

Haryana Cabinet approves housing, EV, MSME and governance reforms

CHANDIGARH: The Haryana Cabinet on Tuesday approved a series of decisions aimed at promoting affordable housing, boosting industries, improving governance, strengthening welfare measures and encouraging electric mobility.

In a major relief for beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban 2.0, the Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, approved a sharp reduction in stamp duty and registration charges for Economically Weaker Section (EWS) beneficiaries purchasing eligible dwelling units of up to 60 square metres.

Under the decision, eligible beneficiaries will pay only Rs 500 as stamp duty and Rs 500 as registration fee per conveyance deed.

At present, stamp duty is charged at 5 per cent along with 2 per cent additional duty, while registration fees are levied on a slab basis.

The government said the move would reduce the financial burden on beneficiaries and support the "Housing for All" mission.

The Cabinet also approved a Bill to establish Kusum International University in Rewari through an amend-



ment to the Haryana Private Universities Act, 2006.

The government said the university would help expand higher education capacity and contribute towards achieving the National Education Policy 2020 target of a 50 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio.

To improve financial accountability, the Cabinet approved the draft Haryana Local Audit Bill, 2026, which proposes a statutory framework for independent audits of local bodies and institutions receiving pub-

lic funds.

The Bill empowers the Local Audit Department to issue surcharge notices, seek records and submit audit reports to the State Legislature within fixed timelines.

The government also unveiled the Haryana Progressive MSME and Export Promotion Policy 2026, describing it as the state's most comprehensive policy for micro, small and medium enterprises.

The policy includes 60 initiatives aimed at attracting Rs 55,000 crore

in manufacturing investment, creating more than five lakh jobs and doubling the state's exports over the next five years.

It offers incentives such as capital and interest subsidies, credit support, export assistance, common infrastructure, technology adoption and sustainability measures.

The Cabinet approved compensation of Rs 7.5 lakh for the legal heirs of persons who die due to unnatural causes in police custody, including torture, suicide, quarrels among detainees or negligence by police personnel.

Compensation will not be paid in cases of natural deaths, illness, escape attempts or natural disasters.

In torture cases, at least half of the compensation amount will be recovered from the salaries of the guilty police officials.

In another decision, the Cabinet extended 20 per cent horizontal reservation for Haryana domicile ex-Agniveers in recruitment to posts of Fire Operator-cum-Driver, Wildlife Guard, Constable in the Indian Reserve Battalion and State Disaster Response Force.

Power employees, Aam Aadmi Clinics staff end strike: Cheema

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema on Tuesday said 16 unions of the Punjab State Power Corporation and staff unions of 'Aam Aadmi Clinics' called off their strikes and returned to work.

He said the decision followed extensive marathon negotiations over the past two days to address core grievances, including accepting key demands of the health staff and establishing a dedicated financial committee for power sector employees.

Addressing the media here, Cheema said, "Following intensive deliberations with Power Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond and the PSPCL CMD, followed by a marathon five-hour session chaired by me at the Patiala Head Office, a consensus was reached with all 16 power sector unions."

He said the key participating unions, including the Technical Services Union PSEB, PSEB Employee Federation AITUC, Ministerial Services Union PSEB and the Association of Junior Engineers, agreed to restore normal functioning.



"To address the financial aspects of their demands, the government has constituted a dedicated financial committee set to submit its final report by August 15," he added.

The minister further said the issue involving the health sector has also been resolved following a meeting between Aam Aadmi Clinics (AAC) union representatives and the Managing Director of the National Health Mission (NHM).

"The state government accepted the union's primary demand to count their service experience when filling regular posts, while the re-

maining administrative demands remain under active consideration," Cheema said.

The minister also highlighted the progress regarding sanitation and sewerage board workers, with key unions withdrawing their calls following discussions with him and minister Harjot Singh Bains.

Cheema said, "An ordinance to transition outsourced staff into contractual roles has been submitted to the Governor, paving the way for enhanced job security and service conditions for thousands of workers across the state."

Scope for errors like leaks would be less if states handle education as much as possible: CM Reddy

HYDERABAD: Alleging that the Centre is trying to indirectly exercise control over states in the education sector, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday said scope for errors such as leaks of exam papers would be less if education is handled by the states as much as possible.

Responding to the Telangana High Court's directive to the Chief Secretary to relieve HYDRAA Commissioner A V Ranganath, he said appointment of officials is the state government's prerogative.

The government has confidence in the judiciary, and it would face the cases in courts, he said.

He alleged that the Centre is trying to "snatch away" the powers in the domain of the state with regard to some examinations in the education department concerning rural areas. He, however, did not specify the exams.

"At least now, not only NEET but also other exams, the Centre should stop its attempts to indirectly exercise power over universities. Scope for errors would be less if education is handled by state governments as much as possible," he told reporters in Delhi.

He felt that problems such as leaks of question papers are cropping up more when the exams are conducted offline.

He said the state government would take measures to prevent question paper leaks after the legislation against paper leak is passed in parliament.

On the High Court's directive on July 27 to remove Ranganath as Commissioner of Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) while dealing with a contempt of court case, Reddy said HYDRAA is the "greatest reform" of his government.

Those who encroached upon government lands and public parks are "misleading courts" and also filed contempt petitions, he said.

"Appointment of officers is the prerogative of the government. None can snatch away that power. We have full confidence in the judiciary. We will face it in courts," he said.

Referring to 63 contempt petitions filed against Ranganath, Reddy said a top official in the previous BRS government had 400 contempt pleas against him.

The state government has protected lakes, drainages and water bodies through HYDRAA, which would be empowered, he said. HYDRAA earned praise from various quarters in the country, he said.

Citing examples, he dismissed criticism that HYDRAA did not act against "influential people".

A leader of the opposition BRS leader encroached Bathukammakunta lake in the city and later filed a contempt of court petition, he said.

Kerala's investment policies to remain unchanged despite govt change: Minister Kunhalikutty

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Kerala's industrial investment policies will remain consistent regardless of changes in government, Minister P K Kunhalikutty said on Tuesday, reaffirming the state's commitment to policy stability for investors.

"Ministries may come and go, but policies will stay," Kunhalikutty said while addressing industry representatives from across the state at a consultation organised by the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation under the aegis of the Department of Industries and Commerce.

Projects announced under the Invest Kerala initiative will continue as planned, the state minister for Industries, Commerce, IT and AI said.

The government will roll out three major initiatives—the Investment Advisory Council, the Invest Kerala Cell and Kerala Desks abroad—as part of its 100-day programme.

It is developing a comprehensive investment ecosystem aimed at transforming Kerala from a remittance-dependent economy into one driven by investments, he said.

Industry feedback will be sought before the initiatives are finalised, with implementation planned through executive orders and legislative measures, he added.

On the state's investment agenda, Kunhalikutty said the government is taking steps to establish a board and a council while according top priority to Ease of Doing Business reforms.

He stressed that the government's policies would remain investor-friendly, underlining Kerala's growing reputation as an investment destination.

"Kerala is widely regarded as one of the most suitable destinations for starting businesses and making investments. The state is the go-to destination for industries in India," he said.

Kunhalikutty said investor grievances had declined significantly, aided by improvements in technology and infrastructure.

Pradhan returns to Odisha to rousing welcome from BJP MLAs, BJD says event tried to conceal failure

BHUBANESWAR: Senior BJP leader Dharmendra Pradhan was on Tuesday accorded a warm welcome by Odisha ministers and party MLAs at the Bhubaneswar airport upon his return to his home state for the first time after resigning as the Union education minister in the face of massive student and youth protests.

However, both the opposition parties, the BJD and Congress ridiculed the grand welcome of Pradhan, saying it was an "attempt to conceal his failure and protect his image".

At least five state ministers -- Suryabanshi Suraj (higher education), Nityananda Gond (mass

education), Rabi Narayan Naik (panchayati raj), Mukesh Mahaling (health) and Sampad Chandra Swain (industries) -- and 21 other BJP legislators, two former MLAs and senior party leaders welcomed the Sambalpur MP at the Biju Patnaik International Airport here.

'Dharmendra Pradhan zindabad' slogan rented the air as his supporters lined either side of the road to welcome their leader. Pradhan stepped down as the Union education minister on July 25, taking moral responsibility for the irregularities in the conduct of the NEET-UG 2026 examination held on May 3.

Pradhan's supporters



are projecting him as a "hero" as he is the first minister in the Narendra Modi government who stepped down on "moral grounds".

"Of the 79 MLAs, 26 legislators, including five

ministers, were present at the airport to welcome Pradhan. This reflects his acceptability among party lawmakers," a political observer said.

Odisha BJP leaders, including Chief Minis-

DTU launches executive programmes in clean energy, corporate sustainability

NEW DELHI: Delhi Technological University (DTU) has launched two executive education programmes in collaboration with edtech platform VCnow to equip working professionals with skills in renewable energy management and corporate sustainability.

The programmes, introduced through the university's Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning (CTEL) under the Department of Digital Education, include the Advanced Programme in Renewable and Sustainable Energy Management and the Leadership Programme in CSR, Energy & Corporate Sustainability.

According to the university, the first programme commenced with an orientation session on July 12, while the second began with its academic orientation on July 19.

The six-month programmes will be conducted in a blended format, comprising live online classes on Sundays, a three-day campus immersion, six academic modules and a capstone project.

DTU said the inaugural batch comprises professionals from India, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates, representing sectors including power generation, electrici-

ty distribution, energy storage, green finance, manufacturing, higher education and defence services.

Vice-Chancellor Prateek Sharma said the programmes were aimed at promoting lifelong learning and building expertise in the rapidly evolving clean energy sector.

He said the courses align with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) and contribute to the vision of Viksit Bharat by preparing professionals for emerging sustainability challenges.

Dean of Digital Education, S Indu, said the university remains committed to delivering technology-enabled and industry-oriented education that addresses global climate and sustainability concerns.

The university said participants in the renewable energy programme will have access to the facilities at its Nodal Centre of Excellence in Energy Transition (NCEET), including the Yogi Goswami Clean Energy Laboratory.

Representatives of VCnow, DTU's academic partner for the programmes, said the growing global focus on clean energy and sustainability has created an urgent need for professionals with specialised knowledge in these fields.

Shinde directs officials to fast track completion of 900-bed hospital complex in Thane

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday directed officials to complete the remaining works of the upcoming 900-bed district hospital complex in Thane on a "fast-track" basis to make it operational.

The project, comprising a district general hospital, a women's and children's hospital and a super-speciality hospital, aims to provide world-class and advanced healthcare facilities to the common citizens of Thane and neighbouring Palghar district.

Shinde separately held a review of departments held by Shiv Sena ministers. The meeting was attended by Shiv Sena ministers Prakash Abitkar (health), Dada Bhuse (school education), Gulabrao Patil (water supply and sanitation), Uday Samant (industries), Shambhuraj Desai (tourism), Sanjay Shirsat (social justice), Sanjay Rathod (soil and water conservation), and Pratap Sarnaik (transport).

During a review meeting held in the Deputy Chief Minister's



Committee Room in Mantralaya, a detailed assessment was made of the current status of Thane Civil Hospital and the progress achieved so far.

Additional Chief Secretary to the Deputy Chief Minister Aseem Gupta; Principal Secretary Navin Sonar; Health Department Secretary E. Ravindran; District Collector Shrikrishna Panchal; Thane Municipal Corporation Additional Commissioner Sandeep Malvi; and District Civil Surgeon Dr Kailas Pawar were also part of the meeting.

Shinde instructed senior officials to accelerate every phase of the project while ensuring that no administrative delays are tolerated.

During the meeting, it was pointed out that although the hospital building has been completed, operations cannot commence due to the lack of an electricity connection.

Shinde directed that all work related to providing power connectivity to this essential healthcare facility be completed within the stipulated timeframe.

Assam oppn MLAs seek Rs 10000 crore from Centre for flood relief

GUWAHATI: Opposition members in the Assam Assembly on Tuesday demanded a special package of Rs 10,000 crore from the Centre for relief and rehabilitation of the flood, which wreaked havoc in parts of the state.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pijush Hazarika said that 68 people have lost their lives in this year's "unprecedented" deluge, and admitted that the administration could not reach all affected people.

During a Zero Hour discussion on the flood, which caused devastation in Charaideo, Sivasagar and Jorhat districts, Congress, Trinamool Congress and AIUDF criticised the disaster management authority's handling of the situation.

"This time, it has been an extremely devastating flood. People who went to rescue the stranded ones have also died. People are still affected even after nine days. There are heavy layers of mud and silt everywhere," TMC MLA Sherman Ali Ahmed said.

He alleged that the government failed to provide relief to the people, while agencies like SDRF and NDRF also could not rescue the most affected victims, resulting in the deaths of a huge number of people.

"The Centre should have already declared a special package. The Prime Minister and Home Minister always claim that



their hearts cry for Assam. Now, they give a financial package of Rs 10,000 to Assam," Ahmed said.

He also requested Assembly Speaker Ranjeet Kumar Dass to lead a team to the affected areas to enquire about the condition of the flood victims.

Supporting Ahmed, Congress MLA Jakir Hussain Sikdar said that the entire Upper Assam region has not seen such a flood in the last 100 years.

"Now, it is our duty to give relief to the people. The state government should ask for special assistance from the Centre to remake the lives of the people in those areas," he added.

The opposition member further demanded that every family, irrespective of economic condition, be given a one-time assistance to rebuild their life.

"The state government should move a resolution to declare the Assam flood a

national disaster. This will help get more funds to handle the crisis," Sikdar said.

AIUDF MLA Mazibur Rahman said multiple agencies are involved in managing the flood, but nobody could give proper relief to the victims.

"Authorities like Assam State Disaster Management Authority have totally failed. The government should think everything afresh so that such a situation never arises in future," he added.

Responding to the allegations, complaints and suggestions, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pijush Hazarika said the latest wave of flood was "unprecedented and unnatural" from all angles.

"The flood which occurs naturally every year has been contained in 80 per cent of the locations due to strengthening of the embankments. We are yet to work on 130 km more embankments, but this has nothing to do with the later flood," he added.

The flood in Upper Assam has created havoc, killing a large number of people, Hazarika said.

He said that a total of 68 people have lost their lives in this year's flood, with Sivasagar accounting for the highest number of deceased at 30, followed by 20 in Charaideo, nine in Jorhat, two in Golaghat and seven in other districts.