



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



READ **SHARE** FOLLOW



newindianexpress.com



facebook.com/
thenewindianexpress



twitter.com/
newindianexpress



instagram.com/newindianexpress

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 upgrades

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

Vijay fires graft salvo; DMK dubs it ‘cinema script’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

CHIEF MINISTER C Joseph Vijay on Monday launched a broadside against the opposition DMK, invoking the Enforcement Directorate (ED) letters and the 50-year-old Sarkaria Commission report to accuse the party of indulging in “scientific corruption” during its stints in power.

Responding to the allegations outside the House, Leader of Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin called the CM's address a “memorised cinema script” that sought to deflect to decades-old issues without responding to his pointed questions on the state's law and order.

In his 45-minute reply to the debate on the demand for grants

‘Politics not excuse to demean women’

In a veiled reference to the recent comments made by Udhayanidhi Stalin in the context of an actor, Vijay said politics could not be an excuse to demean people, particularly women. Law would take its course against those making such remarks, he added | P4

for the Home Department, Vijay targeted DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi, current party chief MK Stalin, and LoP Udhayanidhi Stalin as alleged beneficiaries of corruption, triggering loud protests from DMK members, who later staged a



CM C Joseph Vijay speaks in the Assembly in Chennai on Monday during his reply to the opposition's allegations regarding the home department | EXPRESS

walkout from the Assembly.

Citing ED documents, the CM listed alleged corruption during the DMK regime in the municipal administration department and in Tasmac. ‘Malpractice, fraud, manipulation, abuse of power, and organised

crime syndicate’ were the words used by the ED on graft during the previous DMK regime, the CM said.

Citing the ED report, Vijay alleged that 7.5% to 10% of the project cost of developmental projects was collected as com-

mission in the name of party funds by the DMK leadership. Vijay also targeted “Karur gang” and accused V Ashok Kumar, brother of former minister Senthil Balaji, of orchestrating fraud, manipulating bids, and transferring illicit money linked to state transport department and other contracts.

Speaking to reporters after the DMK staged a walkout from the House, Udhayanidhi called Vijay a “dummy” whose rise to power was an “accident”. Alleging that three CM associates — Vishnu Reddy, Anil Reddy and Suji Reddy — were in full control of the mining activities, Udhaya said he would release evidence supporting his allegations in phases. **FULL REPORTS ON: 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 redefin-

ing 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.

Bypolls on Oct 6 for two seats in TN and one in Puducherry

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai/Puducherry

THE Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday announced bye-elections to the reserved Assembly constituencies of Madurantakam and Dharapuram in TN and Thattachavady constituency in Puducherry on October 6. The TN seats fell vacant after AIADMK MLAs Maragatham Kumaravel and P Sathyabama resigned and subsequently joined the ruling TVK. Puducherry Chief Minister N Rangasamy had resigned as MLA of the Thattachavady constituency in May and retained the Mangalam seat after winning both the constituencies in the April 9 Assembly polls.

The filing of nominations will begin on September 9, with September 16 being the last date. Scrutiny will be held on September 17, and candidates can withdraw their nominations till September 19. Counting will take place on October 9.

Seven Assembly constituencies in TN are currently vacant. A senior ECI official said election petitions are pending in five constituencies — Tiruchy (East), Perundurai, Ambasamudram, Viralmalai, and Karur — and hence bypolls have not been announced there. **P7**

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 | P9



CANDLE LIGHT VIGIL

People light candles and pray during a day of mourning for those killed in the August 26 floods in Kathmandu, Nepal on Monday. The death toll from the devastating flash floods in Nepal surged to 1,356 on Monday as more bodies were recovered from the affected areas. At least 4,994 people remain missing | AP/PTI

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