

Dy CM inspects Sungal Tunnel project at Kalidhar; emphasizes strict compliance to timelines, quality parameters

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Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today inspected the ongoing construction works of the Sungal Tunnel project at Kalidhar and reviewed the pace and quality of execution on the ground.

The Deputy Chief Minister took serious notice of the "poor" quality standards, slow pace of work and alleged violation of prescribed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Expressing dismay over the delay, the Deputy Chief Minister noted that the project has already missed its 2025 completion deadline. He directed the executing agencies and officials concerned to ensure strict adherence to quality norms and safety protocols.

He emphasized the need for following all safety measures in letter and spirit to avoid unfortunate inci-



dents like the recent accident in which a labourer lost his life. He called for speedy and quality execution of all the works on the project for completion within the shortest possible time.

The Deputy Chief Minister maintained that until completion of the Tunnel project, alternative roads

be maintained for seamless traffic movement for the public convenience.

Highlighting the importance of the tunnel project, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the project is crucial for improving the road connectivity, mobility across Rajouri, Poonch, Jammu and overall development of the region be-

sides providing better transportation facilities to the people.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister also assessed the ongoing work on the road from Master Vaid Prakash Academy to Langer, Nowshera besides reviewing other ongoing developmental projects in the area.

GDC Kastigarh and GDC Doda sign historic MoU to strengthen academic collaboration

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In a significant step towards enhancing the quality of higher education and promoting institutional co-operation, the Government Degree College Kastigarh and Government Degree College Doda signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at fostering academic collaboration, innovation and holistic development of students.

The MoU reflects the shared commitment of both institutions to create a dynamic academic environment through mutual cooperation, exchange of educational resources and collaborative initiatives. The agreement will facilitate a wide range of academic and co-curricular activities designed to benefit students, faculty members and the overall educational ecosystem of the region.

Under the agreement, both colleges will jointly organize seminars, workshops, conferences, guest lectures, faculty exchange programmes, educational tours, field visits, intern-



ships, mentoring sessions and extension activities. The collaboration will also focus on skill development, research-oriented learning, digital education, career counselling and promotion of innovative teaching methodologies to equip students with modern academic and professional competencies.

The MoU is expected to provide students with broader exposure to interdisciplinary learning opportunities and enhance their participation in academic research, cultural ac-

tivities and community outreach programmes. It will further encourage knowledge-sharing among faculty members and strengthen institutional capacities through the exchange of expertise and infrastructure support.

The Principals of both the colleges emphasized that the partnership marks a progressive milestone in the field of higher education and will open new avenues for academic excellence, student empowerment and collaborative growth. They ex-

pressed hope that the initiative would help in nurturing a vibrant learning culture and preparing students to meet future educational and professional challenges effectively.

The agreement was formally signed by Principal GDC Doda Dr. Javid Iqbal and Principal GDC Kastigarh Prof. Koshal Kumar Mangotra. Faculty members present during the ceremony included Dr. Sandeep Kotwal, Dr. Wahid Balwan, Dr. Sumit Kotwal and Prof. Anoj Kumar, among others.

PIDG to launch fund in India in second half of 2026

SINGAPORE, MAY 28: London-based Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), backed by global governments supporting developing economies of Africa and Asia, will help launch a unique fund in the second half of this year in India, supporting healthcare and agriculture projects, a senior official of the group said in Singapore.

PIDG is also working on details for mobilising USD 500 million in equity-form in India's green projects over the next three years, its head of Indian business, Nishant Kumar, said on the sidelines of an international conference held in Singapore from May 18 to May 20.

"We are working on a unique project-supporting fund in the second half of this year catering to the Indian healthcare and agriculture sectors," said Kumar, Head of Coverage - Asia for PIDG, an innovative infrastructure project developer and investor that mobilises private investment in sustainable and inclusive infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia.

Kumar also expects PIDG to invest at least another USD 150 million, typically a mix of equity and other forms of funding, to support green projects in the country this year, following on to the USD

150 million invested last year. "Such fundings, which were in the form of equities or similar products, convince private sector investors to commit to fresh investments which, at times, can be four times over our commitment," Kumar told PTI on the sidelines of the Philanthropy Asia Summit.

To date, PIDG funding has resulted in more than USD 30 billion private sector capital mobilisation in projects across the region it is working, he said. Operating in India since 2010, PIDG channels government, private, foundation and philanthropy capital into projects, he added.

Since 2002, PIDG has supported 258 projects, which provided more than 230 million (23 crore) people with access to new or improved infrastructure. It is funded by the governments of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Australia and Sweden, and Global Affairs Canada.

Kumar also gave an update on PIDG's five-year strategy to scale its role as a leading mobiliser of climate capital in emerging markets and developing economies, pointing out that the group is working alongside government counterparts and the private sector to help accelerate project preparation, enhance bankability and attract private capi-

tal into infrastructure aligned with national development priorities. He also updated on some of the recently-signed PIDG funding commitments in India.

Work is in progress according to a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between PIDG and the Uttar Pradesh government in February to strengthen collaboration in mobilising investments into priority infrastructure sectors, supporting the state's sustainable economic growth and climate resilience.

"We are identifying, developing and financing infrastructure projects across key sectors, including clean energy (solar and biomass), sustainable transport, agri-PV technology and green hydrogen infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh," Kumar said, adding that more than USD 500 million in private investment have been mobilised in India for climate-positive infrastructure opportunities across the country.

Furthermore, details have been worked out by PIDG and AVPN - Asia's leading social investors network - under an MoU also signed in February. "We have joined hands to deepen collaboration in mobilising impact capital for emerging economies through sharing networks, opportunities and infrastructure devel-

opment expertise," Kumar said.

The MoU between PIDG and the Uttar Pradesh government was facilitated by AVPN.

GuarantCo, a part of PIDG, has completed its first-ever Public Private Partnership (PPP) transaction in India, a first-of-its-kind partially-guaranteed loan transaction under the Government of India's Prime Minister e-Bus Sewa Scheme (PSS). The related agreement was signed in February. This transaction forms part of the initial set of contracts awarded under the PSS, Kumar said.

GuarantCo is also providing a partial credit guarantee for a loan facility provided by Axis Bank to Chartered Speed Limited. The facility is intended to support the scaling and operation of a 300-plus fleet of electric buses and associated charging infrastructure across five cities in the states of Chhattisgarh and Meghalaya.

This is the fourth deal completed under GuarantCo's USD 200 million electric vehicle framework agreement with Axis Bank to finance the growth of India's e-mobility ecosystem, with the intention of de-risking private lending and enabling participation of commercial capital in India's rapidly-growing electric mobility sector.

In times of strife, important to remind ourselves of the love in our heart: Imtiaz Ali on 'Main Vaapas Aaunga'

MUMBAI, MAY 28: The world is getting harsher and that is precisely why Imtiaz Ali says he made "Main Vaapas Aaunga", a story about love, healing and the quiet sweetness that people carry in their hearts long after everything around them has been torn apart.

With the film, which reunites Ali with his "Amar Singh Chamkila" star Diljit Dosanjh, the director seeks to explore how love is the very thing that makes survival possible during and even after a crisis.

"I feel that all of us have some sweetness, which we ascribe either to a romantic or to a spiritual thing that we keep close to our hearts that sustains us through harsh realities. Today in the world, a lot is going wrong, there is a lot of strife, unfortunately. Therefore, there is all the more reason to remind ourselves of the love in our hearts," the director told PTI in an interview.

"The emotion of love, healing, romance, and beauty is required more in a condition of harshness outside. When there is strife, there is more reason for us to keep closer what is precious to our heart," he added.

Set against the backdrop of the Partition of India, Ali's new film draws not from history books but from the first-hand accounts of survivors he encountered while filming for his 2024 movie "Amar Singh Chamkila" across Punjab.

He met elderly men and women who, decades later, spoke not of the violence they had witnessed but of the beauty they had held onto.

"What surprised me when I met these very old



people is that the stories they are talking about now are not stories of tragedy, nor are they stories of hatred. In fact, they are only talking about things that are dear and precious, loving and beautiful," said the filmmaker, known for films like "Rockstar", "Tamash", "Love Aaj Kal", "Highway" and "Jab We Met".

He added that such recollections highlight an inherent "romanticism in humanity".

"Main Vaapas Aaunga" follows a young man (Vedang Raina) who falls in love with a woman (Sharvari) in the pre-Partition era. The story unfolds across two timelines, with Naseeruddin Shah essaying the older version of the character and Diljit Dosanjh playing his grandson. A

The film marks Ali's first collaboration with Shah, though their connection goes back to early 2000s.

They first met at a Mumbai editing studio, when Shah had dropped in to evaluate actor Ayesha Takia from Ali's debut film "Socha Na Tha" (2005) for his own directorial project, "Yun Hota Toh Kya Hota" (2006).

When they finally worked together, Ali found the veteran to be a man

without ego.

"You give him something, he reacts directly, he does not set a standard for his directors. I thought that maybe I'll have to say it in a certain way which is more the right way of directing but he was not judging me at all. He was just trying to take what he could from me to have a good performance underway," Ali said.

"I feel there is so much more that this actor has in him to give, he has done so much, he understands so much. But believe me, he does not wear it on his sleeve, he does not throw his experience at you at all. So, people should approach him without any fear. He is just like a kid, all artists, in some way, are like kids."

In the movie, Shah's character battles dementia - a man held together by emotions he never resolved in his youth - and the physical demands were relentless: three hours of daily makeup, hours strapped to a cot with ECG leads.

Between takes, rather than breaking the spell, Shah simply remained.

"It was very uncomfortable, so troublesome for him to get up and off and come back again to his position that he used to sit over there while the lighting was

changing. Sometimes for 45 minutes he would just keep lying on the cot because it was easier to just be in that way."

Ali said the on-screen dynamic between Shah and Diljit Dosanjh was pleasant to watch and it brought a certain emotional depth to the story.

"The way Diljit and Naseer have done scenes, I feel (they are) very light, entertaining, meaningful, and layered. And that's very good because I had gone ahead and thought 'Main Vaapas Aaunga' should be that film with all its layers, texts and subtleties, something that the audience can appreciate and enjoy right at the first viewing," he said.

Dosanjh felt deeply connected to the story as his grandmother had crossed the border during the 1947 Partition while carrying his father as a baby, said Ali.

"We spoke a lot about partition because the scenes that I was performing with them, there was always a basis to those scenes, which I had got from research or from direct experience. They would tell me stories of other people or their own experiences," Ali said.

According to the filmmaker, migration is the biggest story of the century for the whole world.

"Everybody has come from somewhere or the other just a few generations back, especially in India. Nobody migrates out of choice. They only migrate if there is a compelling need or a problem. So, I'm very blessed and lucky to have stumbled across this story."

Actors Sanjay Suri, Rajat Kapoor, Anjana Sukhani, and Manish Chaudhari round out the cast of "Main Vaapas Aaunga".

ONGC yet to take control of Cambay Block as Vedanta challenges govt move

NEW DELHI, MAY 28: State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has yet to take operational control of the Cambay basin block CB-OS-02 in Gujarat after Vedanta challenged the government's decision not to extend the block's contract term.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, through a September 19, 2025, directive, rejected an extension of the contract for the block, in which ONGC holds a 50 per cent participating interest, Vedanta holds 40 per cent, and Invenire Petrodyne Limited holds 10 per cent.

Following the government's decision, ONGC said it was instructed to immediately take over operations of the block and deployed an operational team to Suvali in Gujarat from September 20, 2025. However, the company said Vedanta has not yet handed over operations.

"Pursuant to the Government of India directive, ONGC requested Vedanta for the immediate handover and deployed its operational team at Suvali, Gujarat, from September 20, 2025. However, Vedanta has not yet handed over operations," ONGC said in notes to its FY26 earnings statement.

According to ONGC, Vedanta filed a writ petition before the Delhi High Court on September 22, 2025, challenging the said rejection of the extension of the terms of the contract.

"The court asked the respondents to file their response/counter affidavit and directed them to maintain the status quo in the matter. Further, all the hearings have been com-



pleted on May 18, 2026, and the matter has been reserved for order by the court," it said.

"Pending the outcome of the proceedings, Vedanta continues to act as the operator for the block," ONGC said. "The company remains in preparedness to assume operational control of the block as and when directed by the Government of India."

"The courts have ordered the parties to maintain status quo. We cannot comment beyond this as the matter is sub-judice," a Vedanta Cairn spokesperson said.

Vedanta Cairn Oil and Gas, a unit of Mumbai-listed Vedanta Ltd, was the operator of the Gujarat offshore block CB-OS/2 with a 40 per cent stake. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has, in a September 19, 2025, letter, informed the partners that the application to extend the production sharing contract (PSC) for CB-OS/2 has not been accepted.

While no reasons were stated for the move, ONGC was asked to take over the operations in the interim period.

PSC is an agreement between the government and a resource extraction company. It gives the company time-specified right to explore, develop and produce resources in exchange for a pre-agreed share of the produced output (known as profit petroleum) once costs are recovered.

The CB-OS/2 block, which holds Lakshmi and Gauri fields and produces about 3,400 barrels of oil per day and 3.4 lakh standard cubic metres of gas per day, was one of the three properties operated by Cairn India when billionaire Anil Agarwal's group acquired the firm in 2011 for USD 8.67 billion.

The other assets of Cairn India were the Barmer oil fields in Rajasthan and the Ravva oil and gas fields in the Krishna Godavari basin off the Andhra coast.

Cairn India was merged into Vedanta Ltd in 2017. Vedanta Cairn Oil & Gas spokesperson had in September last year stated that the block contributed less than 0.3 per cent to the overall EBITDA of Vedanta.

The PSC for CB-OS/2 block was signed on August 30, 1998, and the con-

tract expired on June 30, 2023. The Vedanta-led consortium continued to operate the block during the pendency of its application for extension of the PSC.

After the PSC extension was rejected, the block had to return to the government.

Prior to the denial of extension for CB-OS/2, the government had extended the contracts for Vedanta Cairn's two other blocks - a 10-year PSC extension was approved for the Rajasthan block RJ-ON-90/1 till May 14, 2030, and a similar period was given for the PKGM-1 block, more commonly known as the Ravva field, till October 27, 2029.

According to a DeGolyer and MacNaughton reserve report commissioned by Vedanta Cairn in 2019, CB-OS/2 block's two discoveries, Gauri and Lakshmi, held a total in-place reserves of 13.6 million barrels of oil and oil equivalent gas.

While the block PSC expired, Vedanta Cairn had pressed ahead with its development plan for the discoveries in the 3,314 square kilometre shallow water block. (PTI)