



Uttar Pradesh Explores Privatisation of Loss-Making Discoms | Uttar Pradesh | 14 Jan 2025

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** has initiated steps toward **privatizing** or forming **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)** for two of its **loss-making electricity distribution companies (discoms)**.

- This move has **sparked protests** from employees concerned about **job security** and the potential impacts on service delivery.

Key Points

- The **state's power corporation** recently floated a tender inviting consultants and transaction advisers to devise a **privatization** or **PPP model** for **Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (DVVNL)** and **Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (PVVNL)**.
 - Both discoms have been grappling with **substantial financial losses**, prompting the government to explore alternatives to improve efficiency and service quality.
 - The government has clarified that the specifics of the partnership, including the **shareholding structure**, will be determined based on recommendations from consultants.
 - These experts will analyse the current state of the discoms and propose a suitable model for privatisation or PPP.
 - The model is expected to allow private entities to bring in operational expertise and investment while maintaining some level of government oversight to ensure public accountability.

What is DISCOM?

- **About:**
 - **DISCOM stands** for **Distribution Company** in the power sector. It refers to entities responsible for the **distribution of electricity to consumers**, including **households, businesses, and industries**.
 - **Role of DISCOMs:**
 - **Electricity Distribution:** They manage the infrastructure and operations for **delivering electricity** to consumers within their designated areas.
 - **Billing and Revenue Collection:** DISCOMs handle **metering, billing, and collecting payments** for electricity consumption.
 - **Maintenance and Upgrades:** They are responsible for maintaining the **distribution network**, including **transformers, substations, and power lines**.
 - **Customer Service:** DISCOMs address issues like **power outages, meter installations**, and grievances related to electricity supply.
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Mahakumbh Mela 2025: World's Largest Religious Gathering | Uttar Pradesh | 14 Jan 2025

Why in News?

The [Mahakumbh Mela 2025](#), celebrated as the largest human gathering on Earth, commenced with the auspicious '[Shahi Snan](#)' (royal bath) on the occasion of **Paush Purnima**.

- Held every **144 years** during a **rare celestial alignment**, the event is expected to draw over **1.5 crore (15 million) devotees** to the sacred confluence of the [Ganga](#), [Yamuna](#), and the mythical [Saraswati](#) at the **Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh**.

Key Points

- The **45-day spiritual festival**, which concludes on 26 **February**, will feature several significant bathing rituals, including:
 - **Makar Sankranti**: 14 January
 - **Mauni Amavasya**: 29 January
 - **Basant Panchami**: 3 February
- These events hold immense religious significance, drawing devotees, saints, and pilgrims from across India and the globe.
- **Namami Gange Yagya**:
 - On the eve of the festival, the Namami Gange team organized a grand 'yagya' at the Sangam to pledge continued efforts toward preserving the purity and flow of the [Ganga River](#).
 - The event saw participation from over **200 Ganga Sevadoots** and thousands of volunteers, with a special recognition of youth contributions to the **Ganga Swachhata Abhiyan**.
- **Safety and Security Measures**:
 - To ensure the safety of millions of pilgrims, the **Uttar Pradesh Police** and [National Disaster Response Force \(NDRF\)](#) teams have been deployed across the Maha Kumbh area.
 - Special water police units are stationed at the Sangam to manage the massive influx of devotees during the ritual baths.
- **Maha Kumbh Mela 2025**:
 - The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, a sacred pilgrimage, will be held in Prayagraj from **13th January to 26th February 2025**.
 - It occurs **every 12 years**, rotating among four locations i.e., **Prayagraj (UP), Haridwar (UK), Nashik (MH), and Ujjain (MP)**.
 - The word **Kumbh** refers to a pot or vessel, which, in **Hindu mythology**, is said to have held the **nectar of immortality (amrit)**.
 - Uttar Pradesh has declared the **Maha Kumbh area in Prayagraj** as a new district called **Maha Kumbh Mela** for **4 months** i.e., **1st December 2024 to 31st March 2025**.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)

- **About**: NDRF is a specialised force constituted for the purpose of specialized response to natural and man-made disasters in India.
- **Formation and Purpose**: The NDRF was formed in 2006 under the [Disaster Management Act, 2005](#). Its primary purpose is to respond quickly and effectively to natural and man-made disasters.
- **Structure**: The NDRF consists of battalions from the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) including the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).
 - **Each battalion has specialized training and equipment for disaster response.**

