JODHPUR GETS ₹480-CRORE NEW AIRPORT TERMINAL

Modi launches ₹29,000-cr revamped UDAN scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Jodhpur, July 4


PM Narendra Modi with Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu in Jodhpur, on Saturday PTI

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi on Saturday launched the next phase of the Centre's flagship regional connectivity scheme, UDAN, and inaugurated a new terminal building at Jodhpur airport, marking a major push to expand aviation infrastructure and improve air connectivity across India.

The revamped UDAN (*Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik*) scheme, approved by the Union Cabinet earlier this year, entails an outlay of nearly ₹29,000 crore over the next 10 years and aims to connect more underserved regions while strengthening last-mile air connectivity.

Addressing the event, Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu said the scheme would accelerate aviation-led development and transform regional connectivity by expanding infrastructure and making air travel more accessible and affordable.

PM also inaugurated the new terminal building at Jodhpur airport, developed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) at a cost of ₹480 crore, significantly enhancing the airport's passenger handling capacity.

'Diplomatic ties helped tackle energy crisis'

ASSERTING THAT THE country implemented "visionary policies" during the recent fuel shortages amid the West Asia crisis, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that India did not merely recover from the unexpected challenge but positively used its "diplomatic power" to recover from the crisis.

Speaking after the inauguration of refinery-cum-petrochemical complex in Balotra, the PM added that the ruling party's success in implementing visionary policies for a decade "played a crucial role".

"This is all unprecedented. India has made the right decisions at every level. Accurately assessed the crisis in time. Devised an effective strategy. Made balanced use of India's resources. India made positive use of its diplomatic power. And only then has India been able to recover from the crisis," PM said on fuel shortages.

PM Modi stated that the Congress government from 2018 to 2023 did not cooperate, and the work remained at a standstill.

"Today I'm inaugurating the refinery project here. We signed the MoU in 2017, but the then Congress government from 2018 to 2023 did not cooperate and the work remained at a standstill. The country did not recover from such an unexpected challenge merely by chance. The success of the visionary policies we have been implementing for a decade played a crucial role. You are well aware of my style of functioning: we are the ones who also inaugurate the projects for which we laid the foundation stone," Modi said on fuel shortages amid the West Asia crisis. —ANI

India-Israel bilateral investment pact comes into effect

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, July 4

THE INDIA-ISRAEL Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA), which will ensure a secure and predictable investment climate between the two countries, came into force from Saturday, the finance ministry said.

The pact, which will provide protection to the two-way investments, is expected to contribute to increased cross-border investment activity, it said. The two countries inked the treaty on September 8 last year.

"The BIA between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the State of Israel enters into force with effect from today, 04 July 2026," the ministry said.

Under the pact, India has cut down the local remedies exhaustion period for Israeli investors to three years.

Local remedies exhaustion means that investors must first try to resolve their disputes using the legal system of the host country before they can take the matter to international arbitration.

India-Canada FTA within six months, hints Goyal

FE BUREAU
New Delhi, July 4


Piyush Goyal at a toy expo in New Delhi on Saturday ANI

A TEAM OF negotiators will be in Canada next week for the third round of talks on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with both sides aiming to complete the negotiations in the next six months, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said Saturday.

The first round of talks on the agreement were held in March after finalisation of the Terms of Reference. The second round happened in May. In May Goyal visited Canada with a big business delegation. During that visit he had met Prime Minister Mark Carney, Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu and foreign minister Anita Anand to give a push to the process.

Speaking on the sidelines of 17th Toy Biz International B2B Exhibition, Goyal said he will be visiting Brussels along with EAM S Jaishankar and Minister of Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw for India-European Union Trade and Technology Council meeting.

India-Peru FTA not soon

Goyal said that the war in Asia has slowed down negotiations on the FTA with Israel while with Peru the process has been delayed due to the demand for concessions on some products from the other side.

"There are certain concerns. There are many products where we cannot offer them market access. I do not see the Peru FTA happening very soon," Goyal said. He said that manufacturers should immediately send delegations to explore opportunities in the UK market as the FTA with UK is becoming operational from July 15.

Origin of goods under UK trade pact defined

THE FINANCE MINISTRY has notified the rules for determination of origin of goods under the India-UK CETA, which will come into force from July 15, as per a notification. A certificate of origin is a key document required for exports to avail duty benefits under India's trade agreements with partner countries.

The CBIC, in a notification, said entities authorised by the two countries are permitted to issue these certificates in their respective countries.

"While the agreement offers significant tariff advantages, these benefits will now be available only to goods that genuinely satisfy the prescribed origin criteria. The framework strengthens the integrity of the FTA by preventing misuse through third-country routing" said Rajat Mohan, managing partner, AMRG Global. —PTI

No evidence of E20-related vehicle issues at dealerships, OEMs: ARAI

GEETA NAIR
Pune, July 4

THE AUTOMOTIVE ORIGINAL Equipment Manufacturers (ARAI) have reported no complaints at their dealerships regarding vehicles powered by E20 blended fuel. The ARAI convened a meeting with OEMs to discuss the growing concerns surrounding E20 fuels and customer complaints about their potential adverse effects on engine performance, particularly for two- and four-wheelers.

However, ARAI director Reji Mathai noted that participating OEMs were unable to respond meaningfully because their dealerships had not seen problems from vehicles using E20 fuel.

Mathai urged that OEMs must proactively address consumer concerns by clarifying the performance of their vehicles with respect to E20 blended fuel. He urged OEMs to speak clearly on the matter.

THE FUEL SAGA

- ARAI director urged that OEMs must address consumer concerns by clarifying performance of their vehicles with respect to E20 blended fuel
- He hinted various groups working against India's ethanol-fuel blending programme
- ARAI asserted that the E20 policy has conducted testing to ensure there is no adverse impact on engine life

Additionally, Mathai hinted at various interest groups that may be working against India's ethanol-fuel blending programme, suggesting that the oil lobby may oppose increasing blending levels. He stated that India's combination of BS VI emissions standards and E20 fuel is viewed as a successful global benchmark.

ARAI defended the policy on E20 fuel, asserting that it, along with OEMs and oil marketing companies (OMCs), has conducted rigorous testing and validation of the vehicles to ensure there is no adverse impact on engine life. Mathai also acknowledged a 2-6% reduction in fuel economy, and explained that this information has always been transparent. While there may be minor deterioration in older vehicles, it is part of normal wear and tear.

The E20 fuel has undergone extensive testing for durability, performance, and reliability under various operating conditions, assessing its impact on critical vehicle systems, including the engine, fuel lines, and other components. As a result of these tests, OEMs made some adjustments to components and materials.

In 2022, ARAI conducted tests on vehicles aged 8-10 years, including BS III two-wheelers, BS IV four-wheelers, and newer BS VI vehicles. OEMs also performed multiple tests, evaluating vehicles over distances of 40,000 to 60,000 km under both field and laboratory conditions.

No adverse effects were observed in vehicles using blended fuels, and OEMs expressed satisfaction with the findings, supporting the E20 blending policy.

The E20 blending programme was launched in September 2023 and will be implemented nationwide by April 2025, with oil marketing companies moving the launch date up by a year.

'Bullet train project 80% done'

UNION RAILWAY MINISTER Ashwini Vaishnaw on Saturday said the first section of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train project will be inaugurated in 2027, adding that nearly 80% of the project has been completed.

While speaking to the media on sidelines of the Commencement of Commercial Production event at CG Semi's OSAT Facility, scheduled to be held today in Sanand, Gujarat, Vaishnaw said work on the country's first bullet train corridor was progressing rapidly and the remaining sections would be opened in phases.

"The first section of the Bullet Train from Surat to Bilimora will be inaugurated in 2027. Thereafter, the Wapi-Surat section, followed by Wapi-Ahmedabad, Ahmedabad-Thane and finally Ahmedabad-Mumbai will be completed in phases. The work is progressing very fast," he said.

Vaishnaw added that nearly 80% of the work on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train project had been completed and that efforts were underway to complete the project within the stipulated timeline. —ANI

Centre raises procurement price of onion in Maha by 13%

SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, July 4

TO BOOST THE procurement for the buffer, the government on Saturday revised the upward, onion procurement price in Maharashtra by 13% to ₹2,125 per quintal under price stabilisation fund from ₹1,875 per quintal fixed last month.

The procurement for building buffers have been sluggish this season because of lower prices offered to farmers compared to market prices and the Department of Consumer Affairs revised the purchase price for the fourth time this fiscal. The minimum assured procurement price for the vegetable was raised to ₹1,875 per quintal last week. On June 13, prices offered to farmers were increased to ₹1,650 per quintal from ₹1,580 per quintal announced on June 1.