

India and Qatar yesterday agreed to elevate their bilateral relations to a Strategic Partnership. An agreement in this regard was signed between the two countries following delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, in New Delhi. Briefing the media in the National Capital last evening, Secretary for Consular, Passport, Visa and Overseas Indian Affairs, in the External Affairs Ministry, Arun Kumar Chatterjee, said, the talks between Prime Minister Modi and the Amir of Qatar focussed on strengthening trade, energy, investments, innovation, technology, food security, culture, and people-to-people ties. During the talks, both leaders also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest. Mr Chatterjee, said, two agreements and five MoUs were signed during the State visit of the Amir of Qatar. A revised double taxation avoidance agreement was also signed between the two countries.

The Secretary said, the two countries have also agreed to double trade between two countries to 28 billion dollars annually in the next five years.

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A team from Pawan Hans has arrived in Nagaland to conduct inspections under the Regional Connectivity Scheme-UDAN. The team reached Kohima yesterday. The team will focus on assessing infrastructure and feasibility in five districts- Kohima, Mokochung, Phek, Tuensang, and Zunheboto, selected under the first phase of the scheme. The initiative aims to enhance regional air connectivity, improving accessibility and economic opportunities for residents in Nagaland's remote areas. In a meeting with the inspection team and transport officials, Transport Secretary Robert Longchari outlined key developments and challenges including financial approvals and minor modifications, such as fencing and helipad upgrades.

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In a significant move aimed at improving public service, the Finance Department of Nagaland has announced the approval for the implementation of Grade IV eGPF (Electronic General Provident Fund) across all state departments. The decision was made after the Governor of Nagaland gave his formal approval.

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All Nagaland Electricity Field Workers Association (ANEFWA) has served an ultimatum to the Engineer-In-Chief of the State Power Department, seeking immediate resolution of long-pending issues. This follows multiple representations made to the department that went unheeded. The ultimatum issued yesterday by the Association outlined several demands, including filling up of vacant posts through promotions, creation of 849 new posts to address acute shortage of Operation & Maintenance staff, provision of pool vehicles and safety tool kits, and posthumous regularization and ex-gratia payment to work-charged employees who die on duty. The ANEFWA has set a 30 days deadline for the Power Department to address the issues, warning that failure to resolve them will lead to phase-wise democratic agitation.

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Chumoukedima district administration has advised all individuals, village councils and stakeholders to refrain from undertaking any activities near National Highway (NH) -29 that may adversely impact the stability and safety of the highway and its users. Deputy Commissioner, Chumoukedima informed that certain activities such as quarrying, earth cutting, construction activities, setting up of temporary stalls and other land-related operations are being undertaken in close proximity to NH-29 including lands within the Right of Way which pose a significant risk to the structural integrity of the highway and public safety. In the interest of safeguarding critical infrastructure and ensuring commuter as well as public safety, the administration urged all to extend full cooperation in maintaining the durability of NH-29 and safety of all. Further, it cautioned that any activity found to be detrimental to the safety and integrity of NH-29 will lead to appropriate legal action in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

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