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LPG REFILL BOOKING GAP CUT TO 25 DAYS FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMERS

The Centre has directed oil marketing companies to revise inter-refill booking interval for domestic LPG consumers in rural areas to 25 days

MOVE FOLLOWS DIP IN REFILL BACKLOG

The earlier interval for refill booking for rural consumers was 45 days. Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Suresh Gopi said on Monday that the decision follows an improvement in LPG supply situation and a reduction in refill backlog. He shared a copy of the letter issued by Petroleum Ministry to OMCs to immediately implement the decision

U.S. NOW LARGEST SUPPLIER OF LPG IMPORTS

- Owing to the West Asia situation, LPG was the worst-hit fuel as India imports nearly 60% of its domestic requirement, with around 90% of those imports sourced from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait
- Recently, India significantly diversified its LPG imports, with the United States emerging as the country's largest supplier

63,810

TONNES A DAY IS INDIA'S DAILY LPG PRODUCTION

Defence ministry clears purchases worth ₹1.1 lakh cr

Forces to get advanced choppers, radars; Su-30MKI fighter jets to get major upgrade

JAVARIA RANA @ New Delhi

THE defence ministry on Monday cleared military hardware purchases worth ₹1.1 lakh crore for the Army, Navy and Air Force. Approximately 98% of the procurement by value will come from Indian industry.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh gave the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN), or in-principle administrative approvals, for the defence acquisitions.

For the Air Force, the DAC cleared "various proposals to enhance the war-fighting capability of fighters, transports and helicopters". Sources said these include the overhaul of 40 Su-30MKIs by Hindustan Aeronautics, twice the number the PSU had earlier proposed. IAF operates around 260 Su-30MKIs, its mainstay fighter fleet. The DAC had earlier cleared the overhaul of Su-30 aero-engine aggregates.

The approval seeks to address a gap in the IAF's long-range beyond-visual-range capability, with Operation Sindoor underscoring the requirement. The overhaul covers modifications to allow the Sukhois to fire the RVV-BD, the export version of Russia's R-37M missile. Weighing 510 kg and carrying a 60 kg warhead, the missile has a range of 200 km and is designed to engage AWACS aircraft, aerial refuellers and other high-value airborne assets.

For the Navy, the DAC cleared the design, development and subsequent procurement of a marine gas turbine in the 24-28 MW class, with the ministry saying the propulsion system "will reduce dependency on foreign vendors". India currently imports turbines for several frontline destroyers and frigates.

The Navy will also get Arudhra radars, which "will replace the existing Air Route Surveillance Radars at various Naval Air Stations". Developed by the DRDO, Arudhra is a four-dimensional active phased-array radar with an instrumented range of 400 km which is able to detect a two-square-metre target at up to 300 km.

The Army stands to get more HAL-built advanced light helicopters, or Dhruv, to "execute complex missions across all terrains and operational situations".

A ₹8,073 crore deal for 34 ALH Mk-III was signed with HAL in March 2024.



DAC accorded Acceptance of Necessity to various acquisition proposals at an estimated cost of ₹1,10,000 cr

Defence ministry

CBRN recce vehicles

The Army is set to get Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear recce vehicles, high mobility vehicles, self-propelled mechanical mine layers, advanced light helicopters, and trawl tanks

Acceptance of Necessity

AoN is the first step in defence acquisition. The process involves tech evaluation, trials as well as negotiations. Big acquisitions will require more govt approvals

Avoid Social Media war: NDA panel to TDP, JSP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Vijayawada

THE NDA Social Media Coordination Committee has appealed to TDP Social Media activists and Jana Sena workers to refrain from making abusive, insulting or provocative comments against leaders and supporters of either party. It stressed the need to protect the unity of the ruling alliance ahead of the local body elections.

In an appeal to TDP social media warriors and Janasainiks, the committee said some people were using the names of Jana Sena activists to make objectionable remarks against Chief Minister and TDP president N Chandrababu

'Strive for decisive win in local polls'

Vijayawada: CM Naidu asked TDP leaders and cadre to intensify grassroots work and secure a decisive win in the local body elections. He stressed unity among alliance partners and countering alleged misinformation campaign by YSRCP | P4



CM Chandrababu Naidu at the TDP Leadership Conclave on Monday | EXPRESS

Naidu, Education Minister Nara Lokesh, their family members and TDP sympathisers.

Similarly, some individuals were allegedly using the TDP's name to target Jana Sena leaders and activists.

The committee cautioned activists of both parties against posting social media content on the YSR Congress Party's alleged 'fake propaganda' relating to the Mega DSC, government policies and administrative issues in a man-

ner that could damage the government's image.

The letter said some activists were posting content out of personal anger and emotion while ignoring party directives. Such posts could send wrong signals to the public

and provide political advantage to the YSRCP, it said.

The committee called upon TDP and Jana Sena activists to avoid daily exchanges of criticism and abuse and instead focus on taking the government's welfare and development programmes to the people.

"At present, we are a united alliance and have to work together for the upcoming local body elections," the letter said, stressing that the focus should be on the common political opponent, the YSRCP, rather than on fighting among alliance partners. The committee also referred to instances involving remarks against NTR by some Janasainiks and retaliatory comments against Chiranjeevi by some TDP workers. P4

MOVING FROM CO-OPERATION TO CO-CREATION

US market open for Indian space startups, says Sergio Gor

PADMINI DHURUVAJ & BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor on Monday said that the American market is open for Indian space startups as the two countries move towards 'co-creation' from 'co-operation' and data-sharing.

Stressing that NASA and ISRO will work together on the Moon Base Programme, he said: "Make no mistake: we are going back to the Moon, and we want India by our side."

Gor said the US-India space relationship is moving towards joint technology development, investment in startups and future space missions. "We are no longer just sharing data; we are co-designing instruments, co-funding startups, and co-authoring the future of human discovery," he said, referring to discussions between the two countries on expanding their civil space partnership.

Pixxel raises \$100 mn

Bengaluru-based planetary-infrastructure company Pixxel on Monday announced the close of its \$100-million Series C funding round, marking the single-largest funding round organised by a space-technology company in India. The round brings Pixxel's total funding to \$195 million

"The American market is open to you. Our investors are watching. Our ecosystems welcome you. We are here to help you make that leap," he said while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the Bengaluru Space Expo.

India's space sector reforms have ignited a commercial awakening. Innovators like Pixxel and GalaxEye are redefining Earth observation. Digantara is leading the way in space situational awareness. Bellatrix is propelling space forward. Pioneers like Skyroot and Agnikul are building next-generation launch capabilities, he said.

He said the US wants to build a direct commercial corridor between American industry and Indian innovators. "The US and India are working together on multiple sectors and at unthinkable working levels."

Gor's remarks come as India seeks to expand the role of private firms in its space programme. The government opened the sector to greater private participation in 2020, and companies have since increasingly entered rocket manufacturing, satellite development and space-based services.



Owner of deadly Delhi hostel held from Rajasthan; 5 officials suspended

IFRAH MUFTI & UDAYAN KISHORE @ New Delhi

A day after seven persons were killed when a multi-storey paying guest accommodation collapsed in Satya Niketan, its alleged owner Hiram Gupta was arrested in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan, on Monday. Meanwhile, the Delhi High Court ordered a one-week audit of PGs and hostels across the city.

Gupta, the 81-year-old retired Indian Air Force Sergeant, was apprehended by Delhi Police teams following a case registered against him for culpable homicide and negligence in maintaining the structure and endangering the safety of others. A lookout notice had also been issued against Gupta.



PG-owner Hiram Gupta (left) with his son after their arrest on Monday | x

Gupta, a long-time resident of Gurugram, allegedly owns several properties and a hardware shop. Police said the collapsed property was registered in the name of his 75-year-old wife, Urmila Gupta, while

Gupta and their 52-year-old son, Mahesh Gupta, were managing and running the premises. Gupta reportedly had electricity connections for two floors of the building in his name, police said. Police also arrested his son and his wife.

Police are now searching for the PG operators and the labour contractor. Their roles in the construction and operation of the premises will be examined and action taken accordingly.

Meanwhile, the MCD suspended five officials of its South Zone, including Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Kumar and four building department officials, with immediate effect, with disciplinary proceedings pending against them.

Vizag teenager races towards F1 dream

NEELIMA EATY @ Visakhapatnam

SIXTEEN-year-old Visakhapatnam racer Bhuvan Bonu is competing in the 2026 Indian Formula 4 Championship with Hyderabad Blackbirds, taking a step closer to his goal of making it to Formula 1. One of the youngest racers from the Telugu states, Bhuvan has already made his mark in national-level single-seater racing.

He enters F4 after securing multiple podium finishes in the JK Tyre and MRF championships, including a victory in the Formula LGB 1300 class. He won both MRF Formula 1600 races in the opening round of the MRF Indian National Racing Challenge at the Madras International Circuit in August.

For Bhuvan's mother, Radhika Bonu, his entry into racing began as just an interest. When he was nine, Bhuvan went to a friend's birthday party in Dallas, where he took part in a fun karting race at K1 Speed in Richardson, Texas. P4



IN A FIRST NATIONAL FILM AWARDS IN GUJARAT

For the first time in its 72-year history, the National Film Awards ceremony will be held outside New Delhi, in Kevadia in Gujarat on September 22 | P7

SC judge shoots off 4th letter to CJI against Rajasthan HC's Justice Sharma

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE internal war in higher judiciary has intensified with Supreme Court's Justice Sandeep Mehta writing his fourth consecutive letter to Chief Justice Surya Kant against Rajasthan High Court's acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma, levelling fresh charges of interfering in an internal judicial enquiry and misconducts.

Quoting CJI Surya Kant's earlier remark that judges should not try to "hit sixes" before retirement, Justice Mehta in his fourth letter on August 30 wrote in a reference, "Justice Sharma seems to be possessed of a licence to hit sixes ever since he took over as Acting Chief Justice."

According to sources in the Supreme Court registry, the said internal judicial enquiry relates to allegations that a

Judicial corruption at HC

In his fourth letter dated August 30, Justice Mehta said he has "material" against Justice Sharma regarding arbitrary rule changes, judicial interference and corruption and administrative breakdown at Rajasthan HC

High Court judicial officer displayed indecent photographs of a lady judicial officer on his phone. A committee was

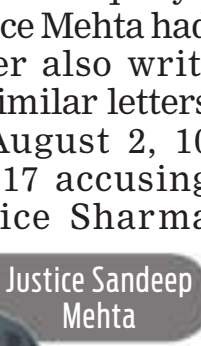
formed, but Justice Sharma allegedly interfered and leaked confidential proceedings. "Justice Sharma has made direct intervention in the enquiry proceedings, hampering the independence of the committee..." Justice Mehta wrote. He alleged

that the committee, comprising three female judges of the Rajasthan High Court, recorded the minutes and refused to proceed with the enquiry.

Justice Mehta had earlier also written similar letters on August 2, 10 and 17 accusing Justice Sharma



Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma



Justice Sandeep Mehta

