



Union Minister for Railways, Coal, Finance and Corporate Affairs Piush Goyal chairing the 26th GST Council meeting, in New Delhi on Saturday.

## CAG puts spanner on GE's diesel loco mfg unit in Bihar

**NEW DELHI, JULY 21** /- Putting a spanner on US giant General Electric's diesel locomotives manufacturing unit in Bihar's Marhrowa, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has said that the project was not "in sync with the overall strategic vision of railways". Diesel locomotives procured under this agreement would have no scope for productive utilisation in the Indian Railways network in the future, the CAG said in its report.

In fact, the railways itself had decided to significantly reduce in-house production of diesel locomotives at Varanasi from 2019-20, the report said, adding that setting up a new infrastructure for production of diesel locomotives and incurring a liability of Rs 171.26 billion was not in sync with the railways' strategic vision.

The proposal to set up the Marhrowa unit was made by the railways in September 2006 and GE Global Sourcing India was awarded the contract in November 2015.

Since a long time had elapsed, there was a need to reassess the necessity of setting up a new diesel locomotive manufacturing unit before awarding the contract. Audit analysis showed that diesel locomotives available with the railways were sufficient in numbers, the CAG said.

Electrification has been a major goal of the railways since the BJP-led government took over its reins with a 2021 deadline to completely move to electrify its broad gauge routes.

It will also run freight trains in dedicated freight corridors on electricity. At present, around 42 per cent of the tracks are electrified.

This would make diesel traction only necessary for low-traffic routes, for which high-powered diesel locomotives were not likely to be used optimally.

"The railways awarded the contract to manufacture 1,000 diesel locomotives over 10 years to GE in 2015. Need for high-power diesel traction in the Indian Railways is going to diminish in the years to come. The diesel locomotives procured under this agreement would have no scope for productive utilisation in the Indian Railway network in future, the state auditor said.

The auditor was also critical of the parking system of the Indian Railways, stating that the national transporter did not execute agreements promptly in many cases and did not enter into agreements in some places.

"The contractors were managing the parking lots in an un-professional manner and the railways was not able to ensure that they provide service according to the agreements and recover dues from contractors, it added.

It also raised an alarm on the lack of land management cells for commercial plots managed by the commercial department at any level in the railways. (PTI)

## Balmer Lawrie targets retail segment for lubes & grease SBU

**KOLKATA, JULY 21** /- Balmer Lawrie & Co Ltd, a diversified PSU under the Oil ministry, would focus on the retail segment for its grease and lubricants business division, its CMD Prabal Basu said. Inaugurating the renovated applications research laboratory of the company here on Friday, Basu told reporters that presently the business division contributed around Rs 350 crore to Rs 400 crore of the overall revenue. With a market segment of 2.27 per cent presently, the company is aiming to penetrate the retail segment as margins were high as compared to industrial.

Basu said that total manufacturing volume presently was 10,000 metric tonnes, adding that plans were there to raise it to 30,000 to 40,000 mt. The retail segment comprised 30 per cent of volume sales of the division. "We want to take this percentage to 50 per cent," he said.

## Himachal govt announces MIS for apple procurement

**SHIMLA, JULY 21** /- The Himachal government has approved implementation of Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of apple. The scheme will be implemented from July 20 to October 31 this year, a spokesperson of the Horticulture Department said here today.

The MIS will be undertaken for procurement of 2,29,156 metric tonnes apple, for which price has been set at Rs 7.50 per kg, the handling charges will be Rs 2.75 per kg and assumed sale realisation will be Rs 3.50 per kg, he added.

Under the scheme, 279 procurement centres will be opened as per demand of the fruit growers, he said, adding that the fruits will be procured in 35 kilo gunny bags with 2.5 per cent more fruits in view of evapo-transpiration and respiration losses.

Apple having diameter above 51 mm will be accepted only under the scheme, he said, adding that fruit having punctured skin or bird eaten or damaged would not be accepted.

However, fruits having slight hail damage, slight bruising, russeting and misshapen fruit will be accepted, he added.

# Truckers' strike gets mixed response on day two

**NEW DELHI, JULY 21** /- Truck operators' nationwide indefinite strike called by their umbrella body AIMTC received a mixed response on the second day.

Transporters yesterday started a nationwide indefinite strike and their demands include a reduction in central and state taxes by getting diesel under the GST so that price of the deregulated commodity can be reduced.

According to reports, the strike was more effective in the financial capital Mumbai, while in other parts of the country, including Delhi, it showed some impact on the second day.

"The day two consolidated the

Chakkajam in the entire country and there have been very positive reports from across the country and all state, district and taluk level associations and unions and their members' extended unstinting support to this movement," claimed All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) Core Committee President Bal Malkit Singh.

He said the industry has started to feel the pinch and pegged the losses at Rs 4,000 crore a day.

"We have inputs from across the country that there was total suspension of operations in Delhi- NCR, Maharashtra, Gujarat, entire South India, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh,

Odisha, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and J&K," Singh said.

AIMTC further claimed that the transportation services to and from the port, refineries, harbours and movement from petrochemical units, white goods, FMCG, Steel, Coal, Cement, Granite, and other industrial units have been stopped.

It is a steadfast resolve of the AIMTC leadership that mere assurances will not suffice this time. Till date there are no reconciliatory talks or indication from the Government to resolve the issues with immediate tangible results. The movement will

get intensified in days to come," he said. Essential commodities have been kept out of the strike.

AIMTC claims that about 93 lakh trucks are affiliated to the body. The Indian Foundation of Transport Research and Training (IFTRT), however said the strike has a partial impact so far in the country including in the national capital.

Apart from demanding reduction in diesel prices, truckers are also against the "flawed and non-transparent" toll collection system that favours road concessioners and alleged that the time and fuel loss goes up to Rs 1.5 trillion annually on account of it.

## 5 oil PSUs sign JV pact for N-E natural gas pipeline grid

**GUWAHATI, JULY 21** /- Five central oil PSUs - IOCL, ONGC, GAIL, OIL and NRL - Friday signed a joint venture agreement for executing the North-East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid as a step towards the Urja Ganga Gas Pipeline Project, a NRL statement said here.

The JV company shall develop, build, operate and maintain the Natural Gas Pipeline Grid connecting Guwahati to the other major North-Eastern cities and major load centres such as Numaligarh Refinery and integrating it with gas producing fields, wherever feasible, in the region.

The JV agreement was signed by IOCL Executive Director (Project) H K Singh, ONGC General Manager R Kaul, GAIL Chief General Manager (PD) D N Rao, OIL Chief General Manager (PL) B K Mishra

and NRL Senior Chief General Manager (Corporate Affairs) A K Bhattacharya, the statement said.

The Rs 6000 crore Grid's estimated length would be around 1500 km, the statement said adding that the tentative time schedule for commissioning it would be four years, including one year for pre-project activities. The JV company will have equal equity contribution from all the partners. The project will connect the state capitals of all the eight North Eastern states - Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

The Gas Grid Project will connect all NE States to the National Gas Grid through Barauni-Guwahati Gas Pipeline being laid by GAIL.

## News In Brief

### Havells posts Q1 net at Rs 210 cr

**NEW DELHI, JULY 21** /- Consumer electrical goods maker Havells India reported a standalone net profit at Rs 210.40 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, 2018 of this fiscal. The company had posted a net profit at Rs 121.38 crore during the April-June quarter of the previous fiscal. Havells India said in a regulatory filing. Total income during the quarter under review stood at Rs 2,625.56 crore. It was Rs 2017.04 crore in the year ago period.

### Power Grid signs MoU with UP Power Corp

**LUCKNOW, JULY 21** /- Power Grid Corporation of India Friday signed an MoU with Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation (UPPC) for energy efficiency and agricultural demand side management programme. Further discussions will be held between Power Grid Corp and UPPCL to decide terms and conditions of the probable agreement for Power grid acting as an investor as well as a Project Management Consultant (PMC) for replacement of agriculture pump sets in East and South DISCOMs of UP. (PTI)



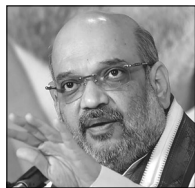
International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde and Argentina's Treasury Minister Nicolas Dujone attend a news conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina - REUTERS

# Farmers' income would be doubled before 2022: Shah

**NEW DELHI, JULY 21** /- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aim to double farmers' income by 2022 would be achieved before the targeted year, BJP president Amit Shah asserted on Saturday, dismissing the Opposition's claim that it was merely a political statement. Speaking at a conference on 'Role of Insurance in Reforming Agrarian Economy' here this morning, he said, "The kind of changes the Modi government has brought in agriculture sector, I am convinced there will be infrastructure to not only achieve the target of doubling farmers' income but go beyond that before 2022."

After independence, agriculture has mostly been a subject of "Bhashanbaji" but in the past 10-15 years, innovative contributions from different quarters have started coming to the fore, Shah said.

The goal will be achieved as the Centre and state governments are work-



ing in a mission mode, he said. "The goal set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not a political statement. I firmly believe as India completes 75 years of its independence in 2022, we will achieve a big success by doubling farmers' income and raising agriculture's contribution in the economy to 30 per cent,"

Shah claimed. Crediting the Modi government with an "all-encompassing vision" to benefit farmers, Shah claimed that the government not only managed to arrange a wider crop insurance to farmers but also effectively checked black marketing of urea in the country.

The Minimum Support Price (MSP) for kharif crops announced by the government will benefit the farmers. In some cases they are getting more than 1.5 times the cost of crop, he said.

Shah also praised agricultural reforms in the BJP ruled states, saying innovative farming practices in these states were mutually share, thus affecting farmers in a large part of the country.

"NDA government is most liberal towards their needs and open to ideas to ensure that steps are taken to facilitate them in enhancing their contribution in the economy," he said.

Weather Report			
	MinTemp.	MaxTemp.	Weather
<b>Gangtok</b>			
22-Jul	18.0	23.0	Generally cloudy sky with a few spells of rain or thundershowers
23-Jul	18.0	23.0	Generally cloudy sky with a few spells of rain or thundershowers
24-Jul	19.0	24.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
25-Jul	19.0	25.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
26-Jul	19.0	25.0	Rain or Thundershowers
27-Jul	19.0	25.0	Rain or Thundershowers
<b>Gyalsingh</b>			
22-Jul	19.0	25.0	Generally cloudy sky with a few spells of rain or thundershowers
23-Jul	19.0	25.0	Generally cloudy sky with a few spells of rain or thundershowers
24-Jul	19.0	27.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
25-Jul	19.0	27.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
26-Jul	20.0	28.0	Rain or Thundershowers
27-Jul	20.0	28.0	Rain or Thundershowers
<b>Mangan</b>			
22-Jul	20.0	31.0	Generally cloudy sky with a few spells of rain or thundershowers
23-Jul	20.0	30.0	Generally cloudy sky with a few spells of rain or thundershowers
24-Jul	21.0	30.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
25-Jul	21.0	29.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
26-Jul	20.0	29.0	Rain or Thundershowers
27-Jul	20.0	29.0	Rain or Thundershowers
<b>Namchi</b>			
22-Jul	21.0	26.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
23-Jul	21.0	26.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
24-Jul	20.0	28.0	Partly cloudy sky becoming generally cloudy towards afternoon or evening or night
25-Jul	20.0	28.0	Partly cloudy sky becoming generally cloudy towards afternoon or evening or night
26-Jul	21.0	29.0	Rain or Thundershowers
27-Jul	21.0	29.0	Rain or Thundershowers
<b>Tadong</b>			
22-Jul	21.0	29.0	Generally cloudy sky with a few spells of rain or thundershowers
23-Jul	21.0	30.0	Generally cloudy sky with a few spells of rain or thundershowers
24-Jul	22.0	30.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
25-Jul	22.0	30.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
26-Jul	21.0	29.0	Rain or Thundershowers
27-Jul	21.0	29.0	Rain or Thundershowers
<b>Darjeeling</b>			
22-Jul	16.0	20.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
23-Jul	15.0	21.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
24-Jul	15.0	21.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
25-Jul	15.0	20.0	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers
26-Jul	15.0	20.0	Partly cloudy sky with possibility of rain or Thunderstorm
27-Jul	15.0	20.0	Partly cloudy sky with possibility of rain or Thunderstorm

Source: IMD