

# Now govt depts, PSUs can't move court against each other over commercial disputes

**NEW DELHI, MAY 16 /-** The Union government on Wednesday put in place a new mechanism to settle commercial disputes between government departments and Public Sector Undertakings where the Cabinet Secretary will have the last word, and barred them from approaching courts to settle such matters. However, disputes concerning the Railways, Income Tax, Customs and Excise departments have been kept out of ambit of the new mechanism.

"The Union Cabinet approved the strengthening of the mechanism and resolution of commercial

disputes of central public sector enterprises inter se and also between CPSEs and other government departments/organizations. The decision will put in place an institutionalised mechanism within the government for speedy resolution of commercial disputes of CPSEs without the matter being referred to the courts of law," an official statement said here.

Now a new two-tier mechanism will be put in place. The existing permanent machinery of arbitration mechanism to resolve commercial disputes between CPSEs, and CPSEs and government departments outside courts.

At the first level, such commercial disputes will be referred to a committee comprising secretaries of the administrative ministries to which the disputing parties belong and the Law Secretary. The financial advisors of the two ministries concerned will represent the issues related to the dispute in question before the committee.

In case the two disputing parties belong to the same ministry, the committee will comprise secretary of the administrative ministries concerned, the administrative Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises. In such

a case, the matter would be represented by the financial advisor and one joint secretary of that ministry. At the second level, in case the dispute remains unresolved, it will be referred to the Cabinet Secretary, whose decision will be "final and binding on all". For the faster disposal of disputes, a timeline of three months at the first level has been prescribed.

"It will reduce court cases. At times even courts have questioned government departments settling disputes through litigation," Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters at the Cabinet briefing. (PTI)



The Members of Oman-India Joint Business Council, meeting the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi --PIB

## Ahluwalia takes charge as MoS for electronics & IT

**NEW DELHI, MAY 16 /-** Minister of State (MoS) for Electronics and IT S Ahluwalia Wednesday said it is important that workplace-enabled digital and paperless systems to help provide carbon-free society to coming generations. The minister, who took charge of his new office on Wednesday, said he will work towards expansion of the government's Digital India initiatives. Ahluwalia was earlier serving as MoS for Drinking Water and Sanitation and has been assigned the new role as part of the recent Cabinet reshuffle. "I feel that digital, paperless offices will contribute a lot to the society. We will be able to give a carbon-free society to our future generations," he told reporters here. He highlighted the important role played by information and communications technology (ICT), referring to it as the 'spine' that plays a critical role in the welfare of individuals. Ahluwalia was elected to Rajya Sabha in 1986 and since then, has undertaken a variety of roles across ministries like agriculture and parliamentary affairs. Asked if the new mandate would be challenging, Ahluwalia said he likes taking on such roles. "I am the only one in my family in 14 generations to become a politician, most others are technocrats... take on everything as challenge," he said. (PTI)

## News In Brief

### More funds okayed for Defence NFS project

**NEW DELHI, MAY 16 /-** The Union government on Wednesday nearly doubled the budget for laying of alternate communications network for defence services. The budget for the Network For Spectrum (NFS) project has been raised by Rs 11,330 crore, an official statement said. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for enhancement of budget by Rs 11,330 crore for NFS project for laying of alternate communication network for Defence Services for release of spectrum over and above Rs 13,234 crore already approved by Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure in July, 2017, it said.

### IndiGo to connect Hubli to Goa & Kochi

**MUMBAI, MAY 16 /-** Budget carrier IndiGo Wednesday said it would commence flight operations from next month to Hubli from Goa and Kochi from next month, using an ATR plane. The launch of services to Hubli from June 28, which will be the airline's 52nd destination, is aimed at consolidating IndiGo's position further in the southern India market, a release said. The low cost carrier will also operate additional flights between Hubli-Chennai, Hubli-Bangalore and Hubli-Ahmedabad with the Airbus A320, starting July 1, it added. (PTI)

# India's energy mix will be substantially complemented by renewable energy: Pradhan

**DUBAI, MAY 16 /-** India's energy mix will be substantially complemented by renewable energy and the country is going to generate around 175 Gigawatt of energy from such sources, Ministers for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan has said. He said India was a leading player in the renewable energy movement and has positioned itself in this arena in a short span of time.

"We are going to generate around 175 Gigawatt of renewable energy on solar, wind, bio-CNG, bio-fuel to small hydro projects in all the verticals and in the near future, India's energy mix will be substantially complemented by renewable energy," he told PTI. Concluding his three-day visit to the UAE, Pradhan who is also the minister for skill development and



entrepreneurship said that India-UAE relationship is at its peak.

Our strategic relationship has developed due to the efforts of two visionary leaders, Prime Minister Modi and the Crown Prince of the UAE. We are moving towards a special strategic and comprehensive strategic relationship," he said. Later, speaking at a press conference, Pradhan said that India is prepared to enhance the skills of manpower being supplied to the UAE. He said that in a crisis-like situation, India should have oil storage facility, which makes it a win-win situation for both India and the UAE.

"The UAE gets an assured market and we get a regular supply chain. This is a special arrangement with the UAE," he said. Asked about the recent hike in oil price, he said that today, the oil price is pinching Indian consumer because India is a very price sensitive country. "We are a big consuming

## Sugar imports from Pak miniscule: CommMin

**NEW DELHI, MAY 16 /-** India imported just 1,908 tonnes of sugar from Pakistan since April this year, the government said today, rebutting opposition charge that large quantities of the sweetener are being shipped from the neighbouring nation. Till May 14 in this fiscal, import of sugar from Pakistan is mere 1,908 tonnes for a value of USD 0.657 million. In 2017-18, sugar import stood at 13,110 tonnes valued at \$89 million, the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), which is under the Commerce Ministry said.

"Import from Pakistan has been very miniscule as compared to the total production in the country and exports from India," the



DG, DGFT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry Alok Varshani addressing a press conference on import of sugar from Pakistan, in New Delhi --PIB

## CBI files chargesheet against Mehul Choksi, Gitanjali group

**NEW DELHI, MAY 16 /-** The CBI on Wednesday filed its chargesheet against billionaire jeweller Mehul Choksi and 17 other entities, including companies owned by him and other individuals, in connection with the over USD 2 billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam, officials said.

The chargesheet was filed before a special CBI court in Mumbai. In the chargesheet, pertaining to the FIR against Choksi, the Gitanjali group of companies and 16 other entities (including companies and individuals), the agency has slapped charges of criminal conspiracy, cheating and under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, the officials said. They added that this was a separate chargesheet filed against Choksi, Supplementary chargesheet against conspiracy, cheating and under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, the officials said. The FIR was lodged on the basis of a complaint from the PNB, dated February 13. According to it, the alleged conspirators were Mehul Choksi and 16 others, arising out of 143 Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) and 224 Foreign Letters of Credit issued to the companies of Choksi, the officials said, adding that the total loss, allegedly perpetrated by the jeweller and his nephew Modi -- both absconding -- was



over USD 2 billion. It is alleged that the accused PNB officials, in a conspiracy with private persons, had sent the unauthorised LoUs and Foreign Letters of Credit to overseas branches of Indian banks for release of funds to the accused companies suppliers or to clear the liabilities of the accused companies.

The accused PNB officials allegedly did not enter the instructions for these LoUs in their internal software to avoid scrutiny. They were sent through an internet messaging system for banking called SWIFT, used to pass instructions among banks globally to transfer funds. An LoU is a guarantee given by an issuing bank to Indian banks that have branches abroad to grant short-term credit to an applicant.

## Rly manufactures bricks out of waste soil to cut costs, curb pollution

**NEW DELHI, MAY 16 /-** In a first, the railways has started producing bricks out of waste soil in a manufacturing unit in Manipur as part of its ambitious project to provide Imphal rail connectivity.

The railways, whose primary mandate is to run trains, has taken up manufacturing work of this nature at a project site to curb pollution and cut costs. 3,500 bricks would be produced every eight hours as part of the process. The Northeast Frontier Railway with the help of NIT Silchar is turning the excess excavated soil into bricks that are being used for protective works of bridges, pitching of slopes, steps going down along the embankment and lining of drains. "The construction of the railway alignment

through the hilly terrain entails excavation of huge quantities of earth (soil). The excess excavated soil is generally dumped into low-lying areas which eventually flows into the streams and then the rivers causing high water pollution.

"In an underdeveloped state like Manipur, many villagers consume water directly from the streams, jeopardising their health. Hence, we felt the imminent need to control this malady by minimising the dumping of soil into water bodies," said A Saibaba, Chief Engineer, Construction, NFR who is in charge of the Jiribam-Imphal line. The 111 km line to be completed by 2020, has 47 tunnels covering a distance of 63.2 km and 131 bridges. Usually conventional bricks are purchased from factories

and transported to the site which in this case becomes extremely costly due to the transportation along the hilly roads, officials said. NIT Silchar which conducted experiments in their lab, finally came up with a successful formula of converting this unused soil into blocks.

"As per their studies, the mixture of the local soil with small quantities of cement and other locally available ingredients when subject to high pressure yields blocks of sufficient strength and durability.

"An all-weather semi-mechanized factory has been set up at the Jiribam-Imphal section and manufacture of the soil to cement bricks has already begun and we are producing 3,500 bricks per shift of eight hours," said Saibaba.

## Intl rail coach expo in Chennai from today

**NEW DELHI:** For the first time, an international rail coach expo, displaying rail coaches and train sets, will be held in Chennai from tomorrow (May 17) to May 19, a statement from the railways said on Wednesday. Reputed rail car and equipment manufacturers will showcase their technology and products at the expo, which will be a unique platform to bring different suppliers under one roof and create synergy for "Make in India", the statement added.

## Cabinet nod for infra component development at freight village

**NEW DELHI:** The Cabinet Wednesday approved an array of agreements with several countries in the field of railway, medicine and law, a statement from the government said today.

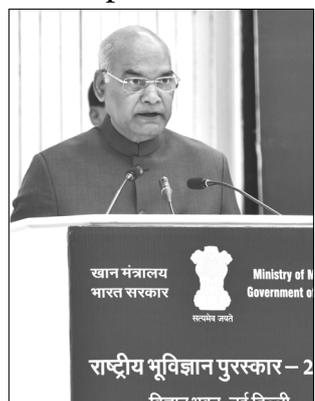
The Cabinet was apprised of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Indian Railways and SNCF Mobilités (a company owned and controlled by the French State) on technical cooperation in the field of railways. The MoU provide a platform for the Indian Railways to interact and share the latest developments and knowledge in the railway sector. The Cabinet also gave its ex-post facto approval for signing of MoUs for cooperation in the legal field between India and Morocco, in the field of health and medicine with Swaziland and cooperation in the field of electoral management and administration with Suriname. It also gave nod to a MoU on cooperation in the field of medicinal plants between India and Equatorial Guinea and on traditional systems of medicine between India and Columbia to propagate such processes in the South American country (PTI)

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## India's economic expansion to boost mining: Prez

**NEW DELHI, MAY 16 /-** India's GDP and larger development over the coming decades and in turn bolster the mining and minerals sector, President Ram Nath Kovind said on Wednesday. He also asserted that eventually the local community must benefit from the discovery, extraction and development of mineral resources. The reform process set in motion in the mining sector four years ago is bearing rich dividends and will enhance the fiscal health of states, Kovind said at the National Geoscience awards event here.

India is one of the fastest growing major economies in the world. Our GDP as well as our larger developmental process is set to accelerate over the coming decades. The mining and mineral sector is poised to grow as a result of this expansion of the economy. At the same time, it will also be a driver of economic expansion," he said. India's per capita



President Ram Nath Kovind addressing at the presentation ceremony of the National Geoscience Awards 2017, in New Delhi --PIB

consumption of many resources and commodities is still very low by global standards and there is room to grow, he said, adding that as more cities, houses and infrastructure are built, the use of key resources will rise.

Kovind said India needs high-quality research initiatives for sustainable, ecologically friendly resource generation and exploration by CSI and technological innovation in the mining sector. Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Mines. He said Narendra Singh Tomar said 36 blocks bearing major minerals other than coal, explored by CSI and auctioned recently will fetch additional revenue to the tune of Rs 1.11 lakh crore. He said adequate provisions under the Mines and Minerals (Development) and Regulation Act has been done and District Mineral Funds have been created to address the concerns of villages impacted by mining in mineral-rich states. (PTI)