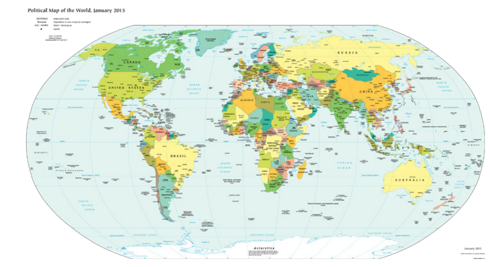
Ports are Tamil Nadu's biggest advantage

Chennai must seize the silver lining in Trump's trade storm



-: Trinity Mirror Online Team :-

The 50% US tariffs slapped on a large swathe of Indian exports—a move that hit our shores on August 27, 2025—have sent ripples of genuine distress across India, and nowhere is the impact felt more acutely than here in South India. Yet, amidst the immediate crisis, there is a profound truth to be acknowledged: this shock, though painful, can be the catalyst for a stronger, more resilient India, one better integrated with its own neighbourhood. The trade war, however unwelcome, is forcing us to build the "bridges between regions" that the global trade order has long discouraged.

The Immediate Damage in Tamil Nadu

For Chennai and its hinterland, the blow has been direct and severe. Our region is a hub for the very labour-intensive sectors that have been targeted, including leather, textiles, and marine products.

* Leather and Footwear: The Ambur-Ranipet belt, a major industrial cluster for leather and tanning, is reeling. Reports indicate that over 50 of the 300-odd factories in Ambur have been forced to shut down. With cumulative duties now potentially soaring above 60% for US-bound goods, our products are rendered uncompetitive against rivals like Bangladesh and Vietnam, whose tariffs are lower.

The resulting job losses, particularly for the large female workforce, are a major humanitarian and economic concern.

* Textiles and Garments: Tamil Nadu's textile sector, including the Tirupur cluster, faces the steepest projected export losses—estimated at around Rs. 14,280 crore (approximately $1.62 billion).

Given that the US accounts for nearly one-third of Tamil Nadu's total exports, this tariff hike is magnified, leading to estimates of potential job losses ranging from 13% to 36% across various industries.

The immediate imperative for our policymakers, both in Fort St. George and New Delhi, must be crisis management: providing immediate liquidity support, interest equalisation, and a comprehensive package to prevent factory closures and widespread unemployment.

The Great Diversification: Asia as Our New Market

While the US market contracts under protectionist policy, the blessing of the tariff move is its relentless pressure on India to abandon its over-reliance on a single, increasingly erratic market. This is where the visionary statement—"it's spurring regional integration, and it's spurring bridges between regions"—must become our new policy mantra.

Our path to continued value-added growth now lies unequivocally with Asia and emerging markets. The government's proactive push for Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) is a heartening sign.

Digital world sees big potential

Data Centres hub

Chennai is rapidly solidifying its position as a major Data Centre Hub in South Asia, leveraging its unique geographical and infrastructural strengths. As a landing point for multiple international sub sea cables (it has the second-highest number in India), it offers low-latency and high-bandwidth connectivity essential for cloud, AI, and digital streaming services. Current capacity (around 108–113 MW in June 2024) is projected to double by 2026, driven by significant investment from hyperscalers. Favorable government policies, a strong IT talent pool, and cost-effective setup further enhance its appeal, positioning Chennai to become a core node for India's $1 Trillion digital economy vision.

A data center is a physical facility that houses computing infrastructure like servers, storage, and networking equipment to store, process, and manage data. These facilities are essential for powering everything from business applications and cloud services to AI and online gaming. Key components include servers, storage systems, routers, and firewalls, supported by robust power, cooling, and security systems.

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* ASEAN and East Asia: India's merchandise exports to partners like Hong Kong and South Korea have shown promising growth even amidst global headwinds, signaling untapped potential. Hong Kong, often seen as a gateway to China, could become a major re-export hub for our goods. We must strategically leverage this momentum by deepening trade and investment ties with ASEAN nations, Japan, and Korea, focusing on supply chain integration, especially in electronics and engineering goods.

* The Global South: The energetic push to expand the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with MERCOSUR (Brazil, Argentina, etc.) is a masterstroke of geopolitical economics. Targeting a bilateral trade goal of $20 billion with Brazil by 2030, this move secures new, stable markets for Indian goods and positions us as a central node in the rising Global South trade architecture.

Policy Directives for Chennai's Future

To truly "not let the tariff crisis go to waste" (as is rightly suggested in some economic commentary), our local and central governments must execute a strategic two-pronged plan focused on diversification and domestic strengthening.

* Port-to-Production Strategy:

Chennai and Ennore ports must evolve into a South Asian gateway. The state must invest heavily in logistics and connectivity to turn them into efficient export-import hubs for new Asian and African trade routes, reducing the reliance on Western shipping lanes.

* Product Upgradation: The tariffs hit labour-intensive sectors hardest because they are easily substituted. We must urgently shift our focus to higher-value, non-substitutable goods. This means accelerated implementation of Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes for non-exempt sectors like advanced textiles and specialty chemicals, and increasing the value addition in our marine products, moving beyond raw shrimp exports.

* MSME Rescue and Reorientation: The brunt of the crisis is borne by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The government must introduce subsidised credit and a fast-track market access initiative specifically for MSMEs to help them reorient their supply chains from the US to new FTA partners. This is crucial for protecting the jobs of millions of low-skilled workers.

Donald Trump's protectionism is fundamentally shaking the post-World War II global trade consensus. For too long, developing Asia has been content to operate within the framework of a US-dominated order. Now, we are being rudely awakened. This unwelcome shock should not be seen as a retreat, but as a mandate for re-alignment. By aggressively pursuing deeper ties with our Asian neighbours and the Global South, we can temper the immediate pain and emerge not just resilient, but as a more self-reliant and structurally stronger economic power—a true leader in the emerging multi-polar world.

Deepavali: time for inner awakening, fortune abundance

As the nation prepares to celebrate Deepavali , a profound message rings true for devotees this year: the Festival of Lights is not merely a time for material celebration, but a potent, four-day window for unparalleled spiritual and financial blessings, says yotida Kalaamani Sri Vengada Sarma, an Upasaka of Sri Maha Prathyangira.

This year's Deepavali holds an extraordinary significance, marked by unique and exceptionally powerful planetary alignments. The period from Sunday, October 19, to Wednesday, October 22, 2025, is being hailed by spiritual leaders as a rare, highly charged 'Mantra-Kala'—a sacred time when prayers and rituals are amplified manifold.

This year, the divine energies are so strong that dedicated prayers, particularly those invoking Lord Ganesha and Goddess Mahalakshmi, will yield blessings that are "many times stronger and permanently effective."

A special emphasis is placed on the potent influences of Rahu and Ketu, whose full grace is promised through sincere devotion during this time. The spiritual counsel suggests that the collective power of these four days will secure immense, lasting prosperity and protection for the entire year.

Devotees are strongly advised to perform their prayers, light lamps, and chant mantras during the specified, powerful 'Muhurta' (auspicious time-slots) aligned with their respective zodiac signs to maximize fortune, victory, and wealth attraction.This powerful spiritual window from October 19 to October 22, 2025, is governed by unique celestial geometry, making the timing of rituals exceptionally important for maximizing wealth and success. Devotees are encouraged to perform their prayers, light lamps, and chant mantras during the specific 'Muhurtas' (auspicious time-slots) aligned with their zodiac signs for amplified fortune and divine grace. For Aries, the key times are the Rudra Muhurta (6:00 AM to 6:48 AM) and Agni Muhurta (10:48 PM to 11:36 PM). Taurus benefits most from the Aahi Muhurta (6:48 AM to 7:36 AM) and Vishnu Muhurta (2:48 AM to 3:36 AM). Gemini and Cancer share the highly potent Brahma Muhurta (4:24 AM to 5:12 AM), with their primary day slots being Mitra Muhurta

(7:36 AM to 8:24 AM) and Pitru Muhurta (8:24 AM to 9:12 AM) respectively. For Leo, blessings are strongest during the Vasu Muhurta (9:12 AM to 10:00 AM) and Agni Muhurta (6:00 AM to 6:48 AM). Virgo should focus on the Varaha Muhurta (10:00 AM to 11:00 AM) and Mitra Muhurta (7:36 AM to 8:24 AM). Libra has the favorable Viswadeva Muhurta (10:48 AM to 11:36 AM) and Aahi Muhurta (6:48 AM to 7:36 AM). Scorpio's key times are the Sudha Mukhi Muhurta (12:24 PM to 1:12 PM) and Rudra Muhurta (6:00 AM to 6:48 AM). Sagittarius can seek blessings during the Vahini Muhurta (2:00 PM to 2:48 PM) and Brahma Muhurta (4:24 AM to 5:12 AM). Capricorn is guided by the Nathkanakara Muhurta (2:48 PM to 3:36 PM) and Samukra Muhurta (5:12 AM to 6:00 AM). Aquarius benefits from the Varuna Muhurta (3:36 PM to 4:24 PM), and finally, Pisces shares the Brahma Muhurta (4:24 AM to 5:12 AM) along with the evening Ahirbudhinya Muhurta (7:36 PM to 8:24 PM). Engaging in spiritual practices during these precise astrological windows ensures the acquisition of prosperity and the enduring grace of Rahu and Ketu throughout the year.

Pathways to Divine Grace:

Beyond the specific worship times, the following actions are highly recommended to secure the maximum blessings of Deepavali:

Charity for Prosperity: During the day, offer auspicious items like red banana, tender coconut, jaggery, jackfruit, pineapple, and Brahmi leaves to a cow, believing it will bring about miraculous transformations.

Worship of Sacred Trees: If direct charity is not possible, pour water mixed with sugarcane sugar and turmeric powder at the base of sacred trees: the Peepal (Aarasam), Banyan (Aalam), Vanni, Bilwa, and Magizham trees.

Parental Blessings: The most accessible and potent ritual is to revere one's parents. Anoint their feet with civet paste and Kumkum, touch their feet, and prostrate. While doing so, remember the name of your paternal grandfather and pour out your heart's desires and troubles to him, coupled with lighting incense and a lamp at home.

This message by Jyotida Kalaamani Sri Vengada Sarma, an Upasaka of Sri Maha Prathyangira, encourages all to embrace the spiritual depth of the four golden days of Deepavali, using this period to usher in a year of unshakeable prosperity, victory, and divine grace. He concludes with, "A Joyous and Blessed Deepavali to All."

World Spine Day: Gurgaon Surgeons Highlight Advancements in Spine Surgery

Madurai, Oct 18: On the occasion of World Spine Day, leading spine surgeons from Gurgaon & Noida are coming together to spotlight the latest advancements in spine surgery, emphasizing how technology is transforming patient care and surgical outcomes.

With the theme "Advancements in Spine Surgery," the expert panel will discuss how innovations such as robotic-assisted and minimally invasive procedures are shaping the future of spine care. These cutting-edge techniques combine the precision of modern technology with the expertise of highly trained surgeons, resulting in safer surgeries, reduced complications, and quicker recovery times for patients.

"Recent advancements in spine surgery, especially the adoption of robotics and advanced navigation, are making procedures more accurate and less invasive," said one of the participating surgeons. "This means less pain, shorter hospital stays, and a faster return to daily life for many patients."

The panel will also address the importance of individualized treatment plans and patient education, ensuring that every patient receives care tailored to their unique condition. While these technological advancements are improving outcomes, the experts caution that not every patient may be a candidate for such procedures and that a thorough evaluation is essential.

The event aims to raise awareness about the signs and symptoms of spinal disorders, the importance of early diagnosis, and the availability of modern treatment options. The surgeons will also share anonymized patient stories to illustrate the positive impact of these innovations.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to promote spine health and empower patients with knowledge about the latest medical developments.

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