced technology to promote co-development and co-production.

Modi would arrive on February 25 on a two-day visit to Israel. He is likely to touch upon all issues of bilateral and regional interest during his meetings. (PTI)