

# Only 6.7 per cent court infrastructure at district level female-friendly, says CJJ

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on Sunday said the fact that only 6.7 per cent court infrastructure at the district level is female-friendly needs to be changed. Speaking at the National Conference of the District Judiciary, Chandrachud said it should be ensured that courts provide safe and accommodating environment for all members of society. "We must without any question, change the fact that only 6.7 per cent of our court infrastructure at the district level is female-friendly. Is this acceptable today in a nation where at the basic level of recruitment in some States over 60 or 70 per cent of the recruits are women? Our focus areas are on increasing accessibility measures which can be under-



stood by carrying out infrastructural audits. "Opening in-court medical facilities, creches and technological projects like e-seva Kendras and video conferencing devices. These endeavours aim to increase access to justice. "Axiomatically, we must also

ensure that our courts provide a safe and accommodating environment for all members of our society, particularly for groups such as women and other vulnerable groups such as persons with disability, members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and people across the socio-

economic landscape," the CJJ said. Chandrachud said with the increasing number of women coming into the judiciary, the biases which we may unwittingly have towards our colleagues at the bar and the bench must be confronted. He also disclosed that at the recently concluded the first-ever National Lok Adalat, almost 1,000 cases were disposed of amicably within five working days. The two-day function was organised by the Supreme Court. President Droupadi Murmu delivered the valedictory address and also unveiled the flag and insignia of the Supreme Court, a statement issued by the apex Court said on Friday. Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and Justice Surya Kant also addressed the gathering.

# BJP's Minority Morcha to put counterviews in support of reforms in Waqf Boards



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid strident criticism of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill by some major Muslim bodies, the BJP's 'Minority Morcha' will rally counterviews in support of reforms in Waqf boards and seek suggestions on the law to present it to the parliamentary committee examining the Bill. Sources said a team of seven BJP members, including State Waqf Board chairpersons, will elicit views of the minority community across the country and assuage their concerns on a host of issues. "We will convey to the committee every point of view. If there is any concern on any aspect of the Bill, we will express it as well. But the

need for reforms in Waqf boards is felt by the community everywhere," a BJP leader claimed. They Minority Morcha will share the report with the BJP leadership and the parliamentary panel headed by veteran party MP Jagdambika Pal. The committee members include Shadab Shams, Sanwar Patel and Mohsin Lokhandwala, who head the boards in Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, and Haryana Waqf Board administrator Zakir Hussain among others. The issue was also flagged in a last week meeting of the Minority Morcha at the BJP headquarters here. The party leadership, sources said, told the Morcha head Jamal Siddiqui to reach out to Muslims across the country to make a case for reforms in the Waqf Act so that Waqf boards functioning could be made more accountable and transparent. The Morcha was also asked to seek suggestions and assurance the community's concerns. Major Muslim bodies like Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind and All India Muslim Personal Law Board have been galvanising opinion against the proposed Bill, alleging that it is against their religious practices and violates the Constitution. BJP leaders said the government had started working on the bill during its second term and has spoken to a number of stakeholders.



# MHA forms Central team to assess damage caused by floods in Gujarat

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs has constituted an inter-ministerial team to assess the damage caused by rainfall and floods in Gujarat. The team will shortly visit the flood-affected districts of Gujarat, which was hit by heavy to extremely heavy rainfall between August 25 and 30 caused by a deep depression formed over Rajasthan and Gujarat, according to an official statement. At least 25 people have died in rain-related incidents across the State on August 26 and 27.

The statement said the MHA has constituted an inter-ministerial central team (IMCT) led by the executive director, the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), to assess the damage caused by rainfall and floods in Gujarat, the statement said.

Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan were also affected by heavy to very heavy rainfall. Multiple spells of heavy rains, cloudbursts and landslides have caused extensive damage in Himachal Pradesh this year. The MHA is in touch with senior officers of these states, and will depute IMCT there as well, if the severe damages are reported by them, the statement said.

During this monsoon, some other states have been affected by heavy rainfall, floods, cloudbursts and landslides. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Central Government is fully committed to providing all possible help to affected states, the statement said.

As per the decision taken by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, in August 2019, the MHA, this year, constituted IMCTs which have visited flood and landslides-affected States of Assam, Kerala, Mizoram, and Tripura in advance for on-spot assessment of the damage without waiting for their memorandum.

The IMCT for Nagaland has also been constituted, which will visit the affected areas of the state shortly.

# Expect good Wayanad relief package from Centre, says CM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Kerala Government has sought a Rs 2,000 crore relief package from the Centre for the unprecedented devastation that occurred in Wayanad recently and is hopeful of getting "good assistance", Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said here.

He also dismissed as "not pragmatic" the recommendations made by the Madhav Gadgil and Kasturirangan committees on ecologically sensitive areas of the Western Ghats, saying the panels did not consider the societal expectations and ground realities in his state.

Speaking to PTI this weekend during an interview on the Wayanad landslides, the chief minister said the State Government has decided to construct new townships for the families of the victims and the survivors of the unprecedented devastation "within a year" and these dwellings would be "climate-resilient and sustainable". Vijayan said the State sought a disaster relief package of about Rs 2,000 crore from the Centre when he recently met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi. The PM was "very positive" on the issue and the state was hopeful of getting "good assistance" from the Union Government, he added. The Chief Minister said the funds were expected to be



released after a central team submitted a report to the Union Government. Vijayan added that categorising the Wayanad landslides as a "national or severe calamity" would enable all parliamentarians to donate Rs 1 crore each to the Kerala relief fund, otherwise only the local MPs will be able to do so. "If this disaster is included in that (national or severe calamity) category, we will get good assistance. It will create a good atmosphere for reconstruction," he told the news agency. The 79-year-old veteran Marxist politician said the July 30 disaster that wiped off large tracts of three villages -- Punchirimmattam, Chooralmala and Mundakkai -- apart from some areas of Attamala in Wayanad has "shaken the lives of our people, leaving those affected with unimaginable trauma and concerns about their future". "The recent landslide in Chooralmala village has caused unprecedented devastation. I would like to assure that our

Government's primary objective is to provide a comprehensive rehabilitation package to the survivors. "We are committed to providing the best possible rehabilitation package to the survivors, in line with the Kerala model of development with its people-centric approach," he said. Vijayan recently said during an all-party meeting that the Wayanad survivors would be housed in one or two townships which will have single-storey houses of about 1,000 square feet in size with the option to expand to two storeys in the future. "Our priority is to ensure that families who lost their homes in the landslides have a safe and secure place to reside. The construction of the townships is expected to be completed within a year," he told PTI. On the recommendations made by the Madhav Gadgil and Kasturirangan committees on handling the fragile and ecologically sensitive areas along the Western Ghats,

Vijayan said these reports were "not fully accepted by the entities that commissioned them." This highlights the fact, he said, that "much of the recommendations in these reports were not pragmatic and did not consider societal aspirations and ground realities". "At least some parts of the reports did not consider humans dwelling in ecologically fragile zones for centuries as part of the ecosystem," the chief minister added. He also underlined that "small and marginal" farmers cannot be equated with rich realtors, planters or miners occupying similar terrains. "There was no such differentiation in these reports, which is why many States were forced to completely disregard them," Vijayan said.

He added that it was also "not desirable" for his Government to take a position in a "hasty manner" without "adequately studying the draft Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) notification issued by the Centre recently. The notification issued on July 31 seeks to declare over 56,800 square kilometres of the Western Ghats across six States, including 13 villages in Kerala's landslide-hit Wayanad, as an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA). It invited suggestions and objections within 60 days. "We have to wait to hear from the local self-Governments and eventually take an informed decision on it.

# Govt mulling to extend security for gig workers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Labour and Employment move comes close

Months after the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued a notice to the Centre regarding allegations of "anti-labour practices" at an Amazon India warehouse in Manesar, Haryana, Union Labour and Employment Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya has announced that the Government is exploring ways to extend social security coverage for those serving in the sector.

Gig workers, who take on short-term or project-based jobs often for multiple clients rather than being employed by a single company, will be registered on the eShram Portal to facilitate the implementation of these social security measures, said the Minister at a review meeting here.

Dr Mandaviya emphasised the development of a comprehensive strategy to ensure these workers receive the social security benefits they are entitled to. The Minister also highlighted that companies employing gig and platform workers will be encouraged to lead this registration effort. An online window will be provided for aggregators to streamline the registration process. He underscored the significance of the Code on Social Security, which marks the first formal recognition of gig and platform workers in India. This step aims to acknowledge and formalise their roles within the economy.



on the heels of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) suo moto cognizance taken in June when it launched an investigation into human rights violations of the gig workers at an Amazon warehouse in Haryana, where even basic amenities like restrooms were reportedly missing. The NHRC also demanded answers from the Central Labour Ministry. Labour associations have accused five warehouses in and around Manesar of violating regulations under the Factories Act, 1948. These cases highlight the broader issue of gig workers' exploitation by the companies that employ them. According to NITI Aayog, the number of gig workers could expand to 23.5 million by 2029-30 from the 7.7 million they are at now. The lack of robust legislation addressing new forms of labor, particularly gig and platform work, affects workers, especially women, who often struggle to maintain a living wage and stay in the workforce.

# India sets ambitious goal of hosting 10 cr foreign tourists by 2047: Tourism Ministry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India currently hosts around 110 million foreign tourists annually, the ambitious goal is to increase this number to 100 million during the 'Amrit Kaal' period, said Mugdha Sinha, Director General of the Tourism Ministry here. In this regard she enlisted various measures being implemented to attract more international visitors and boost the inbound tourism sector. Amrit Kaal is the Prime Minister's vision 2047 for 'New India'. Majorly, the focus is on how the tourism industry, private and the Government sector can collaborate effectively. Efforts are also being made to



encourage repeat visits by foreign tourists, said the new DG of the Tourism Ministry while talking to reporters here at the conclusion of the three-day BLTM 2024 event. On the occasion, Uttarakhnd's Tourism Minister Satpal Maharaj stated that tourism in India is expanding rapidly. "The world is opening its doors to Indian

tourism will generate more employment opportunities for locals." He emphasised the connection between local crafts and travel-tourism. Sanjeev Agarwal, founder and CEO of Fairfest Media Limited, the organizers of the expo, pointed out that to further strengthen the tourism sector, the country's railway network needs to be improved. He pointed out that India has a vast railway network that requires enhancement. According to estimates, India's MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 6 per cent between 2024 and 2029, reflecting the increasing significance of MICE in the

tourism industry. The Indian Exhibition Industry Association noted that the value of this industry was USD709 million in 2023 and is projected to reach USD1,283 billion by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 10.5 per cent. On the occasion, Jyoti Maydeo, President of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAAI), emphasised the pivotal role of India's travel and tourism industry in the Nation's economy. "The industry contributes 10 per cent to the GDP and generates approximately USD 78 billion annually. By 2029, it is expected to create 53 million jobs and attract 30.5 million travelers, highlighting its substantial growth potential.

# Bishnoi community welcomes EC's decision to defer Haryana polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

The Bishnoi community has thanked the Election Commission for deferring the Haryana Assembly poll date to October 5 from October 1 in view of the centuries-old festival of the community. The ruling BJP has also welcomed the Election Commission's decision. The EC on Saturday deferred the Haryana Assembly poll date, saying the decision was taken keeping in mind the Bishnoi community's festival. Som Prakash Bishnoi, Akhil Bhattarji Bishnoi Mahasabha's Vice President, said the entire community thanks the Election Commission for its decision to



Lakhs of members of the Bishnoi community take part in the festival and it takes 15-20 days to organise it, he said. "Earlier, we were worried what if people (Bishnoi community) cannot vote as they would be travelling or if they are not able to take part in the event too. Now, with the new poll date, our problem has been solved and we thank the EC for this," he said. Before the revision of the date, the Haryana polls were to be held along with the third and last phase of the Jammu and

Kashmir elections. The decision to postpone the Haryana elections has been taken to honour both the voting rights and traditions of the Bishnoi community which has upheld a 300-400-year-old practice in remembrance of their Guru Jambheshwar, the EC said on Saturday.

It said it had received a representation from the National President of the All India Bishnoi Mahasabha, Bikaner, Rajasthan for rescheduling the Haryana Assembly polls. Generations of families from Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana visit their native village Mukam in Rajasthan on 'amavas' in the month of 'Asoj' for the annual festival in Bikaner in memory of Guru Jambheshwar, according to the EC.

# Ex-ISRO scientist's wind technology poised to support India's targets for Carbon Net Zero by 2070

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A team led by a former ISRO scientist Rakesh Aggarwal has developed cost-effective green efficient GARV (Guided Airflow Rotational Vortex) technology in wind sector, offering a promising solution to support India's ambitious targets for Carbon Net Zero by 2070. Validated by BITS, Goa, this groundbreaking technology based on 'drag cum lift wind turbine' concept is patented in several major jurisdictions, including India, the US, Australia, Russia, New Zealand,

and European countries. Talking about its key features, Aggarwal explained the technology utilises a unique design that creates a rotational vortex effect, which significantly increases the amount of wind energy captured by the turbine blades. This results in a higher conversion rate of wind energy into electrical power when compared to the conventional turbines. "It achieves this by optimising airflow and reducing the wear and tear on turbine components, leading to lower maintenance costs and a longer lifespan," said the senior scientist, an expert in electric and con-

trol designs. Aggarwal noted that it took him 3-4 years to develop the technology, which he feels can be a game changer in the green sector as it can adapt to various wind speeds. "These GARV turbines are capable of operating efficiently across a wide range of wind speeds, from low to very high. This adaptability ensures consistent energy generation even in areas with fluctuating wind conditions." Similar to other innovations in green technology, GARV wind turbines developed under the umbrella of TDR Foundation, a non-prof-



it organisation can be fabricated and installed locally, reducing transportation costs and supporting local manufacturing industries. "A unique feature of this wind turbine technology is its adaptability—it can be fabricated and installed directly at the site and can handle a range of capacities from a few kilowatts to several megawatts. The system optimises drag force into torque, enabling it to generate electricity from very low wind speeds to speeds exceeding 200 km/h," said Aggarwal. He said the turbines can generate electricity from wind speeds of a

few kilometres per hour to above 200 kilometres per hour and has the capacity to meet the energy needs of India and other countries with cheap green energy making fossil fuels irrelevant. Its innovative approach and cost advantages make it a potential game-changer in the wind energy sector, offering economically viable alternative to conventional energy sources, said Aggarwal, reflecting on his childhood dream of developing an indigenous concept, which also aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Make in India' and 'Go local Go Vocal'.