

MUMBAI MERI JAAN

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Editorial

Election Commission to upgrade VTR sharing process

The Election Commission of India is now introducing a streamlined, technology driven system to provide timely updates on the approximate voter turnout percentage trends. This new process significantly reduces the time lag associated with the earlier manual reporting methods. The initiative aligns with the Commission's commitment to ensure timely public communication, which has often been underlined by the Chief Election Commissioner, Shri. Gyanesh Kumar on various occasions.

Under the statutory framework of Rule 49S of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, Presiding Officers (PROs) are required to furnish Form 17C, detailing the account of votes recorded, to polling agents, who are nominated by the candidates and are present at the polling station at the close of poll. While this legal requirement remains unchanged, the process of updating the VTR App, which had evolved as a facilitative, non-statutory mechanism to keep the public informed of the approximate voter turnout percentage trends is being streamlined to ensure faster updation.

Under this new initiative, the Presiding Officer (PRO) of each polling station, will now be directly entering voter turnout on the new ECINET App every two hours on polling day in order to reduce the time lag in the updation of the approximate polling trends. This will be automatically aggregated at the constituency level. The approximate voting percentage trends will continue to be published every two hours as before. Notably, voter turnout data will now be entered into ECINET by PROs immediately after the close of poll, before they leave the polling station which will reduce the delays and ensure that the approximate percentage of votes polled would be available on the updated VTR App constituency-wise after the close of polls subject to network connectivity. Where mobile networks are unavailable, entries can be made offline and synced once connectivity is restored. This updated VTR App will become an integral part of ECINET before the Bihar elections.

Previously, voter turnout data was collected manually by Sector Officers and relayed to Returning Officers (ROs) via phone calls, SMS, or messaging apps. This information was aggregated every two hours and uploaded to the Voter Turnout (VTR) App. The polling percentage trends were often updated hours later, based on physical records arriving late in the night or even the next day, leading to delays of 4-5-hours or more leading to misperceptions by some.

MMJ

Maharashtra cabinet unveils EV policy 2025 with tax waivers, toll exemptions and infra push

Kalpesh Mhamunkar

In a major step towards sustainable transportation, the state Cabinet on Tuesday approved the Maharashtra Electric Vehicles Policy 2025, aimed at boosting electric vehicle (EV) adoption and manufacturing across the state. The policy, which will be effective until 2030, includes a provision of Rs1,993 crore over the next five years for its implementation.

The policy focuses on expanding EV charging infrastructure, encouraging environmentally sustainable and innovative transport solutions, and enhancing energy security and economic growth. The state government anticipates a significant surge in the use and sales of electric vehicles as a result.

According to transport minister Pratap Sarnaik, "All electric vehicles sold and



registered in Maharashtra will be exempt from motor vehicle tax, registration certificate fees, and renewal charges. Charging stations will be set up at every 25 km along state and national highways.

Sarnaik also informed that subsidies will be given for vehicle purchase in the state. A 10% subsidy on the base price will be offered for electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, non-transport four-wheelers, state transport buses (M3, M4), and buses used in private, state, or urban transport services.

A 15% subsidy will be granted on electric goods vehicles including three-wheelers, M1 category transport

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Maharashtra Maritime Board defends Colaba Passenger Jetty Project near Gateway Of India amid Heritage concerns

Urvi Mahajani

The Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB) has defended its plan to construct a passenger jetty and terminal near the Gateway of India, stating that the project is a critical public infrastructure initiative aimed at easing congestion and improving safety.

The Board filed an affidavit



before the Bombay High Court in response to a PIL filed by the Clean and Heritage Colaba Residents Association (CHCRA), which has opposed

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Construction of a new jetty at Gateway

Jennifer Shetty, AGNI's A Ward Coordinator

On March 13, 2025 the minister for Ports and Fisheries, Mr Nitish Rane, conducted the ground breaking ceremony for a jetty at the Gateway of India, Colaba, which left the residents of both Colaba and the city of Mumbai, absolutely numb. The jetty is being constructed between Radio Club and the Gateway of India.

The jetty will not be a standalone structure. This

area which is already brimming over with tourists will now have a giant jetty which will extend 650 meters into the sea. It will have an 80X80 platform which will house 150 car parks, lounges, toilets, ticket counters, cafeterias followed by a walkway 34 meters wide which will open out at the end into a badminton racket shaped structure. At the end of the racket shaped structure will be an

Contd. on Page 3

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Ayushman Vay Vandana Card: Complete Guide to Free Healthcare for Senior Citizens Above 70

MAS Team

The Government of India has launched a dedicated healthcare initiative for its senior citizens through the Ayushman Vay Vandana Yojana, a specialized vertical under the flagship Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY). This scheme provides comprehensive health insurance coverage specifically designed to address the medical needs of citizens above 70 years of age.

The Ayushman Vay Vandana Card is a health insurance card introduced in October 2024 as part of the government's commitment to providing universal healthcare coverage for senior citizens. This card serves as a gateway to free medical services under the AB PM-JAY scheme, specifically tailored for India's aging population.

The card offers substantial financial protection with health insurance coverage of up to 5 lakh per beneficiary, ensuring that senior citizens can access quality healthcare without the burden of high medical expenses. This coverage extends to both government and private hospitals empaneled under the scheme, providing beneficiaries with a wide network of healthcare providers to choose from.

Key Benefits and Features

Universal Coverage: One of the most significant advantages of the Ayushman Vay Vandana Card is that it has no income limit restrictions. This means that senior citizens from all economic backgrounds, regardless of their financial status, can avail themselves of the benefits under this scheme. This inclusive approach ensures that healthcare access is not determined by economic capacity.

Comprehensive Healthcare Services: Cardholders can access free healthcare services including medical consultations, diagnostic tests, treatments, and hospitalization. The scheme covers a wide range of medical procedures and treatments, ensuring comprehensive care for age-related health issues that commonly affect senior citizens.

Out-of-Pocket Expense Coverage: According to a



government statement from 18 November 2025, the card specifically addresses out-of-pocket expenses that senior citizens typically face during medical treatment. This feature significantly reduces the financial burden on families caring for elderly members.

Wide Hospital Network: The card provides access to both government and private hospitals that are part of the AB PM-JAY network, giving beneficiaries flexibility in choosing their preferred healthcare providers.

Step-by-Step Application Process

The Ministry of Health has provided a detailed process for obtaining the Ayushman Vay Vandana Card through a mobile application. Here's the complete guide:

Step 1: Download the Application Visit the Google Play Store and download the official "Ayushman Bharat" app on your smartphone.

Step 2: Choose Login Type Upon opening the app, select the appropriate login option - either as a beneficiary (if you're applying for yourself) or as an operator (if you're helping someone else apply).

Step 3: Authentication Process Enter the required authentication details including: Mobile number
Captcha verification
Select your preferred mode of authentication
Click on the Login button

Step 4: Beneficiary Information Fill in the beneficiary's essential details:
Select your state from the dropdown menu
Enter Aadhaar card details

accurately
Step 5: eKYC Process If the system cannot locate the beneficiary in the existing database, you'll need to proceed with the electronic Know Your Customer (eKYC) process. This involves:

Providing consent for the verification process
Agreeing to receive OTP for authentication

Step 6: Declaration Submission Complete the declaration form by filling in all required fields with accurate information. This step is crucial for the application's approval.

Step 7: Mobile Verification Add the beneficiary's mobile number and enter the OTP received on that number for verification purposes.

Step 8: Additional Details Provide supplementary information including:
Category selection (if applicable)
PIN code of residence

Step 9: Family Member Information Enter details of family members who may be eligible under the scheme and submit the complete information.

Step 10: Card Download Once the eKYC process is completed and approved by the system, you can download the Ayushman Vay Vandana Card directly from the app.

For citizens who need assistance with the application process or have questions about the scheme, the government has established a dedicated helpline. You can get support by giving a missed call to 1800 11 0770. This toll-free number connects you with customer service representatives who can provide guidance and resolve

queries related to the Ayushman Vay Vandana Card.

The launch of the Ayushman Vay Vandana Card represents a significant step forward in India's healthcare policy, particularly in addressing the specific needs of senior citizens. As the country's population ages, the demand for accessible and affordable healthcare for elderly citizens has become increasingly important. This initiative recognizes that senior citizens often face multiple health challenges simultaneously and require frequent medical attention. By removing financial barriers and providing comprehensive coverage, the scheme ensures that age-related health issues don't become a financial burden for families.

The digital application process reflects the government's commitment to leveraging technology for better service delivery. The mobile app-based application system makes it easier for families to apply for the card from the comfort of their homes, reducing the need for multiple visits to government offices.

The eKYC integration ensures that the verification process is streamlined while maintaining security and authenticity. This digital approach also helps in maintaining accurate records and faster processing of applications.

The Ayushman Vay Vandana Card is part of India's broader vision of achieving universal health coverage and ensuring that no citizen is denied healthcare due to financial constraints. For senior citizens above 70, this card represents not just health insurance, but a promise of dignity and care in their golden years.

As the scheme continues to expand its reach, it is expected to significantly improve health outcomes for senior citizens across the country, providing them with the medical care they need without the associated financial stress. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to caring for its aging population and ensuring that healthcare remains accessible to all citizens, regardless of age or economic status.

Construction of a new jetty at Gateway

Contd. from Page 1 amphitheater and 10 docks for anchoring boats on either side of the structure. This enormous jetty will rest on 137 piles dug deep into the sea.

No public hearing was held for a project which will impact the residents of south Mumbai deeply. There were numerous agitations by residents who spoke to the media, sought the help of politicians and wrote to the concerned authorities, including the Chief Minister, all to no avail. The residents repeatedly stressed that they were not against the project of the jetty, but requested the authorities to build it at Bhaucha Dhaka or Ferry Wharf or at Princess Docks. The residents pointed out that this was essential to protect both a heritage area like the Gateway of India and south Mumbai which is already reeling under an avalanche of tourists, vicious traffic snarls and unruly hawkers, many of whom are unlicensed.

A protest meeting was called by the residents of Colaba and Cuffe Parade. The Hon. Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly and the MLA of the

constituency, Mr Rahul Narwekar, assured the residents of his cooperation, along with South Mumbai MP, Mr Arwind Sawant and Mr Abu Azmi, who is a member of the Samajwadi party and a resident of the area.

Although all the politicians who attended the meeting assured the residents of their support, it appears the jetty will become a reality as the work of barricading on the pavements of Apollo Bunder, Colaba, is almost complete. Since there was no other option, no help from elected representatives and no way of meeting the Chief Minister, the residents knocked on the doors of the Bombay High Court and the Supreme Court.

Three Writ Petitions have been filed of which two have been heard but the order passed is not to the satisfaction of the petitioners. The next hearing at the Bombay High Court is on June 16, 2025. The citizens of south Mumbai have the support of the people of Mumbai, a city which is becoming more challenging to live in given the many surprises it holds for its citizens in the future. **MMJ**

Save Powai Lake Group Cancels Silent Protest After BMC Demands ₹11,000 Fee

Devashri Bhujbal

The Save Powai Lake group called-off their scheduled silent protest in form of human chain at the lake premises after the BMC asked the organisers to pay one-day event fee. "The ward office told us to pay Rs 11,000 for organising a protest. They also sent us a BMC circular justifying them ask for the nominal fee. It was shocking that a protest to protect a lake was considered as an event,"

said environment activist, B N Kumar who leads the Save Powai Lake group.

As per the posters, the group had scheduled a 'Silent Human Chain' on Sunday, June 8 from 5 to 6 pm at Powai Lake Selfie Point. "We got permission from the police. But took rounds of BMC office for their NOC. Until Friday, we did not receive permission and on Saturday they sent us a 2015 Outdoor **Contd. on Page 4**

MMBoard defends Colaba Jetty

Contd from Page 1 the project citing heritage and environmental concerns.

The PIL, filed through advocate Prerak Chaudhary, had sought an interim stay on the demolition of a wall and piling work already initiated at the site. However, the association did not receive any interim relief from the Bombay High Court or the Supreme Court.

Tushar Patole, executive engineer at the MMB, stated in the affidavit that the petitioners, under the guise of challenging permissions, are "effectively taking exception to a policy decision" that has been a decade in the making.

"The petitioner, claiming to represent local residents, is ignoring larger public interest and is seeking to obstruct the project on the basis of perceived personal inconvenience," the affidavit reads.

The project site is located near the Radio Club at Apollo Bunder, and not directly adjacent to the Gateway of India monument. The affidavit emphasised that the plan was revised from its original location — closer to the monument — after the Western Naval Command flagged serious security concerns.

"The Gateway of India, a symbol of strength and resilience, is a

potential target for terrorist attacks. The Navy recommended shifting the jetty near Radio Club to decongest the area," the affidavit said.

The MMB noted that the existing five jetties adjacent to the Gateway are over a century old and unable to handle the current volume of passengers — approximately 30 to 35 lakh annually. One of the jetties is reserved exclusively for the Atomic Research Centre.

"The existing jetties are antiquated, unsafe, and lack basic infrastructure like proper berthing, waiting areas, emergency services, and frisking zones," said Patole. "Passengers, especially women, children, and the elderly, often risk injury while navigating multiple boats during boarding."

The new facility aims to segregate ferry commuters from tourists, ease vehicular traffic, and enhance safety. The MMB clarified that all necessary permissions have been secured, including clearances from the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA), State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), traffic police, and the Heritage Committee. The matter is likely to be heard on June 16. **MMJ**

Maharashtra to go fully solar in government offices by December 2025, CM Devendra Fadnavis announces major green push

Kalpesh Mhamunkar

In a major push towards sustainable energy, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has announced that all



sustainable facility powered entirely by renewable energy.

Two-Pronged Solar Mission

Outlining the roadmap, CM Fadnavis said MahaUrja will focus on two key objectives: Accelerating the shift to solar energy in all state government offices.

Rolling out a state-level solar power initiative aligned with the Pradhan Mantri Suryaghar Yojana.

In the first phase, domestic electricity consumers using up to 100 units will be transitioned to solar energy. In the second phase, this will extend to those using up to **Contd. on Page 4**

Save Powai Lake Group Cancels Silent Protest

Contd. from Page 1 Event circular justifying their refusal," Kumar added.

"They insisted payment for organising Silent Protest. Why should we pay for? It is not a Cold Play Event," Kumar said.

"It was astonishing and shocking as the Human Chain is not an activity that can attract an event fee. We are not holding a concert or any religious or cultural event," said Pamela Cheema, chairperson of Advanced Locality Management & AGNI Ward Coordinator.

"However, undaunted, we will continue the campaign - #SewerMuktPowaiLake - until all the sewer lines are diverted and sewerage treatment plant (STP) is set up. We will intensify our digital campaign with new messaging and involving all sections and the group will meet shortly to discuss other options," the activists added.

Kumar added that, all the promises by the authorities to clean the lake have remained only on paper and there is a semblance of action to clear hyacinth from the lake now, after the activists raised their alarm.

The activists had recently

started the SavePowaiLake online campaign. The BMC also acted fast and deployed additional machines and manpower to clear the hyacinth and unwanted vegetation from the Powai lake, which is damaging its biodiversity.

The BMC also came to conclusion that diversion of sewage lines is the only long-term solution to preserve Powai Lake. It also admitted that 18 million litres of sewage flows into Powai Lake daily and inflow of untreated sewage has led to an increase in water hyacinth.

On June 2, the BMC said in its statement that the draft letter (D.L.) for diverting the channels to prevent the entry of sewage into the Powai Lake has been approved. The acceptance of this tender (Date of Acceptance) and the issuance of work orders are expected to be done in the coming week. It also said that from May 23 to June 1 1,450 metric tons of hyacinth was been removed.

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Maharashtra to go fully solar

Contd. from Page 3 300 units, with the ultimate goal of eliminating electricity bills for these users.

Highlighting Maharashtra's pioneering role in the renewable energy sector, the Chief Minister said the state has installed over 5 lakh solar agricultural pumps in the last two years—more than any other state in India.

He also announced that under the Mukhyamantri Saur Krishi Vahini Yojana, solar power will be supplied to agricultural feeders with a combined capacity of 16,000 MW by 2026. This initiative represents Asia's largest decentralized solar energy project.

CM Fadnavis pointed out that electricity tariffs have increased by 9% annually over the past two decades. "Between 2025 and 2030, our aim is to bring down tariffs every year," he said, adding that the state's entire agricultural electricity demand will be met through solar energy by December 2026.

52% of Maharashtra's Power to Come from Renewables by 2030

Looking ahead, the Chief Minister said Maharashtra has signed a key agreement with a Russian government-owned company to develop thorium-

based energy generation technology. This move is expected to significantly enhance India's clean energy capabilities.

By 2030, Maharashtra aims to produce 52% of its electricity from renewable sources such as solar, wind, and hydrogen—drastically cutting down carbon emissions.

MahaUrja's New Eco-Friendly Headquarters

The newly inaugurated building in Aundh exemplifies green construction and is built to Super ECBC and Net Zero Energy standards. The building includes innovative features like:

Porotherm blocks, Double-glazed windows, Ceramic mesh, Radiant cooling system, Earth tunnel tube system, Venturi effect ventilation, Two-stage evaporative cooling and Solar tubes, A 290 kW grid-connected solar power plant

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EV Policy 2025

Contd. from Page 1 four-wheelers, light commercial vehicles (N2, N3), and agricultural EVs like electric tractors and harvesters.

To promote EV, the state government has decided to give toll exemptions to the E-vehicles. "Full toll exemption for electric four-wheel passenger vehicles and buses on the Mumbai-Pune Yashwantrao Chavan Expressway, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Shivdi-Nhava Sheva Atal Setu, and the Hindu Hridaysamrat Balasaheb Thackeray Maharashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg. The loss of toll companies will be borne by the government," added Sarnaik.

A 50% toll discount will be provided to electric four-wheelers on other state and national highways under the Public Works Department.

The policy also introduces a clean mobility transition model, which targets a drastic reduction in carbon emissions, air pollutants, and greenhouse gases from the transport sector by 2030.

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