

Rajnath Singh stresses on new opportunities to enhance participation of Russian industries in 'Make in India' projects

Chennai Dec 11 2024: The 21st session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military & Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) was co-chaired by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and Russian Defence Minister Mr Andrey Belousov in Moscow on December 10, 2024. Raksha Mantri emphasised that the India-Russia relationship is very strong, and has lived up to the responsibilities of a special and privileged strategic partnership. He added that the ties have further strengthened with the recent exchanges including two visits of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Russia during 2024.



Shri Rajnath Singh Privileged Strategic Partnership with Russia. He stressed on new opportunities for enhancing participation of Russian industries in the 'Make in India' projects. He reiterated India's commitment towards Special and

for 2021-31 will give necessary impetus to 'Make in India'. Shri Rajnath Singh invited Minister Belousov to visit India to co-chair the 22nd session of IRIGC-M&MTC in 2025. The invitation was accepted.

At the end, the two Ministers signed the protocol of the 21st IRIGC-M&MTC meeting highlighting the ongoing and prospective areas of cooperation.

Prior to the meeting, Raksha Mantri inspected the Guard of Honour at the Russian Defence Ministry in Central Moscow. Earlier, he laid a wreath at 'The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' in Moscow to honour the Soviet soldiers killed during the Second World War.

Tiruvannamalai Deepam: Minister assures lamp lighting at hilltop, 40-lakh devotees to attend

Chennai Dec 11 2024: "This year, over 4 million devotees are expected to attend the Tiruvannamalai Deepam Festival. To facilitate this, 350 kg of ghee-soaked cloth wicks and around 40 tons of ghee, approximately 450 kg, must be transported to the hilltop.

The Chief Minister has directed that all necessary manpower be deployed to ensure the festival proceeds successfully without any untoward incidents," said Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, Sekarbabu, during the Assembly session.

The Tamil Nadu Assembly convened its second day of session on Tuesday at 9:30 AM. During the question hour, ministers responded to inquiries raised by members.

Deputy Speaker and member Pichandi brought up the recent unprecedented rains in Tiruvannamalai, which caused landslides at three locations on the hill, resulting in the loss of seven lives. He noted



that Rs.5 lakh in compensation had been provided to each affected family.

Highlighting the significance of the Karthigai Deepam Festival, an annual event of great importance to the Annamalaiyar Temple, Pichandi asked whether the government would permit devotees to climb the hill this year and what arrangements were in place.

Responding, Minister Sekarbabu emphasized the ancient

legacy of the Tiruvannamalai Deepam Festival, tracing back to Sangam-era traditions. He reiterated that the event, which draws millions of devotees, must not be disrupted. The Deputy Chief Minister had personally inspected the Girivalam path on October 18, following which six meetings were conducted, including two chaired by Minister E.V. Velu, with district and police officials.

The government has addressed the landslide issues caused by the heavy rains on a war footing. To ensure the festival's success, the Chief Minister ordered the formation of a geologist-led expert committee under Saravanaperumal Raja. The eight-member team conducted a three-day survey from December 7 to 9 and submitted its findings.

Based on their recommendations, arrangements are being made to transport 350 kg of cloth wicks and 450 kg of ghee to the hilltop. The Chief Minister has instructed that sufficient manpower be deployed to carry out these tasks efficiently and safely. The Minister assured that the festival would proceed smoothly with appropriate measures in place.

He concluded by affirming the government's commitment to ensuring the uninterrupted celebration of the historic Tiruvannamalai Deepam Festival in alignment with its cultural and spiritual significance.

LOK SABHA SPEAKER AND PARLIAMENTARIANS PAY FLORAL TRIBUTES TO SHRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Chennai Dec 11 2024: Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla paid floral tributes to Bharat Ratna Shri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari in Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan on his Birth Anniversary, today.



Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla; Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha Shri Harivansh; Members of Parliament and former MPs after paying floral tributes to Bharat Ratna Shri C. Rajagopalachari in Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan, on his Birth Anniversary on 10 December, 2024

Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha Shri Harivansh; Members of Parliament, former Members of Parliament and Secretary-General

of Lok Sabha Shri Utpal Kumar Singh also paid floral tributes on the occasion.

A booklet containing the profile of Shri C. Rajagopalachari, brought out both in Hindi and English by the Lok Sabha Secretariat was also presented to those who attended the function.

The portrait of Shri C. Rajagopalachari was unveiled by the then President of India, Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy in the Central Hall of Parliament on 21 August, 1978.

An ardent patriot, a pioneering social reformer, incisive thinker, profound scholar, astute statesman, a renowned

lawyer, an able administrator and above all a humanist, Shri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, endearingly called 'Rajaji', was born on 10 December 1878 in Thorapalli village in Salem district of Madras Province. On 14 July 1937, Shri Rajagopalachari assumed the office of the Prime Minister of the then Madras Province. He was the last Governor-General of India. After Independence, Shri Rajagopalachari was appointed as the Governor of West Bengal. After the death of Sardar Patel in December 1950, Shri Rajagopalachari was appointed as the Minister of Home Affairs in the Government of India. In recognition of his commendable service to the nation, Shri C. Rajagopalachari was awarded 'Bharat Ratna' in 1954. He was the first to receive the highest civilian award.

"Sanitation is not just an infrastructure goal but a behavioral mission that shapes the health and dignity of rural communities C R Patil

Chennai Dec 11 2024: As part of the ongoing efforts to strengthen the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G), the Hon'ble Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C.R. Patil, convened a high-level review meeting with State Ministers in charge of rural sanitation from Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. The session focused on assessing progress, addressing challenges, and aligning strategies to achieve sustainable sanitation outcomes across rural India.

During the meeting, Shri Patil emphasized that sanitation is not just an infrastructure goal but a behavioral mission that shapes the health and dignity of rural communities. "The path we chart today will decide the future of a cleaner, healthier India. Each State/UT has a unique story to tell and different terrains to tread, but the destination is the same - a Swachh Bharat," the Minister remarked.

The meeting was also attended by State Mission Directors, Joint Secretary DDWS & Mission Director, SBM-G.

The review highlighted key milestones across the four states:

Madhya Pradesh: 99% of villages are ODF Plus with 95% villages reaching ODF Plus Model status. The state has implemented innovative plastic waste management initiatives, including MoUs with RRDA Bhopal.

Uttar Pradesh: 98% villages are ODF Plus and over 1 lakh personnel have been trained to implement SBM-G objectives. Plastic waste management models such as waste-to-energy and kabadiwala linkages were also highlighted.

Bihar: 92% villages are ODF Plus, with grey water and solid waste management coverage at 91% and 80%, respectively. The state is focusing on

underperforming districts to enhance outcomes.

Punjab: 98% villages are ODF Plus, with 87% of villages saturated with grey water management. Efforts are underway to strengthen solid waste management systems.

The Minister provided comprehensive guidance for the states, emphasizing collective efforts to:

Verify and sustain ODF Plus Model villages through robust monitoring mechanisms.

Bridge gaps in solid and grey water management by prioritizing household-level solutions.

Strengthen the functionality of community sanitation complexes and enhance asset management.

Innovate in plastic waste management by forging partnerships with recyclers and leveraging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) frameworks.

Promote behavior change through targeted IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) campaigns, ensuring sustained toilet use and waste segregation.

Shri Patil called on states to intensify efforts to foster community led approaches by engaging women's self-help groups, local leaders, and private sector enterprises. "Sanitation is a movement of the people, by the people, and for the people. It is this ownership that will truly make a difference," he added.

Advertisement for Oasis Grace Engineering Projects Pvt Ltd. The ad includes a 'What We Do' section listing services like project management, design, and construction. It also features a 'Build Your Future With Us' section with contact information for RTN DR.R. SATHYANARAYANAN. The ad highlights 20+ years of excellence and lists projects in various locations including Chennai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad. A 'Who We Are' section mentions ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certifications. The ad concludes with a list of clients and a 'What We Offer' section detailing project phases from planning to handover.

Advertisement for passport and legal services. The ad lists services including passport, MSME, PAN, Aadhaar, FSSAI, Patta, Legalheir, 24 Wheeler Insurance, Property Tax, EB - Name Transfer, State and Central Govt, Authorized Franchisee, and All Online Services. It provides contact information for 'சேவை கெடியம்' (Sevai Kedyam) with phone numbers 8148231942 and 8144337349.

CRISPR-Cas technology: balancing efficiency, safety

Chennai, Dec 11 2024: Genome editing with various CRISPR-Cas molecule complexes has progressed rapidly in recent years. Hundreds of labs around the world are now working to put these tools to clinical use and are continuously advancing them.

CRISPR-Cas tools allow researchers to modify individual building blocks of genetic material in a precise and targeted manner. Gene therapies based on such gene editing are already being used to treat inherited diseases, fight cancer and create drought and heat-tolerant crops.

The CRISPR-Cas9 molecular complex, also known as genetic scissors, is the most widely used tool by scientists around the world. It cuts the double-stranded DNA at the exact site where the genetic material needs to be modified.

This contrasts with newer gene editing methods, which do not cut the double strand.

The cut activates two natural repair mechanisms that the cell uses to repair such damage: a fast but imprecise one that reconnects only the ends of the cut DNA, and a slow and precise one that is slow and thorough but not activated in every case. The latter requires a copyable template for repair to

accurately rejoin the DNA at the cut site.

The slow variant is called homology-directed repair. Researchers want to use this method of repair because it allows the precise integration of individual DNA segments into a desired gene region. The approach is very flexible and can be used to repair different disease genes.

"In principle, it could be used to cure any disease," says Jacob Corn, Professor of Genome Biology at ETH Zürich.

To get the cell to use homology-directed repair, the researchers recently began using a molecule called AZD7648, which blocks fast repair and forces the cell to use homology-directed repair.

This approach is expected to accelerate the development of more efficient gene therapies. Initial studies with these new therapies have been good. Too good to be true, as it turned out.

A research group led by Jacob Corn has just discovered that the use of AZD7648 has serious side effects.

Although AZD7648 promotes precise repair and thus precise gene editing using the CRISPR-Cas9 system as hoped, in a significant proportion of cells this has led to massive genetic changes in a

part of the genome that was expected to be modified without scarring.

The ETH researchers found that these changes resulted in the simple deletion of thousands and thousands of DNA building blocks, known as bases.

Even whole chromosome arms broke off. This makes the genome unstable, with unpredictable consequences for the cells edited by the technique.

"When we analysed the genome at the sites where it had been edited, it looked correct and precise. But when we analysed the genome more broadly, we saw massive genetic changes.

These are not seen when you only analyse the short, edited section and its immediate neighbourhood," says Grégoire Cullot, a postdoctoral fellow in Corn's group and first author of the study.

The extent of the negative effects surprised the researchers.

In fact, they suspect that they do not yet have a complete picture of the full extent of the damage because they did not look at the entire genome when analysing the modified cells, only partial regions.

New tests, approaches and

regulations are therefore needed to clarify the extent and potential of the damage.

The molecule AZD7648 is not unknown. It is currently in clinical trials as a potential cancer treatment.

But how did the ETH researchers become aware of the problem? In other studies, the researchers showed how highly effective and precise CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing is when AZD7648 is added. "This made us suspicious, so we took a closer look," says Jacob Corn.

The ETH researchers then analysed the sequence of DNA building blocks not only around the edited site but also in the wider environment. They discovered these unwanted and catastrophic side effects caused by using AZD7648.

Their study is the first to describe these side effects. Other research groups have also investigated them and support the ETH researchers' findings. They also aim to publish their results. "We are the first to say that not everything is wonderful," says Corn. "For us, this is a major setback because, like other scientists, we had hoped to use the new technique to accelerate the development of gene therapies."

INSA HOLDS ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING AT SRMIST

Chennai Dec 11 2024: The 90th Annual General Meeting of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) witnessed the participation of top Scientists from India and a few experts from industries. The inauguration ceremony was graced by Dr. P. Sathyanarayanan, Pro Chancellor (Academics) of SRMIST. In his address, Dr. Sathyanarayanan expressed his gratitude to INSA for hosting the meeting at SRMIST and emphasized India's rich legacy in research and innovation. "India has always been at the forefront of research in fields such as Mathematics, Astronomy, And Metallurgy, thanks to our culture of innovation," he said. He further highlighted the crucial role of education in the



nation's prosperity and urged the promotion of start-ups.

In his presidential address, Prof. Ashutosh Sharma, President of INSA, discussed "Structure and Processes of S & T and the Question of Sustainability." He addressed the key challenges, including the structure and functioning of science and technology, its strengths and weaknesses, and the role of new thinking in overcoming these challenges. The meeting also saw the

convergence of some of India's leading scientific luminaries, creating a platform to celebrate achievements, share insights, and engage in critical discussions shaping the future of science and technology in India.

The two-day event brought together over 200 participants, including INSA Fellows, early-career researchers, young innovators, and members of India's scientific community. It featured a carefully curated program,

which included the Council Meeting, lectures by Newly Elected Fellows and Foreign Fellows, INSA Distinguished Lectures, and presentations from INSA Young Associates, Associate Fellows, and History of Science Young Associates. The gathering also included the induction of new Fellows and the felicitation of outgoing Council members for their invaluable contributions to the Academy.

"Amazon SAMBhav 2024": Dr. Jitendra Singh Hails StartUps and Innovations as Catalysts for India's Viksit Bharat 2047 Vision

Chennai Dec 11 2024: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh, speaking at the "Amazon SAMBhav 2024" summit here, emphasized India's extraordinary strides in innovation, entrepreneurship, and public-private collaboration as cornerstones of the nation's journey towards becoming a developed economy by 2047.

Lauding Amazon's expanded \$350 million allocation targeting manufacturing and AI StartUps, the Minister described AI StartUps as India's "Growth Catalysts".

Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted India's transformation from being among the "Fragile Five" economies a decade ago to ranking among the top five globally. He attributed this success to bold government policies, including opening key sectors like space and biotechnology to private players, and fostering a thriving startup ecosystem. "India is now home to nearly 1.75 lakh



startups, up from just 350 in 2014, and ranks third globally in the startup ecosystem. This journey is nothing short of remarkable," said Dr. Jitendra Singh.

Amazon SAMBhav 2024, now in its fifth edition, brought together thought leaders, industry stalwarts, entrepreneurs, and policymakers under one roof. The summit featured over 50 interactive booths at the Smbhav Pavilion, showcasing advancements in artificial intelligence, sustainable business practices, and digital transformation tailored to the needs of MSMEs.

SMBhav Venture Fund, launched in 2021, was a focal point this year, with an expanded \$350 million allocation targeting manufacturing and AI StartUps. Dr. Jitendra Singh lauded the fund's role in nurturing cutting-edge technology solutions and empowering local businesses to compete globally.

The Minister acknowledged the theme of the event, "Naye India Ki Nayi Raftaar" (New India's New Momentum), and remarked on its appropriateness. Drawing from his background in science, Dr. Jitendra Singh stated, "As someone belonging to the fraternity of science, we have been taught not to speak without evidence. I think there is enough evidence to justify this theme." He emphasized how India's progress in innovation and entrepreneurship exemplifies the rapid momentum envisioned by the theme.

Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted how landmark policies such as Bio-E3—focused on biotechnology for the economy, employment, and environment—are setting the stage for a bio-economy-driven industrial revolution. Similarly, he underlined the achievements of India's space sector, which has grown from

a single-digit startup presence to over 300 private entities within three years, thanks to forward-thinking reforms.

"India has not only reached global benchmarks but is now setting them," remarked Dr. Jitendra Singh. He cited examples such as the launch of a DNA vaccine for COVID-19 and the establishment of the Global Partnership in Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) to illustrate India's leadership in science and technology.

The Amazon SAMBhav 2024 summit exemplified how collaborative efforts between the government and industry can drive innovation and economic progress. Dr. Jitendra Singh's address underscored the vital role of such partnerships in realizing India's vision for 2047—a developed, self-reliant nation at the forefront of the global digital economy.

India's Women Entrepreneurs: Pioneers of Inclusive Development and Equal Growth

Chennai Dec 11 2024: Women entrepreneurs are emerging as radiant beacons of innovation and resilience, transforming industries and breaking barriers with their visionary leadership. Their ventures are not just businesses; they are powerful narratives of determination, creativity, and empowerment, inspiring countless others to dream big.

With a vision to promote the sustainable development of women entrepreneurs for balanced growth in



the country, Startup India is committed towards strengthening women entrepreneurship in India through initiatives, schemes, creation of enabling networks and communities and activating partnerships among diverse stakeholders in the startup ecosystem.

Since its launch in 2016, the Startup India Initiative, driven by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), has been a game-changer for fostering entrepreneurship in India.

As of October 31, 2024, a total number of

73,151 startups with at least one-woman director have been recognized under the Startup India Initiative. This represents nearly half of the 1,52,139 startups supported by the government, showcasing the crucial role women play in driving innovation and economic growth.

With a 7% boost in employability, India emerges as a global powerhouse for skilled talent by 2030

Chennai Dec 11 2024: Wheebox ETS India Skills Report 2025, in collaboration with CII, Taggd, AICTE, and AIU, unveils a strategic vision for "Global Talent Mobility" underscores India's pivotal role in addressing global workforce demand, skills required fueled by rising employability, an optimistic hiring intent, and a roadmap for 2030.

Employability among Indian graduates has seen a steady rise of 7% this year, reaching 54.81% in 2025, up from 51.25% last year. With 65% of the Indian workforce under 35 years old, India's youthful and dynamic talent pool is uniquely aligned to meet the demands of industries across the Gulf Nations, Southeast Asia, Europe, and Africa. The report highlights that India's skilled professionals, particularly in technology, healthcare, renewable energy, and AI, are driving global innovation and economic growth.

Nirmal Singh, Chief Convener of India Skills Report and CEO of Wheebox, An ETS Company remarked, "This decade belongs to



India as a leader in global talent mobility. This decade must be focused on quality of skills training that shall make a stark difference for international mobility. Long term and internally certified skill programs with embedded language training will be the winning bet to provide early work opportunities. The skilled and certified talent from India provides a unique advantage and leverage to India. Our workforce is bridging skill gaps worldwide, creating transformative opportunities in a rapidly evolving global economy."

The report reveals an upward trend in hiring intent, with organizations across technology, manufacturing, healthcare, and e-commerce gearing up to onboard fresh talent. The India Hiring Intent Survey for 2025

showcases optimism among over 1,000 corporations spanning 15 industries, particularly for entry-level roles. Key states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Delhi emerge as leaders, while cities such as Pune, Bengaluru, and Mumbai stand out as hubs for employable talent.

With the steady rise of 7% employability this year, reaching 54.81% in 2025, up from 51.25% last year reflects the success of initiatives from Central and State Governments, Institutions like AICTE, UGC, AIU, and reforms like Skill India Mission and NEP 2020, and State Skilling and education bodies which emphasize vocational training and industry-aligned education. With 50% of secondary and tertiary students expected to receive vocational training by 2025, India is setting the stage for a globally competitive workforce.

"This increase in employability is not just a statistic—it's a testament to India's ability to adapt, innovate, and thrive in an interconnected world. Governments have to initiate a large scale internationally acceptable and certified skilling and employment initiative for the world." Singh added.

The India Skills Report 2025 outlines a clear roadmap for aligning India's talent ecosystem with global market demands such as Vocational Training - Expanding access to industry-specific training across states, focusing on high-demand skills like AI, cybersecurity, and green energy. Cross-Border Collaboration - Strengthening partnerships with countries facing aging populations and skill shortages. Technology Integration - Leveraging AI and automation in education and assessments to prepare graduates for future roles. Diversity and Inclusion - Promoting a balanced workforce, with women now comprising 47.53% of the employable talent pool.

Star Health Introduces 'SUPER STAR' A Long Term Retail Offering

Chennai Dec 11 2024: Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Limited, the first standalone health insurance company in India, today announced the launch of its revolutionary retail health insurance product, 'SUPER STAR'. This innovative policy offers a long-term policy for the retail health segment, combining advanced features and highly customisable covers to address the growing complexities of modern lifestyles, rising medical expenses, and unforeseen emergencies.

Commenting on the launch, Anand Roy, MD & CEO of Star Health Insurance, said: "The SUPER STAR policy reflects our commitment to crafting innovative solutions that address the dynamic healthcare needs of our customers. By expanding its reach through our extensive agency network, we are bridging digital convenience with personalized options, ensuring unmatched flexibility and freedom of choice. While the product will be available to all customer demographics, it is the millennials that have been looking for greater personalisation. SUPER STAR addresses this growing need amongst our



customers by offering limitless options, affordability, family discounts, and long-term benefits, making it ideal for young families. With features like Quick Shield and the long term tenure, we aim to provide comprehensive and highly customisable coverage for India's evolving healthcare needs."

SUPER STAR is now available through Star Health's agency network, broadening its accessibility across customer demographics and geographies.

Key Features of the SUPER STAR Plan:

Quick Shield: Enjoy immediate coverage starting as early as the 31st day, even for pre-existing conditions such as Diabetes, Hypertension, Asthma, and specific

heart-related diseases. **Freeze Your Age:** Lock in your age at the time of enrolment, ensuring stable premiums until a claim is made

Super Star Bonus: Provides a guaranteed 100% cumulative bonus every year, regardless of claims, with no cap on accumulation

Unlimited Sum Insured: Offers complete financial security by eliminating caps on the sum insured, ensuring unrestricted access to healthcare when needed

Limitless Care: An add-on feature that ensures infinite financial protection for a one-time claim during the policy's lifetime

Premium Waiver: Waives premiums for the subsequent year if the proposer faces

listed critical illnesses or accidental death

E-International Medical Opinion: Facilitates second medical opinions from an international panel once per policy year, enhancing global access to expert advice

The plan also includes discounts for addition of family members of the policy holder and rewards for proactive health management through wellness benefits offered by Star Health.

Acknowledging millennials as a key target demographic, the SUPER STAR product caters to young families and individuals looking for policies that address their individual requirements and offer ultimate level of personalisation.

The launch reaffirms Star Health's leadership in the health insurance industry, driven by its innovative product design, robust underwriting methodology, strong claims settlement track record, and customer centricity. The SUPER STAR plan is poised to redefine health insurance accessibility and affordability across India.

Star Health has settled over 1.1 crore claims, amounting to INR 53,000 crore, solidifying its leadership in claims settlement and customer trust.

Union Cabinet Approves Singing of MoU between GSI and CNR-IRPI, Italy, for Collaboration in Landslide Prediction and Forecasting

Chennai, Dec 11 2024: The Geological Survey of India will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with The Research Institute for Geo-Hydrological Protection of the National Research Council (CNR-IRPI), Italy for collaboration in Landslide Forecast and Early Warning. The Union Cabinet in its meeting held on 06.12.2024 approved the proposed MoU between GSI and CNR-IRPI. This partnership aims to enrich the knowledge and acquire skills in landslide forecasting and early warning through collaborative research. It is crucial to enhance and scale up India's Landslide Early Warning Systems (LEWS) to international standards, enabling better prediction and mitigation of landslide-related damages, and to



overcome the situation like Wayanaad Landslide in Kerala.

GSI has established a state-of-the-art National Landslide Forecasting (NLFC) facility at GSI, Kolkata to develop and operationalize the regional Landslide Early Warning Systems (LEWS) in all the landslide prone States/ UTs in India within a planned timeline to reduce landslide risks in India. The vision of NLFC is to provide timely information on landslide forecasting to the stakeholders and to the community for preparedness and minimising the

landslide risks. Presently, NLFC is providing live forecast reporting on daily basis in Kalimpong & Darjeeling districts of West Bengal and Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu. Along with that, ground testing of bulletin is in progress in 13 districts.

The Research Institute for Geo-Hydrological Protection (CNR-IRPI), Italy, is a leading institution in developing regional LEWS models, featuring granular spatial and temporal resolutions, including nowcasting capabilities.

This collaboration will help integrate GSI's landslide inventory, susceptibility, and forecast maps with PM Gati Shakti, enhancing resilience and reducing vulnerability in fragile hilly terrains. The LEWS will act as a critical tool to secure lives and prevent destruction in hill areas, facilitating sustainable development and environmental protection. Plans are in place to expand the forecasting system to include more districts, with improved spatial and temporal resolution, across highly landslide-prone regions.

All solar PV modules used in projects must source their solar cells from ALMM List-II starting from 1st June 2026

Chennai Dec 11 2024: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has announced a significant amendment to the Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules (ALMM) Order, 2019 which will have far-reaching implications for India's solar power sector and its clean energy transition. This amendment, set to take effect from 1st June 2026, introduces the long-awaited List-II for solar PV cells under the ALMM framework, marking a major step towards

boosting domestic manufacturing and fostering self-reliance in India's renewable energy industry.

Introduction of ALMM List-II for Solar PV Cells

The introduction of List-II, is a response to the country's rapidly growing solar manufacturing capabilities. Until now, the absence of List-II was due to a limited domestic supply of solar cells. However, with substantial growth in India's solar cell production capacity anticipated over the next year, this

amendment is poised to change the dynamics of the industry. From 1st June 2026, all solar PV modules used in projects - including government-backed schemes, net-metering projects, and open access renewable energy initiatives - will be required to source their solar cells from ALMM List-II, ensuring quality and reliability in solar PV cells used in India's energy infrastructure.

Exemptions for Existing Projects

For projects that have already been bid

out but whose last date of bid submission is before the issuance of this order, an exemption will apply, allowing them to proceed without the requirement to use solar PV cells from List-II, even if their commissioning date is post-1st June 2026. However, for all future bids, the requirement to source both solar PV modules and cells from the respective ALMM lists will be mandatory, marking a decisive shift towards quality assurance and sustainability in India's solar power sector.

'New Realities, New Opportunities': AVPN South Asia Summit 2024 Announces Major Cross-Sector Initiatives

Chennai Dec 10 2024: AVPN, the largest network of social investors in Asia, kicked off its South Asia Summit 2024 in Chennai, India. Centred around the theme 'New Realities, New Opportunities', the Summit focuses on addressing South Asia's social challenges by advancing impactful solutions in climate action, health impact, youth empowerment and livelihoods, and gender equality. The two-day Summit will convene influential global leaders, social investors, policymakers, and impact leaders to drive solutions and social investments targeting the region's most pressing socio-economic and environmental issues.

The Summit will feature over 40 sessions and 90 speakers from around the globe, including senior officials from the Government of India, NITI Aayog, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Blue Planet, Reliance Foundation, among others. Esteemed speakers include; J. Kumaragurubaran, Commissioner of the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC); Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary of the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu; Innocent Divya, IAS, Managing Director, Naan Mudhalvan, Tamil



Nadu Skill Development Corporation and more.

Speaking on the occasion, Naina Subberwal Batra, CEO, AVPN, said "The South Asia Summit 2024 is a pivotal platform for advancing contextual perspectives and co-creating innovative, localised solutions. Through cross-sector partnerships and innovative financing models, we unlock the entire continuum of capital to bridge the SDG finance gap. Hosting the Summit in Chennai for the first time is particularly exciting—a city rich in culture and innovation—not only to catalyse dialogue and insights into scalable, region-specific models for social and environmental change but also to foster exchange between South Asia, Asia, and the world. This unique convergence allows South Asia to share its strengths and learn from global best practices, while showcasing India as a hub for innovation and collaboration."

The Summit's climate action track will spotlight initiatives for sustainable urban

development. With Blue Planet as the anchor partner, a key feature of the Summit is the Climate Pathfinders Workshop at Chennai's Perungudi Dumpsite, where delegates can experience first-hand the transformation of urban waste into sustainable solutions.

Prashant Singh, Co-founder and CEO, Blue Planet, commented "Waste management is crucial to climate action, especially in South Asia's densely populated cities. By viewing waste as a resource, we can unlock innovative solutions that upcycle and repurpose, reducing landfills and driving a circular economy. Blue Planet's integrated technologies transform waste into energy, reusable materials, and sustainable products. The AVPN South Asia Summit 2024 and the Climate Pathfinder's Workshop offers a vital platform to showcase these practices and mobilise investments in sustainable urban waste solutions. Through innovation and social inclusion, we aim to address climate vulnerability while building

resilient communities and ecosystems, harmonising growth with environmental stewardship."

The healthcare sessions at the Summit will highlight digital solutions and community-based models to expand medical access, while gender equality discussions will focus on women's economic empowerment and gender-lens investing to advance Sustainable Development Goals. The youth and livelihood track will showcase successful skill development and entrepreneurship initiatives, emphasising pathways to meaningful employment in the digital economy. Together, these themes underscore AVPN's commitment to sustainable social impact across South Asia through strategic investment and collaboration.

The South Asia Summit 2024 is one of AVPN's signature events, marking the beginning of a series of regional summits across Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia in early 2025. These will culminate in the AVPN Global Conference in September 2025 in Hong Kong, bringing together social investors from around the world to address Asia-Pacific's unique challenges. The regional summits aim to spotlight local issues, fostering community-led solutions to global challenges.

Indian tourists struggle to obtain Dubai visa

Chennai, Dec 11 2024: The new visa rules laid out by Dubai's emigration department is posing as hindrance to the Indian tourists who wish to visit the city during the Dubai Shopping Festival from December 8 to December 14. The department last month introduced stricter requirements for those who wish to apply for tourist visas mandating the travellers to furnish hotel booking documents and a copy of their return tickets.

Confirmed return flight tickets: A tourist



must provide a copy of their confirmed return flight tickets to demonstrate their intention to leave Dubai after your visit. Earlier, these documents were required only if asked

by airport officers.

Proof of accommodation: A tourist must furnish confirmation of a hotel booking or other evidence of where they will stay in Dubai.

Financial

resources: A traveller show proof of funds enough to cover their expenses during their trip, such as bank statements or a sponsorship letter.

Submission by authorised travel agents: The applications for tourist visas can be processed either online or through authorised travel agencies. However, the visit visas can still be submitted by trading companies, individuals, or families. However, the same documentation requirements apply to both visa categories.

Blue Cloud Softech Solutions Ltd. bags US\$ 15 Mln order to provide advanced MDM solutions for medical devices

Chennai Dec 11 2024: Blue Cloud Softech an innovative AIoT solutions provider and a leading player specializing in AI-driven solutions across various fields, has announced that it has signed a contract to deliver its BLUPOINT- Mobile Device Management (MDM) platform specifically designed to optimize the management of biomedical devices.

BLUPOINT is a cutting-edge platform tailored for Healthcare Organizations. It empowers healthcare organizations to enhance their biomedical device management by leveraging advanced technologies that ensure robust security. With strong encryption, remote management capabilities, and granular access controls. Also this solution meets stringent regulatory



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serving technology better

requirements, including HIPAA compliance.

The platform streamlines device management through features such as remote configuration, centralized inventory tracking, and timely firmware updates. Furthermore, BLUPOINT enhances workflows by enabling efficient app distribution, automated user provisioning, and remote troubleshooting.

MDM allows IT teams to remotely configure and update biomedical devices, reducing downtime and ensuring consistent settings across the organization. MDM

provides a centralized platform to track and manage the entire fleet of biomedical devices, including their location, status, and maintenance schedules, and facilitates the timely distribution and deployment of firmware updates, enhancing device security and functionality.

By leveraging MDM solutions, healthcare organizations can effectively manage and secure their biomedical devices, improve operational efficiency, and ultimately enhance patient care.

In addition, BLUPOINT provides healthcare providers

with real-time data access and improved team collaboration. By offering secure mobile access, it enhances the patient experience and facilitates informed decision-making at the point of care.

"We are excited to secure the MDM order along with secure OS development for the medical devices and bring our innovative solutions to the healthcare sector," said Ms. Janaki Yarlagadda at Blue Cloud Softech Solutions Ltd. She also said that "BLUPOINT is designed to empower organizations to manage their biomedical devices effectively, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes."

Nissan Strengthens Leadership Team with the appointment and role expansion of Abhishek Arora as Director - DND-CQT & Transformation

Chennai Dec 11 2024: Nissan Motor India (NMIPL) announced today the appointment and role expansion of Abhishek Arora as Director - Dealer Network Development and Customer Quality Training (DND-CQT), in addition to his current role as Director - Transformation & New Projects, effective from 14 November 2024. In his new role, Abhishek will lead the brand's channel development and management, driving strategic initiatives linked to network development and business to ensure Nissan is future ready for the upcoming products. His deep expertise in managing premium automotive networks is set to bring significant value to Nissan's India CBU business, further strengthening its market presence.

Abhishek had joined



Nissan in September 2024 as Director - Transformation and New Projects and was given interim charge of Director - DND-CQT in October 2024. He will now lead the DND-CQT function full time and continue to manage transformation projects. In his previous role with Audi India, he led key functions such as Network Development, Business Management, Sales Training, and the Used Car Business.

Prior to Audi, Abhishek worked with General Motors, Tata Motors, and Honda Motorcycles, further enriching his expertise in channel sales, planning, and managing premium car networks.

Speaking on the appointment and role expansion, Mr. Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India (NMIPL) said, "We are delighted to welcome Abhishek Arora at Nissan as

Director - DND-CQT in addition to his current responsibilities in driving Transformation Projects. We are confident that his extensive experience and strategic leadership in the premium automotive space will play an important role in strengthening our network capabilities. His leadership will ensure that we are well-positioned to execute our upcoming product launches and further enhance customer experience as we work towards long-term growth and success in this dynamic market with a mix of localized and CBU products."

This appointment reflects on Nissan's focus on delivering excellence in network development, customer quality, and experience, ensuring business continuity as the company drives forward with its ambitious plans for the Indian market.

Srinagar records coldest night at -5.4°C

Chennai Dec 11 2024: Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, experienced its coldest night of the season on Tuesday, with temperatures plummeting to a bone-chilling minus 5.4°C.

The famous ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district recorded an even

harsher -9.0°C, maintaining its status as the coldest place in the region for the second consecutive day, while the picturesque tourist destination of Pahalgam in south Kashmir registered a freezing -8.4°C, the Meteorological Centre in Srinagar said.

The unprecedented

cold wave has disrupted daily activities across the Kashmir Valley.

In Srinagar, the temperature dropped sharply during the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday, recording a low of -5.4°C compared to -3.3°C on the previous night, marking a significant dip of 4.8°C below the

seasonal average.

Other parts of the valley also faced a sharp decline in temperatures. Qazigund, the gateway town on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway, recorded -6.4°C on Tuesday, a drop from -5.2°C the previous night, and 5.7°C below the normal for this time of year.