

E100 fuel gets Govt nod

Paving way for cars running on 100% ethanol

Vehicles that use E20 or normal fuel can't use E85 or E100 fuel

NEW DELHI, Oct 26 (PTI)

THE Road Transport Ministry on Monday notified changes to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, allowing flex-fuel vehicles that can run on up to E100 (nearly pure ethanol).

A senior Road Transport Ministry official said fuel beyond E20 (20 per cent ethanol-blended petrol) and up to E100 is intended only for vehicles designed and certified to use it and will not be applicable for other vehicles. Vehicles that use E20 or normal fuel can't use E85 or E100 fuel. E100 fuel allows vehicles to run on nearly pure ethanol.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has changed certain vehicle classification thresholds, fuel specifications, and technical references used in emission-related tables and testing provisions. Additionally, the Government has raised the vehicle weight limit to 3,500 kg from the previous threshold of 3,000 kg for

(Contd on page 3)



Govt should hike maize-based ethanol procurement rate by 9% to Rs 75/L: AIDA

NEW DELHI, Oct 26 (PTI)

ALL INDIA Distillers' Association (AIDA) on Monday demanded that the Government should increase the procurement rate of maize-based ethanol to Rs 75 per litre for making it remunerative for suppliers.

The association, which represents India's bioethanol and alcohol manufacturing industry, also sought a clear roadmap for the Ethanol Blending

Programme (EBP).

On October 16, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) issued a tender on behalf of oil marketing companies (OMCs), seeking bids for around 11 billion litres of ethanol for the supply year beginning November to meet the requirement of doping 20 per cent ethanol in petrol.

It also reduced the incentive for maize-based ethanol, lowering the procurement price to Rs 68.86 per litre from Rs 71.86.

Israel goes to polls today, uncertainty over Netanyahu's future

■ By Farhan Khan

JERUSALEM, Oct 26 (PTI)

ISRAEL will hold parliamentary elections on Tuesday, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seeking to retain power amid debate over the Government's handling of the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack, the subsequent wars and its domestic and foreign policies.

The election is widely seen as a test of Netanyahu's leadership, as Opposition leaders, including former military chief Gadi Eisenkot and former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, seek to challenge his Right-wing coalition.

Opinion polls indicate neither



Audience members look on as Gadi Eisenkot (inset), leader of the Yashar ('Straight') party speaks at a campaign rally ahead of Israel's general election on Sunday night, in Tel Aviv, Israel. (AP/PTI)

bloc is assured of the parliamentary majority needed to form a Government.

Israel, roughly the size of north-eastern India's Mizoram State, uses a nationwide proportional representation system, with the entire country serving as a single electoral constituency to elect the 120 members of the Knesset, Israel's Parliament. Voters do not elect individual Members Of Parliament. Instead, they vote for closed party lists. This system allows numerous political parties to compete for seats in the legislature. To enter the Knesset, a party must cross the 3.25 per cent electoral threshold, a requirement that often prompts pre-election alliances and mergers.

Serbia's student movement topples President Vucic's decade-long rule in historic upset

BELGRADE, Oct 26 (AP)

THE long-serving strongman leader of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, conceded defeat on Sunday in an election that pitted him and his Right-wing party against a diverse student-led opposition movement that spent two years protesting his Government.

It was a seismic political shift in the Balkan country where Vucic, who had been endorsed by Russian President Vladimir Putin and who denounced the student movement as a foreign-led attempt to unseat him, led with virtually absolute power for 14 years.

High turnout and gathering tensions marked the highly contested parliamentary election that was a showdown between Vucic and his Right-wing Serbian Progressive Party

(Contd on page 3)



People celebrate after Aleksandar Vucic conceded defeat in the parliamentary election in Belgrade, Serbia on Sunday night. (AP/PTI)

Lula elected as Brazil President for fourth time

- In an alleged swipe at US President Trump, Lula said, "Either the homeland remains free, or we die for Brazil." "This country will not accept being anyone's backyard"
- Lula's rival Bolsonaro quickly refused to concede defeat
- PM Modi congratulates Lula on his re-election as President of Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 26 (AP)

BRAZIL'S President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a vocal critic of US President Donald Trump, was re-elected on late Sunday night in a result that provides relief to critics of widening US influence in Latin America.

With 100 per cent of the vote counted, Brazil's electoral court announced that the soon-to-be 81-year-old Lula had a lead of nearly 4.4 million votes over opponent Flavio Bolsonaro, giving him 51.8 per cent of the total vote. Bolsonaro quickly refused to concede defeat and asked for the election results to be annulled after an evening of chaos at some

(Contd on page 3)



Supporters of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva crowd Paulista Avenue during a rally celebrating his victory for a fourth term in the presidential runoff in Sao Paulo, Brazil on Sunday night. (AP/PTI)

Cyclone Arnab nears; Odisha, AP step up measures

BHUBANESWAR/AMARAVATI Oct 26 (PTI)

THE eastern coastal States of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh closed schools, prohibited sea fishing and kept rescue teams on standby, stepping up precautionary measures ahead of Cyclone Arnab's expected landfall on Wednesday to ensure "zero loss of life and minimal damage to infrastructure".

The India Meteorological Department (IMD), in its Monday morning bulletin, said a deep depression over east-central and south-east Bay of Bengal has moved westward and has intensified into cyclonic storm 'Arnab'.

It is likely to cross Andhra Pradesh and Yanam coasts between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam as a very severe cyclonic storm, with maximum sustained winds of 115-125 kmph gusting up to 140 kmph by the forenoon of October 28, it said.

In the national capital, the National Crisis Management Committee reviewed cyclone preparedness, with Cabinet Secretary T V Somanathan saying that besides Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Puducherry, the MHA and

the IMD should alert eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, since high rainfall was also expected there. Somanathan asked agencies to ensure zero loss of life and minimal damage to property and infrastructure and directed them that, in the event of any damage, essential services be restored at the earliest.

While the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have ordered the closure of all schools till Tuesday, the Odisha Government shuttered schools, colleges, and Anganwadi centres in six southern Odisha districts of Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Koraput and Nabarangpur on October 28 and 29.

In view of inclement weather conditions, the State prohibited fishing activities in the sea and entry of tourists in the hills, waterfalls and dams in the six districts. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi deputed eight ministers at separate places to monitor pre-cyclone activities.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu reviewed cyclone preparedness with officials and instructed them to alert people according to the likely impact of the weather system and take all necessary steps to minimise damage.

Govt clears acquisition of military hardware worth Rs 2.12 lakh crore for defence forces

NEW DELHI, Oct 26 (IANS)

THE Government on Monday said it has cleared capital acquisition proposals worth Rs 2.12 lakh crore for defence forces, out of which nearly 82 per cent of the procurements will be made from Indian Industry.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) -- in-principle administrative approval to various capital acquisition proposals of the defence forces -- at an estimated cost of about Rs 2,12,000 crore.

According to an official statement, for the Indian Army, approval was accorded for the procurement of high mobility vehicles (HMT), self-propelled tracked gun systems, gun shot response systems (GSR), light multi-role helicopters (LMRH), very short-range air defence sys-



Kamikaze drone

tems (VSHORADS), platform-based counter unmanned aerial systems (C-UAS), unmanned aerial system brick long range, surveillance UAVs, integrated surveillance and strike system, and long-range kamikaze drone system.

"The HMTs will enhance operational capabilities, logistic support and mobility in challenging terrains. The Self-Propelled Tracked Gun System will provide matching mobility and firepower to mechanised formations. The GSR will serve as a force

multiplier, providing real-time situational awareness of the forces," the statement said.

Moreover, the LMRH will be used by both the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force for reconnaissance and surveillance, combat, search and rescue of troops, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, etc.

The VSHORADS will engage new-generation small-size aerial threats, while C-UAS will enhance the survivability of tanks in the modern battlefield. The surveillance and drone systems will enhance the surveillance and targeting capabilities of the Indian Army.

For the Indian Navy, approval was given for the procurement of Active Offboard Decoy System (AODS) and other major Naval platforms. The AODS will enhance the credibility of anti-missile defence, especially against modern anti-ship missiles of adversaries.

"Pleased to meet a group of defence," he added.

'Atmanirbharta' in defence entering 2nd phase: Rajnath

NEW DELHI, Oct 26 (PTI)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said that India's efforts to achieve 'atmanirbharta' in defence are entering "second phase", asserting that innovators will play the role of "impact players" in the endeavour.

In his address at the plenary session of the Indian Navy's annual seminar Swavlamban 2026 here, he also suggested building a roadmap of specified areas in which self-reliance is needed, and the timelines for achieving those goals.

The Navy is hosting the fifth edition of its flagship seminar at the Manekshaw Centre here on



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at Swavlamban 2026, in New Delhi on Monday. (PTI)

October 26 and 27.

Chief of Defence Staff General N S Raja Subramani, Army chief General Dhiraj Seth and Navy chief Admiral Krishna Swaminathan were also present.

The Defence Minister said the sector, in its bid to achieve self-reliance, has "earned good marks" in its phase one, and now it is entering its second phase.

He said in this next phase, focus should be on delivering outcomes which are of "top end" and of the "state-of-the-art" level. Efforts in second phase should also aim to achieve cost-effectiveness, global competitiveness, high quality, and output to meet operational requirements.

Saudi def pact countries push for peace in Iran

Talks First High-Level Contact Between Tehran & 3 Nations Which Signed Mecca Agreement In Aug

Karachi/Cairo: Top officials from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan met Iranian officials in Tehran on Monday in a bid to de-escalate the conflict in West Asia, as Yemen's Houthis launched new attacks on Saudi Arabia and Egypt approved defence support for the Gulf kingdom. The talks were the first high-level contact between Iran and the three nations — which signed the Mecca mutual defence pact in Aug — since a war that began with US and Israeli strikes on Iran also spread to Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

The Saudi foreign ministry said the visit was intended to open negotiating channels to "prevent the return of military escalation". Saudi Arabia was represented by defence minister Prince Khalid bin Salman, younger brother of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Sal-



(R to L) Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi, President Pezeshkian, and National Security Council head Mohsen Rezaei met Saudi defence minister, Pak army chief, and Turkiye intel chief in Tehran Monday

man; Pakistan by army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir; and Turkiye by intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin, Saudi and Iranian officials said.

Iranian state media published pictures of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, foreign minister Abbas Araghchi and Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, attending the meetings. At the conclusion of the meetings, the four states agreed to continue talks with a view to strengthening cooperation, especially in peace and security, state media reported.

Pakistan and Qatar have led mediation efforts in the war. Qatari mediators were in Tehran Sunday, an official said.

Earlier efforts helped produce an interim peace agreement in June but fighting between Iran and the United States soon resumed. Conflict then flared between the Iran-aligned Houthis and US ally Saudi Arabia, opening a new front.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said Monday's discussions would include "Israel's expansionist policies, developments in the Palestinian territories and Lebanon, and the repercussions of US and Israeli military action against Iran".

Saudi Arabia has intensified strikes against the Houthis since they captured strategic areas along Yemen's Red Sea coast last month, advancing against Saudi-backed gov't forces. The Houthis have hit Saudi airports, ports and oil installations. On Monday, the Houthis said they had attacked pumping stations on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline as well as Riyadh airport. There was no immediate Saudi confirmation of the Houthi attacks. The parliament in Egypt, which has said it is considering joining the Mecca pact, Monday authorised the Egyptian military to help defend Saudi Arabia, a major financial and political partner for Cairo.

Egypt parl okays defence support for Saudis

Lebanese armed group Hezbollah has spent three months preparing for a possible resumption of hostilities with Israel, after receiving an infusion of cash from Iran, according to Lebanese security personnel

briefed on its activities. Invading Israeli forces now occupy its heartland of villages in southern Lebanon, and political pressure has built up in Beirut for its disarmament. It nevertheless remains committed to fighting Israel and has used a lull in hostilities since June to rearm, with a focus on procuring explosives and producing drones that can be flown into Israeli positions, two Lebanese security sources said.

'Hezbollah readies for new war with funds from Iran'

One of the sources, and another close to Hezbollah, said the group had received millions of dollars from Iran to help boost its military capabilities. The group has been restoring command-and-control structures that broke down in key battles, according to one of those sources and three other security officials familiar with the group's operations. REUTERS

Anthony says