

OPINION 6

BHARAT RATNA: HONOURING
THE LEGACY OF JAN NAYAK

WORLD 8

'UK HAS NO PLANS FOR
CONSCRIPTION'

WORLD 9

IMRAN KHAN WARNS HIS
PARTY CANDIDATES

CHANDIGARH, THURSDAY JANUARY 25, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹2



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PM urges Ministers not to crowd Ayodhya

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI/AYODHYA

A day after a massive rush at Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, Prime Minister Narendra Modi advised all his Cabinet colleagues on Wednesday to refrain from visiting the holy city for now and to plan their pilgrimage from mid-February onwards. Besides, well-placed sources in the government and within the ruling party BJP told The Pioneer that each party parliamentarian and party office bearer has been given a target to facilitate an Ayodhya visit for people within their constituency or jurisdiction, particularly for women and elderly Ram Bhakts. Sources mentioned that during the Cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister suggested that, due to the heavy rush and to prevent inconvenience to the public caused by VIPs with protocols, Cabinet members should avoid visiting at this time. The Prime Minister's advisory came after devotees flocked to Ram Mandir in huge numbers a day after the praan pratishthaa ceremony on January 22.

The ministers will visit the Ram Mandir for darshan later from February onwards, sources said. Sources also mentioned that party MPs, as well as the entire Council of Ministers, will "facilitate" at least 2,500 people/devotees from their constituency for the Ayodhya pilgrimage.

In the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls likely to be held in April-May, the same pattern to enable a

ACCORD PRIORITY TO DEVOTEES



large number of visitors to Ayodhya could be replicated by the State ministers and leaders as well.

The Ram Temple at Ayodhya has been a major poll plank and included in the party's manifesto for the BJP for three decades, along with the abrogation of Article 370, and both processes have been completed.

This was the second time that the PM had to urge refraining from visiting Ayodhya, with the first instance occurring in December after he inaugurated several projects, including the airport and railway station.

On December 30, anticipating a large turnout, Modi had suggested that people, out of emotion, should refrain from

visiting Ayodhya on the praan pratishthaa day and instead plan their pilgrimage a couple of days later. In the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday, Modi also inquired about the feedback from the public after the inauguration of the highly-awaited Ram mandir in Ayodhya.

An idol of the new Ram Lalla

was consecrated at the Ayodhya temple on Monday, with PM Modi leading the event. The ceremony was live-streamed across the country.

Addressing the media after the Cabinet meeting, Union Minister Anurag Thakur shared that the Union Cabinet congratulated PM Modi on the successful praan pratishthaa ceremony.

Air India fined ₹1.1 crore for safety breaches

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed a penalty of ₹1.10 crore on Air India after an airline employee alleged safety violations on flights operated on certain long-range terrain-critical routes, specifically regarding the operations of leased Boeing 777 planes to the US.

This is the second time in a week that the regulator has penalised Air India. The DGCA had received a complaint from a former Air India pilot alleging that the airline operated Boeing 777 planes to the US without having the required emergency oxygen supply system.

A comprehensive investigation into the matter was carried out by the DGCA, which also issued a show-cause notice to the airline. "Since the operations of the leased aircraft were not in line with regulatory/OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) performance limits, the DGCA has initiated enforcement action and imposed a penalty of Rs 1.10 crore on Air India," the DGCA said in a release on Wednesday. Reacting to the development, Air India stated that the raised issue had been thoroughly examined by the airline along with external experts. It was concluded that there was no compromise on safety whatsoever, the airline added.

"We disagree with the order issued by the DGCA. The issues raised were thoroughly examined by Air India along with external experts, concluding that there was no compromise on safety whatsoever," Air India said.

PM headed for mega projects launch in Bulandshahr

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address his first electoral rally scheduled in Bulandshahr on Thursday. Given that Varanasi is the home constituency of Prime Minister Modi, the decision to start the campaign from Bulandshahr has sparked speculation about the strategic reasoning behind this choice. The Prime Minister will launch development projects worth more than ₹19,100 crore, including the 173-km-long double-line electrified section between New Khurja and New Rewari on the dedicated freight corridor (DFC), by flagging off goods trains from the two stations. The rally in Bulandshahr will mark the beginning of the election campaign for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and comes days after the praan pratishthaa of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

The BJP claims that around five lakh people will attend PM Modi's rally in Bulandshahr. Many in the BJP feel that Bulandshahr is also lucky for Narendra Modi, as the PM launched his campaign for the 2014 Lok Sabha polls from this city. Prime Minister Modi also intends to connect with voters and supporters in areas where the party faced challenges in the previous elections. The focus is on sharing the winning mantra and garnering support in a bid to secure victory in the contested



seats of western Uttar Pradesh. The BJP, which swept Uttar Pradesh in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections by winning 71 out of 80 seats, saw, albeit inconsequential, a decline of nine seats in the 2019 general elections. Notably, the BJP holds eight out of 14 seats in western Uttar Pradesh, with defeats in six constituencies in 2019.

With the upcoming 2024 elections, Prime Minister Modi aims to reverse this trend, particularly in the eight out of 14 seats the BJP currently holds in the region.

As Congress and the Samajwadi Party engage in seat-sharing talks for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, the political landscape in Uttar Pradesh seems poised for an intriguing

contest in the months to come. On this occasion, PM Modi will launch development projects worth more than ₹19,100 crore, including the 173-km-long double-line electrified section between New Khurja and New Rewari on the dedicated freight corridor, by flagging off goods trains from the two stations. Officials stated that this new DFC section is crucial as it establishes connectivity between the western and eastern freight corridors. The section is also noteworthy for its remarkable engineering feat, featuring a one-kilometre-long double-line rail tunnel with high-rise electrification, the first of its kind in the world. This tunnel is designed to seamlessly operate double-stack container trains. The new DFC section is expected

to enhance the operation of passenger trains due to the shifting of goods trains onto the DFC track, they explained. The prime minister will also inaugurate the fourth rail line connecting Mathura-Palwal and Chhipiyana Buzurg-Dadri sections, along with multiple road development projects. These road projects, developed at a cumulative cost of more than ₹5,000 crore, will improve connectivity and contribute to the economic development of the region, they added.

Among other projects Modi will inaugurate is the Indian Oil's Tundla-Gawaria pipeline and an "integrated industrial township at Greater Noida" (IITGN), developed in line with the prime minister's vision of integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects under PM-GatiShakti.

Built at a cost of ₹1,714 crore, the project is spread over 747 acres and is located near the intersection of the eastern and western dedicated freight corridors, with the Eastern Peripheral Expressway to the south and the Delhi-Howrah broad gauge railway line to the east. IITGN's strategic location ensures unparalleled connectivity, as other infrastructure for multi-modal connectivity is present in the vicinity of this project, officials said.

Centre allows mobile tower in forest to meet 4G target

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Environment Ministry is treading cautiously as it attempts to strike a balance between technological progress and the preservation of natural habitats. It has relaxed regulations for the installation of mobile towers in forest-protected areas, including national parks and wildlife habitats across the country. However, the core and critical wildlife areas of tiger homes are excluded. This move aims to support the government's ambitious project, spearheading the extension of seamless 4G internet connectivity to 24,680 uncovered villages in the country. The project entails the construction of at least 16,464 telecom towers. However, the approval for such construction in protected areas comes with conditions. Protected land can be allocated to a "user agency" only if no private or alternative revenue land is available.

In its recently issued guidelines, the Ministry also stipulates that the user agency must obtain an undertaking from the district magistrate confirming the unavailability of alternative land. A user agency refers to the entity proposing and overseeing the



construction and operation of the mobile tower. This entity could be a mobile network operator, government agency, or another party seeking permission for installation within a protected area. Notably, no proposal for the installation of mobile towers in the core/critical tiger habitat, as notified under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, will be allowed. The guidelines were formulated in response to a significant number of proposals from various States and Union Territories seeking approval from the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife under the Ministry. These proposals aimed at the installation of mobile towers and laying of Optical Fiber Cables inside national parks, sanctuaries, tiger reserves, and tiger corridors.

Lakshadweep scripts a melodious story of hope

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Lakshadweep, a group of islands Arabian Sea, which witnessed anti-India protests for a couple of months by secessionist forces who were out to create a hub of narcotics trade, is back to normalcy and that too in style. The residents of the picturesque islands are busy driving the economy in full speed adding colour to the Blue Revolution conceived by the Centre. Now it is time for agatti, arabianesis, koyas, sulci

palma and purushothamani to rejuvenate the lives of Lakshadweep population. What and who are these characters? That we will come to later in the story. It all began last month with the two-day long tour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the islands where he interacted with the local residents, especially women. When the women shared with Prime Minister Modi how they are struggling to meet both ends, the latter explained to them about the potential of Pradhan Mantri Matsya



Sampada Yojana (PM MSY), a scheme to bring about the Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development. The Prime Minister conferred with scientists of National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources, a unit under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Dr UK Sarkar, director, ICAR, briefed the Prime Minister about the five varieties of ornamental shrimps developed by the Centre for Peninsular Marine Fish Genetic Resources.

"Captive breeding of these shrimps is an ideal profession for women because it needs care, skill and of course the motherly touch. Beautiful shrimps with unique colour and design patterns have been developed in captivity by our scientists and we handed them over to the women in Lakshadweep," said Dr UK Sarkar. Dr TT Ajith Kumar, principal scientist and the chief architect of the project, said community aquaculture units, each with an investment of Rs 2.5 lakh and

minimum ten women fishers started functioning before the Prime Minister's flight reached New Delhi. "There are 45 women fully engaged in breeding these unique shrimps which are a treat to the eyes. We have developed ornamental fish breeds and they command a good market," Ajith told The Pioneer. "The ornamental shrimps will go much higher places than the ornamental fish breeds and will add colour to the Blue Revolution," he added.

Classifieds

LOST AND FOUND

I Lost My ICSE 10th Detailed Mark Sheet (Gagandeep Kaur D/o Late. Gurpal Singh TT No.3801309, Index No-T/1902/022, Passing Year- 2004 From Mount Carmel School, Kakkon Hoshiarpur. If Found Please Contact 09463047773

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, **Parmesh Gupta** S/o Late Raj Kumar Gupta and Veena Gupta W/o Sh. Parmesh Gupta, R/o J-203, Victoria Heights, Peermuchalla, Zirakpur Punjab inform that our son Abhinav Gupta out of our control. We disown him from our moveable and Immovable Properties. Anybody deals with him at their own Risk. We will not be responsible for his any activities.

I, **Ghansham** S/o Arjun R/o House No. 5821, Maloya, Chandigarh inform that my son Shubham is out of my control. I disown him from my moveable and Immovable Properties. Anybody deals with him at their own Risk.

I, **Angrejo** W/o Late Ramesh Caste Dhanak R/o dhank mahola Band Market Jind Haryana declare that my son Rajesh and his wife Neelam and 2nd Son Rakesh and his wife Sheeltal and their family out of my control. I disown them from my moveable and immovable properties. Anybody deal with them at their own Risk. I and my family members will not responsible for their any activities.

I, **Poonam Chander** son of Madan Gopal Gupta, r/o 508/17 Near Rang Mahal, Gurdaspur, disinherited my son Punit Gupta and his wife Mehak by advertising in The Pioneer and Nawaan Zamana newspapers on 01.07.2021. Now they are in my control. I withdraw their expulsion. In future they will inherit my property.

I **No.4483186x** Hav Gurjant Singh Presently R/O Village Bhadson Tehsil Nabha Distt Patiala Have Changed My Father Name And Dob From Jora Singh To Zora Singh And 12 March 1951 To 20 Jan 1952 Due To Wrongly Mentioned In My Army Record.

I **Zora Singh** Father Of No.4483186x Hav Gurjant Singh Presently R/O Village Bhadson Tehsil Nabha Distt Patiala Have Changed My Name And Dob From Jora Singh To Zora Singh And 12 March 1951 To 20 Jan 1952 Due To Wrongly Mentioned In My Son Army Record.

I, **Ronak Jangir** S/O Sandeep Kumar R/O Nangal Sirohi (104), Po, Nangal Sirohi Distt, Mahendragarh, Haryana - 123028, Declare That Name Of Mine, My Father And Mother Is Wrongly Written As Ronak, Sandeep And Sunita In My 10th And 12th Class Educational Documents. Actual Name Of Mine, My Father And Mother Are Ronak Jangir, Sandeep Kumar And Sunita Devi.

I, **Kuldeep Kumar** S/O Layak Ram R/O 83, Near Old Bus Stand, Nangal Sirohi (104), Nangal Sirohi, Mahendragarh, Haryana - 123028, Declare That Name Of My Minor Daughter Is Wrongly Written As Khushi In My Minor Daughter Khushi Jangir Aged 16 Years In Her 10th Class Educational Documents. Actual Name Of My Minor Daughter Is Khushi Jangir.

I, **Rakesh Kumar**, S/o Parkash Singh, R/o Ganesh Colony, Salarpur Road, Kurukshetra, have evicted my son Sachin from all my moveable-immovable properties, as he is out of my control. Anybody dealing with him at their own risk.

I, **Sukhvinder Singh** S/O Bhagat Singh Vill.Chammu Kalan Sub-Tehsil Ismailabad Distt.Kurukshetra My Son Gurvinder Singh And Daughter-In-Law Harvinder Kaur And Granddaughters Khushpreet Kaur And Jaspreet Kaur And Grandson Harnoor Singh are out of my control. I disown him from all my moveable and immoveable properties. If Anybody deals with him at their Own Risk.

I, **Puran Chand** S/o Gian Chand and Father of No. 4004565F Hav Balwinder Singh R/o Vill: Chhana Rai IDE Khan Teh-Mukerian (Hoshiarpur) declare that in my son's Balwinder Singh service documents my name & DOB wrongly entered as Puran Singh & 10-05-1955. My correct name & DOB is Puran Chand & 20-10-1957.

I, **Swarno** W/o Puran Chand and Mother of No. 4004565F Hav Balwinder Singh R/o Vill: Chhana Rai IDE Khan Teh-Mukerian (Hoshiarpur) declare that in my son's Balwinder Singh service documents my name & DOB wrongly entered as Swarn Kaur & 11-01-1959. My correct name & DOB is Swarno & 10-03-1953.

I **Raj Gupta** W/o Girdhari Lal Gupta R/O H.No. 167, Type 5, NUHON Colony, Po Ghanauli, (Ropar) have changed my name to Raj Rani Gupta W/o Girdhari Lal Gupta R/O C-301, Gilco Parkhills, Opposite Dullat Resort, Sec 126, Airport Road Kharar, SAS Nagar (Mohali).

I **Girdhari Lal** Gupta S/o Braham Perkash Gupta R/O H.No. 167, Type 5, NUHON Colony, Po Ghanauli, (Ropar) have changed my address to C-301, Gilco Parkhills, Opposite Dullat Resort, Sec 126, Airport Road Kharar, SAS Nagar (Mohali).

I **Service No JC262860A** Ex subedar Santokh Singh Village Naraingarh PO and Tehsil Dasuya Distt Hoshiarpur Punjab declare that in my army record My wife Name Nirmaljit Kaur and her date of birth 04-12-1966 written wrongly. Actually her Name is Nirmal Kaur and her date of birth is 03-06-1963 as per her aadhar and pan card records.

I, **Kharawate** Raghunath Ram S/O Sh.Ram Kharawate R/O Quater No 3845, Sector-F, Chandimandir Cantt, Panchkula Haryana declare that I have changed my Daughter name from Purvashri Raghunath Kharawate to Purvi Raghunath Kharawate.Vide Affidavit No-52AA 915943, Dated-24-1-24

It is for general information that I, **Raj Kumar** S/o Karam Singh R/O Kahlan, Jalandhar, Punjab- 144805, declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as Karma in my Passport No - Z-1507722. The actual name of my father is Karam Singh, which may be amended accordingly.

I, **Army No. JC-304404Y** Rank-Sub(DMT) Name: Upendra Kumar Singh, presently posted Unit-142 Ad Regt. (SP) C/o 56 APO, Chandimandir Cantt., Panchkula (Haryana), permanent residing at House No/ 151, Gali No.-11, Village- Arrah Jagdev Nagar, Ganeshpuri Colony, PO-Anaith, Tehsil-Arrah, Distt. Arrah, State- Bihar, PIN Code-802302 have changed my wife name from Manorma Devi to Manorma Kumari and also change my wife Date of birth from 20.02.1980 to 05.10.1978

It is for general information that I, **Rahul** S/o Tej Kumar R/o 198, Anandpur Rara, Pathankot, Punjab- 145001, declare that name of my father and my mother has been wrongly written as Teja and Sudesh respectively in my 10th Class School Certificate Cum Marksheet. The actual name of my father and my mother are Tej Kumar and Sudesh Kumari respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

ਮੈਂ ਗਲਸ਼ੀਰੀ ਲਾਲ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਅਮੀ ਚੰਦ ਵਾਸੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਜੰਤਪੁਰ ਭੁਗੀਸਲ ਬਲਾਸਰ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਗਰ ਸੁਰਿੰਤ ਕਰਕਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਲੜਕਾ ਸੁਨੀਲ ਕਮਾਰ, ਨੂੰ ਹ ਮਮਤਾ ਰਾਣੀ, ਪੋਸਟਮੈਂ ਗੁਰਪੁੰਤ ਕੌਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਜਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਿਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਹਨ, ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਾਰੀ ਚੌਲ-ਚਾਲ ਜ਼ਾਇਦਾਤ ਤੋਂ ਬੇਦਖਲ ਕਰਕਾ ਹਾਂ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੈਣ-ਦੇਣ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਖੁਦ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਮੇਰੀ ਬੇਈ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਸੋਚਤ ਹਨ ਕਰੋ।

CHANGE OF NAME

I **Anil Kumar** S/o Dewan Datt Sharma R/O H No. 5424, Sector 38 (West), Chandigarh have changed my name from Anil Kumar to Anil Kumar Sharma.

I **Gurmeet kaur** Harjindersingh Bhullar w/o Harjinder Singh Bhullar Vill Wazir Bhullar, Tehsil Baba Bakala, Distt Amritsar have changed my name to Gurmeet Kaur Bhullar, Gurmeet Kaur is my Given name and Bhullar is my Surname.

I **Nihchaldeep Kaur** w/o Bhupindersingh Surjitsingh Bhullar Vill Wazir Bhullar, Po Beas, Tehsil Baba Bakala, Distt Amritsar have changed my name to Nihchaldeep Kaur Bhullar, Nihchaldeep Kaur is my Given Name and Bhullar is my Surname.

I, **Jasmine** W/o Aman Boparai R/o #94, Sector-12, Panchkula (Haryana) have changed my name from Jasmine to Jasmine Boparai.

I, **Ayesha** D/o Abdul Vahav R/o #1796, Buraill, Chandigarh declare that have converted my religion from Muslim to Hindu and my name from Ayesha to Asha.

I hitherto known as Manvinder Jit Manes daughter of Parminder Singh, wife of Tarlok Singh Manes resident of 1684/15, Nai Abadi, Khanna, District Ludhiana, Punjab-141401, India, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Maninder Kaur Manes.

I **Seema Rani** W/o Yadvinder Singh House. 136, Gobind Nagar, Nayagaon Distt SAS Nagar Mohali Punjab have changed my name from Seema Rani to Simran Kaur.

I **Sani Kumar** s/o Naresh Kumar VPO Siprian Tehsil Mukerian district Hoshiarpur have changed my name Sani Kumar to Sunny Kumar. Please note.

I, **Raghhbir Singh** s/o Ujjager Singh Vill Taragarh (Gsp) have changed my name as Raghbir Singh. All concerned note.

I, **Mohini Jain** W/o Santosh Kumar Jain R/o # 510, Main Bazar, Kalka (Panchkula) have changed my name from Mohini Devi to Mohini Jain after marriage and my correct date of birth is 7th January, 1961.

I, **Satpal** S/o Sarwan Kumar R/o Village Mandkheri, PO Chhachhrauli, Distt. Yamuna Nagar declare that I have changed my name from Satpal to Sat Parkash.

I, **Sandeep Saini** s/o Jai Bhagwan Saini r/o #2184, Gali no. 02, Near Bablu Sunar, Shiv Colony, Karnal (Haryana) have changed my name from Sandeep Saini to Sundeep Saini. In future I should be known as Sundeep Saini.

I, **Rajni Devi** w/o Pardeep Singh r/o Village Kawi, Distt. Panipat declare that Rajni & Rajni Devi both are one and the same person.

I, **Sunita Rani** W/o Ashok Kumar R/o H.No. 724, Global Spaces, Sector 24, Hisar (Haryana), hereby declare that I have changed my name from Sunita to Sunita Rani for future purposes.

I, **Balraj Singh** S/o Dalip Singh R/o H. No. 724, Global Spaces, Sector 24, Hisar (Haryana), hereby declare that I have changed my name from Balraj to Balraj Singh for future purposes.

I, **Rajesh Kumar** S/o Sh. Jai Bhagwan R/o Saini Colony, Thanesar District Kurukshetra have changed my name from Rajesh Kumar Saini to Rajesh Kumar. In future I should be known by Rajesh Kumar. Note all concerns.

I, **WV Bhavn** S/O Vijay Kumar Sharma R/O #703, Sector 11 B, Chandigarh have changed my name to Walait Vijay Bhavn Sharma.

I, **Ramandeep Kaur** w/o Gurvinder Singh R/o Vill Bir Amin, Distt Kurukshetra have changed my name from Ramandeep to Ramandeep Kaur.

I, **Salim** S/o Sultana R/o H.No.329, Village Passina Khurd, Tehsil Bapoli, Distt. Panipat declare that I have changed my name from Salim Ali to Salim, for all future purpose.

I **Manjit Kaur** W/o Tajwant Singh R/o H.No-56, Haruwal, Teh Batala, Distt Gurdaspur, pin 143507, Punjab, India, Declare that I have change my name from Manjit Kaur to Kaur Manjit. Please all Concerned.

I **Mamta Rani** W/o Sh. Gulshan Kumar R/o #1023 Sector-17 Panchkula (Haryana) I have changed my name from Mamta Rani to Mamta Rani Nagpal.

I, **Aashana** D/o Dilshad R/o #45, Qaziyan Mohalla, Ward No.9, Sadhaura, Distt.Yamuna Nagar (Haryana) declare that Aashana & Aashna both are my names.

I **Service No. JC-432476N**, Rank SUB, Pradeep Kumar S/o Thandi Ram R/O Vpo Khandrai Tehsil Gohana Distt Sonipat, have changed my from Pradeep Kumar to Pardeep kumar for all purposes.

I **Sudhir Kumar** s/o Chaman Lal Batra R/o house number 1034 New housing board colony sector 11 Panipat declared that I have changed my name Sudhir Kumar to Sudhir Batra for all future purposes.

I, **Sunil Kumar** alias Lovely s/o Sai Ram R/o #378/5, Gali Sargian, Panipat present r/o #362/1, Near Singla Market, Salarganj Gate, Panipat have changed my name from Sunil Kumar alias Lovely to Sunil Kumar.

I, **Jeevan Bhambri** S/o Purshotam Dev R/o Flat No.32, 1st Floor, Green Field Homes, Kishanpura, Dhakauli, Tehsil- Derabassi, Distt.SAS Nagar (Punjab) declare that Jeevan Bhambri & Jiwan Kumar Bhambri both are one and same person.

I, **Satya Prakash** Pathak S/o Surya Narayan Pathak R/o H.No- 159, Model Town Ambala City have changed my name from Satya Prakash to Satya Prakash Pathak

I, **Priti** W/o Amit Kumar R/o Badhauli, (110), Ambala, Haryana have changed my name from Preeti Pundir to Priti.

I, **Kiran Ghai** W/o Kapil Ghai R/O H.No- 11-A Near Lal Mandir, Subhash Colony Ambala Cantt, Haryana have changed my name from Kiran Bala to Kiran Ghai

I, **Mahinder Singh** S/o Darshan Singh R/o Village Kullarpur Po Naraingarh Distt Ambala have changed my daughter's name from Ravinder Kaur to Ravinder Singh.

I **Priya Bhardwaj** W/o Sahil Bhardwaj R/o H.No- 1798/11 ward No 7, Moti Nagar Ambala City have changed my name fro, Priya Rani to Priya Bhardwaj.

I, **Ravi Kumar** Jain S/o Ashok Kumar Jain R/o #2475-84, Hargolal Road, Ambala cantt 133001 have changed my name to Ravi Jain.

I, **Kiran Bala** W/o Bhupinder Gogia R/O D-7/11 Vatika City Central Sector 23 Ambala City Distt Ambala Have Changed My Name From Kiran Bala To Kiran Gogia.

I, **Diksha** D/O Ravinder Kumar R/O H.No.2604, Gali No.1, Shimla Market, Putlighar, Amritsar Have Changed My Name To Diksha Bhargav.

I **Avtar Singh** S/O Pargat Singh R/O H.No.61, Gali No.02, Krishna Enclave, B/O Ocm Mill, Chheharta, Amritsar Punjab Have Changed My Name Avtar Is My Given Name And Singh Is My Surname

I, **Komal Kumari** Alias Parveen Kumari W/O Satpal R/O H.No.1276-13, Gali Ram Mandir Nimak Mandi Amritsar Have Changed My Name To Komal Kumari

I **Rajat Shah** S/O Banarsi Shah R/O 2574 Gali No.2 Karam Pura Navi Abadi Amritsar Have Changed My Name To Rajab Ali Shah

I, **Himanshu** S/O Vijay Pal Sinh R/O H.No.62-A, New Pal Avenue, Ram Tirath Road, Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Satbeer Singh And Satber To Satbir Singh

I **Rajnish Kumar** S/O Avtar Singh Resident Of 3, Gali No.1, Guru Nagar, Verka, Amritsar. I Have Changed My Name From Rajnish Kumar To Rajneesh Kumar.

I, **Bagjeet Singh** W/O Shinder Singh R/O Village Mand Po Dakota Tehsil Batala Distt.Gurdaspur, Punjab Have Changed My Name To Bagjeet As My Given Name And Singh As My Surname. Concerned Note.

I Hitherto Known As Suman Kaur D/O Santokh Singh W/O Paramjit Singh Residing At H.No.1-3/2006, Sant Nagar, Verka, Amritsar-143001 Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Sarabjit Kaur

I, **Karan Bir Singh** S/O Swinder Singh R/O H.No. 93 Shivala Colony, Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Karan Bir Singh To Karanbir Singh.



HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Telephone:- 01975-238883 e-mail:- hp-una@nic.in

Re-INVITATION FOR BIDS
PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY-III)

The **Superintending Engineer, 15th Circle, HPPWD** Una on behalf of Governor of HP re-invites the percentage rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD / CPWD/Other State Govt. / Central Govt. agencies for the works as detailed in the table below funded under PMGSY-III Batch-I, 2023-24 approved by the MoRD, Govt. of India vide letter No. P-17024/9/2021-RC (EFMS: 735520) dated 16th August, 2023.

Job. No.	Package No.	Name of work	Package Length (in Km.)	Job Length (in Km.)	Estimated Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Total Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Period of Completion of Construction part	Bid Security (Rs. in lacs)	
Constru ction	Maintena nce								
1 (CTB)	HP-12-205	T12-Panjarwar Bathri road to Nangal Khurd Chandpur	5.670						
	HP-12-206	T07-Panjarwar Bathri road to Saloh Badhera	8.510	19.180	1646.02	115.33	1761.35	18 months	35.23
2 (CTB)	HP-12-182	T05-Panjarwar Bathri road to Bankhandi Jhalera	8.520						
	HP-12-199	T14-Panjarwar Bathri road	9.000	17.520		105.35	1771.00	18 months	37.53
3 (CTB)	HP-12-183	T03-Lower Amiala to Kutharkalan up to Jalgarh Road	9.460						
	HP-12-197	T05-Takarla to Baruhai via New Abadi	5.070	14.530	1449.19	87.37	1536.56	18 months	30.74
4 (CTB)	HP-12-188	T05-Thanakalan to Khurwalinval Tiar Road	9.230						
	HP-12-187	T01-Jogi PangaTandaTala iLidk of Road	18.550	27.780	2112.68	167.04	2279.72	18 months	45.60
5 (CTB)	HP-12-184	T01-Basal Puli to NangalSalangirvalDer a Baba Rudru	7.100						
	HP-12-186	T04-Link Road teunt to Damandirval Badoli Dathwara Road	9.300	24.700	2215.0 5	148.52	2363.57	18 months	47.28
6 (CTB)	HP-12-185	T02-Link Road Dhamandri to Ambehra	8.300						
	HP-12-196	T01-Amb Gagret Athwan to HarizanBastli Road	6.550	13.440		80.82	1443.63	18 months	28.88
7 (CTB)	HP-12-194	T04-Charuru to Dhussara	6.890						
	HP-12-195	T02-Bhaloun ITI to Bhindlajvai Sohari Road	11.600	11.600	1076.98	69.75	1146.73	18 months	22.94
8 (CTB)	HP-12-193	T03-Amb Gagret road	3.310						
	HP-12-190	T02-Daulatpur to Bhanjal Shangkarnagar	13.740						
9 (CTB)	HP-12-191	T04-Gagret to Oyal Bhawa Bia Siriyan Uppertli	8.390	30.440	2119.36	183.04	2302.40	18 months	46.05
	HP-12-192	T05-Link Road Piplu To LoharilUpertli	5.000						

Note:- The rates to be quoted by the bidder shall be inclusive of all taxes, royalties, duties and other levies that the contractor will have to pay for the performance of this contract but excluding GST. GST at prevalent rates will be added / paid to the value offered by the bidder separately.
Maintenance Period is five years after date of completion of construction work.
1. **Cost of Bid Form:-** Rs. 5000/- (Non-refundable)
2. **Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:** The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website <https://pmgsytendershp.gov.in>
The bidders are advised to note the other details of the tenders from the website <https://pmgsytendershp.gov.in>
3. **Key Dates:**

1	Date of Online Publication	27.01.2024 (17.00 HRS)
2	Document Download Start and End Date	27.01.2024 (17.00 HRS) upto 10.02.2024 (10.00 HRS)
3	Bid Submission Start and End Date	27.01.2024 (17.00 HRS) upto 10.02.2024 (10.00 HRS)
4	Date of Technical Bid opening.	10.02.2024 (11.00 HRS)

Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.
The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the bids without declaring any reasons thereof.
*Non-registered bidders may submit their bids; however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities of HPPWD before signing the contract.

Superintending Engineer
15th Circle, H.P.P.W.D.,
Una-174303.
(For & on behalf of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh)

RO NO. 5171/2023-2024 Dated: 23-01-2024

I **Ravinder Kumar** S/O Manohar Lal R/O H.No.409, Pishori Nagar G.T Road, Khandwala, Po Rayon And Silk Mills Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Ravinder Kumar To Ravinder Kumar for all future purposes.

I, **Gurjant Singh** S/O Dalbir Singh R/O Village Dhariwal Po Bachiwind Tehsil Ajnala District Amritsar Have Changed My Name Gurjant Is My Given Name And Singh Is My Surname

I **Kavita Wadhwa** Alias Shashi Bala W/O Satish Kumar R/O 584/9 Gali Mochian Wali Hakima Gate Amritsar Have Changed My Name To Kavita Wadhwaa

I, **Rakesh Nischal** S/O Chaman Lal R/O H.No.2135, Gali No.2, Sharifpura District Amritsar Have Changed My Minor Daughter's Name From Ridiama To Ridhima Nischal

I Hitherto Known As Sanjeev Wadhwa Son Of Satish Wadhwa Residing At 584/9, Gali Mochia Wali Hakima Gate Amritsar-143001 Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Sanjeev Kumar.

I, **Gurvinder Singh** S/O Shingara Singh R/O L-1/718, Gurnam Nagar Akali Colony, Sultanwind Road, Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Gurvinder Singh To Gurwinder Singh

I, **No.15576510k** Spr Satbir Singh R/O Vill Mannan Post Office Alma Kalan Tehsil And District Tarn Taran Have Changed My Name From Satbeer Singh And Satber To Satbir Singh

I **Rajnish Kumar** S/O Avtar Singh Resident Of 3, Gali No.1, Guru Nagar, Verka, Amritsar. I Have Changed My Name From Rajnish Kumar To Rajneesh Kumar.

I, Hitherto Known As Raman Kumar S/O Bhajan Lal Khanna Residing At H No. 366-A, Gali No.2, Gopal Nagar, Majitha Road, Amritsar, Punjab, India Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Raman Khanna.

I, **Karan Bir Singh** S/O Swinder Singh R/O H.No. 93 Shivala Colony, Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Karan Bir Singh To Karanbir Singh.

I **Ravinder Kumar** S/o Sh. Gian Chand R/o Village Jhanjhari PO Bhaini Khurd District Karnal have changed my name from Ravender Kumar to Ravinder Kumar for all future purposes.

I, **Sonu** S/o Prem Singh R/o H. No. 486, Near Airtel Tower VPO Panihar Chak, Distt., Hisar, 125001 declare that I have changed my name from Sonu to Sonu Bhawan for all future purpose.

I, **Rahul Kumar** s/o Krishan Kumar r/o Bhima Basti, Masjid wall gali, Fatehabad, Haryana 125050 have changed my name from Rahul to Rahul Kumar for all future purposes.

I, **No.4478654H** Ex HAV Harbhajan Singh S/O Subeig Singh Resident of H.No.S-7/387, Faqir Singh Colony Angarh Amritsar declare that in my Service record name of my son is wrongly written as Jasandeep Singh but his correct name is Jashandeep Singh vide affidavit No. IN- Pb77985994892874W dated 18-01-2024

I, **Priti** W/o Bharat Balkrishan Chawla, 344A, Shiva Enclave, Bhabat, Zirakpur, Mohali, have changed my name to Priti Bharat Chawla.

I, **Gurlal Singh** S/o Hazara Singh, Village Bahri Mohalla, Kurukshetra, declare that Gurlal is my name and Singh is Surname.

I, **Vijay Jindal** S/o Tilak Ram R/o VPO Pillu Khera Mandi Tehsil Safidon Distt Jind, Haryana, have changed my name Vijay Kumar to Vijay Jindal.

I **Amandeep** S/O Maninder Jeet Singh R/O # 1925 Gurdev Mohalla Tehsil Barara (Ambala) Have Changed My Name Amandeep To Amandeep Singh.

I **Kulvant Singh** S/O Sh. Hari Ram R/O Vill. Nand Singh Wala Khara, Teh. & Distt. Kaithal Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Kulvant Singh To Kulwant For All Future Purposes.

I **Vishal** S/O Sham Lal R/O #253, Preet Colony, Lohgarh, Zirakpur Distt Mohali Have Changed My Name From Vishal Kumar To Vishal.

I **Sahil Chauhan** S/O Sh. Sumer Singh R/O #745, Sector 8B Chandigarh 160009 Have Changed My Name To Sahil Singh.

I **Simran** D/O Sh. Sumer Singh R/O #745, Sector 8b Chandigarh 160009 Have Changed My Name To Simran Chauhan.

I, **Mandeep Mann** S/o Sh. Shakti Singh R/o 1974, Jit Pana, High School ke pass, Ballah 03, Karnal, Haryana- 132040. I Have Changed My Name From Mandeep to Mandeep Mann For All Future Purposes.

I, **Santoshi Devi** W/o No. 15680919X, NK Radheyshyam Singh Rana R/o Village - Tharu Baghoah, Tehsil - Sitarganj, District - Udhham Singh Nagar, State - Uttarakhand, I have changed my name in my Husband's Army record from Santoshi Devi to Santoshi Rana.

I, **Kavita W/o** Rajveer Singh R/O H.No. 205, Gobind Bagh, Patiala Punjab-147001 have changed my name from Kavita to Kavita Singh.

I, **Layana K P** Is legally Wife of Service No. 15329862M Rank: L/HAV Name: Nikesh P, presently residing at VIII. Cheruthazham, Post Peryangadi, Tehsil Kannur, Distt. Kannur (State) Kerala, Pin code-670303 have changed my name from Layana KP to Layana K P.

CONT

CM Mann Declares Solo Flight in 2024 Elections; Cong Faces Internal Resistance to Alliance"

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

The political landscape in Punjab is witnessing seismic shifts as the pre-poll alliance prospects between two key players in the pan-India opposition bloc — the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress — seem to be fading away in the border state. Punjab Chief Minister and AAP leader Bhagwant Mann on Wednesday, once again, categorically announced the party's decision to go solo in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, dispelling any notions of an alliance with the Congress "in Punjab".

"Kitni baar kehlaoge mujhse (how many times will you make me say the same thing? Desh mein Punjab banega hero, Aam Aadmi Party 13-0," Mann said, replying to media queries regarding the possibility of alliance with Congress.

Mann, interacting with the media after the Cabinet meeting, asserted, "In Punjab, we will not do anything like that. We have nothing with the Congress."

The declaration came amidst earlier indications of a possible alliance, with Mann previously suggesting that the high command would make the final decision. The recent collaboration in the mayoral elections for the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation seemed to hint at a thaw in relations between the two political opponents in Punjab, where Congress is the principal opposition party, and AAP is in power.

However, Mann's latest statement puts any speculations to rest. He confidently proclaimed, "In 2024, Punjab will create history by giving 13-0 to AAP. There will be no alliance with Congress in the state."

Chief Minister Mann also informed that AAP, in the past few days, have prepared a list of 40 probable for Punjab's 13 Lok Sabha seats, of which 13 will be selected to contest as AAP candidates. "There are three to four probable candidates per Lok Sabha constituency. Surveys will be conducted and we have kept winnability as the criterion (for fielding a candidate)," he added.

Punjab, with its 13 Lok Sabha seats, holds significant political weight, and AAP's decision to contest independently reflects its confidence in securing a sweeping victory. AAP currently has one MP from Punjab, and the party's landslide victory in the 2022 assembly elections has bolstered its aspirations for success on the national stage.

As AAP charts its course for the upcoming elections, the declaration of contesting all 13 seats in Punjab is a clear indication of the party's ambition to replicate its state-level success at the national level.

Interestingly, Mann's declaration came hours after the West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamta Banerjee announced that her party would have no tie-up with the Congress in the state for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

AAP and TMC were both Congress allies as part of the Opposition's INDIA bloc. While Banerjee stated that she would take a decision about her party's stand at the national level after the Lok Sabha elections, Mann did not specify on AAP's position on the INDIA alliance at the national level.

In the past few days, the central leadership of both parties have been involved in discussions to allocate seats for the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elec-

tions. Despite being political adversaries in both Punjab and Delhi, the Congress and AAP have conducted two rounds of negotiations. Additionally, the two parties recently formed an alliance to jointly contest the mayoral position in Chandigarh.

Prior to securing a majority in the Punjab Assembly in 2022, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had claimed victory in one of the state's 13 parliamentary constituencies during the 2019 general elections. In the same elections, the Congress emerged triumphant in eight constituencies, while the Shiromani Akali Dal, then aligned with the BJP-led NDA alliance, secured two seats, and the BJP clinched two victories.

Cong Workers Against Alliance With AAP

In a parallel development, the Congress party finds itself grappling with the aftermath of anti-alliance sentiments within its ranks. The opposition to an alliance with the AAP has been palpable, with Congress leaders in Punjab vehemently opposing the idea. The sentiment was echoed in feedback meetings with Congress general secretary in-charge Devender Yadav, where party cadres expressed their reluctance towards any collaboration. The Congress, with six sitting MPs in Punjab, has been facing internal resistance to forging an alliance with the AAP, citing past grievances and allegations of vendetta politics. The Vigilance Bureau's actions against Congress leaders in corruption cases have added to the acrimony between the two parties.

Despite the ongoing seat-sharing negotiations at the national level, the resistance from state-level leaders and

workers signaled a challenging path for any potential alliance.

In the Congress Parliamentary meet of workers at Jalandhar on Wednesday, a palpable undercurrent of anti-alliance sentiment has surfaced, gaining strength especially in the aftermath of previous year's Lok Sabha bypoll where Sushil Rinku defected from the Congress ranks to join AAP, emerging victorious as the Member of Parliament from Jalandhar.

The gathering, attended by party heavyweights including party affairs in-charge Devender Yadav and the Leader of Opposition in Vidhan Sabha Partap Singh Bajwa, was organized to chalk out the strategy for ensuing Lok Sabha polls.

In a bid to gauge the pulse of the workers on the issue of an alliance and potential disciplinary action against those involved in anti-party activities, party's state general secretary Capt Sandeep Sandhu asked the workers to raise their hands, seeking their opinion on these crucial matters. In similar meeting at Patiala a day before, similar anti-alliance sentiment was observed among the grassroot workers.

Already, state leadership has conveyed its opposition to ally with the ruling party where Congress is the principal opposition party.

In Punjab, where the Congress had a significant setback in the 2022 assembly elections, the party is looking to regain lost ground. The AAP's dominance in the state has created a complex political landscape, making seat-sharing negotiations fraught with challenges. The state units of both parties stand strongly opposed to any alliance, setting the stage for a fiercely contested electoral battleground.

Chandigarh mayoral polls on Jan 30, directs HC

Chandigarh: The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Wednesday set aside the Chandigarh administration's order postponing the mayoral polls and said the election will be held on January 30. The decision came on a petition challenging an order of the Chandigarh deputy commissioner, who is the authority for holding the mayoral polls, postponing the election from January 18 to February 6.

As the matter came up for hearing, the division bench of Justice Sudhir Singh and Justice Harsh Bunger set aside the Chandigarh administration order, said petitioner's counsel Gurminder Singh. The elections for the posts of mayor, senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor will now be held at 10 am on January 30, he said.

"The court has allowed our petition," said Singh, who is also the Punjab Advocate General. He said the presiding authority for the mayoral polls will be appointed on the same day. To a question, Singh said only municipal councillors will be allowed at the Chandigarh municipal corporation office

on that day. No supporter will accompany the councillors, he added. The Chandigarh police will ensure security to the municipal councillors, said the petitioner's counsel, adding that no other state police personnel could accompany the councillors for the elections.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Kuldeep Kumar, an AAP councillor, who challenged the administration's order to postpone the polls.

The mayoral polls, initially slated to be held on January 18, were deferred to February 6 after Anil Masih -- the presiding officer -- fell sick, triggering protests from the Congress and AAP councillors. The Congress and the AAP, which have joined hands for the mayoral polls, have slammed the BJP, accusing it of not allowing the election, fearing "imminent defeat".

Under the Congress-AAP alliance, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will fight for the mayor's seat while the Congress will contest the posts of senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor. In the 35-member

Chandigarh Municipal Corporation, the BJP has 14 councillors. It also has an ex-officio member MP (Kiron Kher) who has voting rights. The AAP has 13 councillors and the Congress seven. The Shiromani Akali Dal has one councillor in the House.

During the hearing on Tuesday, the high court had asked the Chandigarh administration to come up with the earliest possible date for holding the mayoral polls or the matter will be decided on merit after hearing. In the hearing on Saturday, the counsel for the Chandigarh administration had said the polls were deferred keeping in mind the law and order issue.

The counsel for the administration had then apprised the court about the programmes taking place in the city in the wake of the consecration ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22. Thereafter, police would be busy in the arrangement of the Republic Day celebrations, it was also submitted. They also pointed towards the January 16 incident when the AAP coun-

cillors turned up at the MC office with the Punjab police commandos.

Petitioner Kumar, who was the candidate for the mayor post, in his plea filed on January 19, had sought that the January 18 order of the DC, fixing February 6 as the next date for holding the polls, be set aside and elections be conducted forthwith. On January 18, the AAP had moved the high court after the Chandigarh mayoral polls were abruptly postponed with councillors being told that the presiding officer had fallen ill.

During the hearing, the counsel for the Chandigarh administration had informed the high court that February 6 had been fixed as the next date for the mayoral polls after assessing the law and order situation. The petitioner had also sought quashing the order of the municipal corporation authorities restricting the entry of councillors in the MC premises. The petitioner had demanded holding of the mayoral polls in a fair and free manner.

(Agencies)

Punjab Cabinet restores benefits, introduces reforms

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a series of decisions, the Punjab Cabinet on Wednesday announced a comprehensive set of measures aimed at benefiting the citizens of the state. The cabinet meeting saw the approval of initiatives ranging from restoring benefits to ration cardholders to transparent transfer policies for teachers and numerous other reforms spanning various sectors.

Restoration of Benefits to Ration Card Holders

The Cabinet's foremost decision involved the restoration of benefits to 10.77 lakh ration cardholders across the state. The beneficiaries, who were initially deprived due to the deletion of around three lakh cards during the verification process, will now be able to access benefits provided under the Public Distribution System (PDS). This includes the much-appreciated door-to-door delivery of ration schemes recently initiated by the state government. Chief Minister's Office spokesperson highlighted that the decision was made in the larger public interest, ensuring that all eligible beneficiaries could derive the benefits of PDS and innovative ration delivery schemes initiated by the government.

Transparent Transfer Policy for Teachers

Recognizing the challenges faced by teachers in securing transfers, the Cabinet gave its nod to a new and transparent transfer policy — aimed at streamlining the transfer process, allowing teachers, especially those with family members facing chronic diseases, to apply for transfers throughout the year. This initiative is designed to alleviate the administrative burden on

educators, enabling them to focus more zealously on their teaching responsibilities. The new policy is expected to bring about greater efficiency in the education sector, ensuring that educators can contribute wholeheartedly to their teaching roles without unnecessary disruptions caused by transfer-related bureaucratic processes.

Extension of CM Di Yogshala Campaign

Building on the success of the CM Di Yogshala campaign launched in nine cities during phase I, the Cabinet approved the extension of this health-oriented initiative to 15 more districts — Barnala, Faridkot, Fatehgarh Sahib, Ferozepur, Fazilka, Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Mansa, Moga, Sri Muktsar Sahib, Pathankot, Rupnagar, SBS Nagar, Tarn Taran, and Malerkotla. The campaign focuses on promoting yoga and a healthy lifestyle. With its extension, the government plans to cover the entire state, necessitating the recruitment of additional trainers and staff to meet the growing demand for this pro-people initiative.

Financial Assistance to Ex-Servicemen Enhanced

In a move honouring the contribution of ex-servicemen and their widows, the Cabinet approved an enhancement in financial assistance for those above 65 years of age who participated in World War I and II. The financial assistance will be increased from Rs 6,000 to Rs 10,000, and this change is set to be effective from July 26, 2023.

Presently, 453 beneficiaries are availing benefits under this policy of the state government. This hike in financial assistance is expected to provide considerable relief to ex-servicemen and their widows, recognizing their sacrifice and service to the nation.

Approves Name of Former



IPS Aulakh as PPCC Chairman

The Cabinet also approved forwarding the recommendation to Punjab Governor regarding the appointment of 1997-batch IPS officer Jatinder Singh Aulakh as the Punjab Public Service Commission chairman. The file regarding his appointment as the PPSC chairman has already been cleared by the Governor in the evening. Punjab police's former intelligence chief, Aulakh was selected by the PPSC as DSP in April 1990; and was superannuated as ADGP Intelligence on January 31 last year. During his career spanning 33 years, he has been bestowed with the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service in 2022, Police Medal for Meritorious Services in 2011, Chief Minister's Medal for Outstanding Devotion to Duty in 2012, and three Director General's Commendation Disc in 2018, 2017, and 2010.

School of Eminence at Punjab Institute of Technology

The Cabinet gave its approval to set up a School of Eminence in the building of Punjab Institute of Technology (PIT) located in Arniwala Sheikh Subhan village. Originally proposed to be established in Government Secondary School, the decision to shift it to PIT was made due to space constraints.

Self-Certification of Residential Building Plans

In a major relief for urban residents, the Cabinet approved an amendment to Clause 3.14.1 of the Punjab Municipal Building Bylaws-2018. This allows for self-certification of residential building plans up to 500 square yards. The initiative aimed at reducing the time taken for approval, increase transparency, and sensitize citizens to comply with building bylaws.

Introduction of Farishtey Scheme

In a bid to lower the mortality and morbidity rate due to injuries occurring during roadside accidents, the Cabinet approved the introduction of the Farishtey scheme — an initiative aimed at providing immediate and hassle-free treatment to accident victims in both public and empaneled private hospitals. To encourage public participation, the State Government will reward individuals assisting accident victims with Rs 2,000. Commendation certificates will also be issued, describing them as 'farishtey' (angels), providing immunity from legal complications and police inquiries.

Punjab Police to set up AI and machine learning lab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Police on Wednesday inked an MoU with IIT-Ropar to establish a first-of-its-kind in-house Artificial Intelligence and machine learning laboratory.

Punjab Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said AI can assist police in the detection of criminal activities and fraud by identifying patterns and trends in large volumes of data while machine learning algorithms can help understand criminal behaviour and allocate resources accordingly.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Additional DGP, Technical Services, Ram Singh and Director of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Ropar Rajeev Ahuja in the presence of DGP Yadav.

The DGP said the collaboration will not only pave the way for various technological innovations but will also help in harnessing cutting-edge technologies for predictive policing, crime

pattern recognition and analysis, facial recognition and intelligent decision-making. The lab will also help in optimising the deployment of manpower based on real-time data, he said.

ADGP Singh said in the present era, the rapid progress in machine learning and Artificial Intelligence holds the potential to transform the operations of law enforcement agencies. He said the initiative, which is driven by the goal to leverage state-of-the-art technologies, will further help enhance law enforcement capabilities, improve public safety, and foster innovation in AI-driven security solutions. It also reflects the commitment to exploit the advancements in machine learning and AI for revolutionising law enforcement practices and enhancing security measures throughout Punjab, he added.

AI-driven dashboards can provide law enforcement agencies with real-time analytics and insights into ongoing operations and events, improving situational awareness.



The Chandigarh Police women contingent at the full dress rehearsal of the Republic Day Parade at Parade Ground, Sector 17 on Wednesday. *Pioneer Photo*

Hry CM lays foundation stone of 153 projects worth Rs 2024 crore in Hisar

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Wednesday inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for a total of 153 projects valued at Rs 2024 crore at a state-level function conducted through video conferencing at Lala Lajpat Rai Veterinary and Animal Sciences University in Hisar district. The development initiatives comprise the inauguration of 76 projects, collectively costing Rs 686 crore and the foundation stone laying for 77 projects with a combined value of Rs 1338 crore.

In a symbolic gesture, the Chief Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 10 major projects, amounting to Rs 784 crore. The remaining of the projects saw inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremonies carried out by Union Ministers, Haryana Cabinet Ministers, MPs, and MLAs in various districts. The Chief Minister also inaugurated the administrative building and Embryo Transplant Lab for animal breed improvement at Lala Lajpat Rai Veterinary and Animal Sciences University.

He said that the economic vitality of any state or country hinges on robust infrastructure, and our government continuously strengthening the infrastructure in the state, con-



tributing to the overall economic health. The Chief Minister highlighted that prior to this occasion, development projects have been initiated and foundation stones laid seven times across the entire state via digital platforms, resulting in the dedication of 1459 projects with an approximate value of Rs 15500 crores to the public. Today marks the eighth such program, reinforcing the commitment to continuous progress and development.

Khattar said, "In addition to physical development, our government places significant emphasis on cultural and social development." He highlighted the historic significance of January 22, a day when Prime Minister Narendra Modi presided over the grand consecration program of the Ram

Temple. The Chief Minister noted the widespread joy and happiness that permeated the entire nation on that momentous day.

Taking a dig at statements being made by the opposition regarding unemployment, Khattar dismissed their claims, stating that figures ranging from 9 percent to 35 percent are being inaccurately cited. He clarified that the actual self-declared unemployment rate on family identity cards is about 8.5 percent, discrediting the opposition's assertions of up to 34 percent as mere political propaganda.

Highlighting the state's progress in terms of ease of doing business, Khattar underscored that Haryana has become a preferred destination for investment. Over the past nine and a half years, the gov-

ernment has successfully provided employment opportunities to 30 lakh people. Additionally, efforts have been made to facilitate self-employment by making loans available to individuals through banks.

Khattar highlighted the significant infrastructure projects underway in Haryana, including the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor spanning 72 km and the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor extending 506 km. These corridors are poised to bring substantial benefits to the state. Additionally, the construction of the Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor, in conjunction with the KMP (Kundi-Manesar-Palwal) project, is in progress. Furthermore, the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) rail line is being established from Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi to Karnal, promising improved connectivity. The completion of these initiatives is anticipated to yield considerable advantages for the residents of the region.

Notably, a Rail Coach Factory, spread over 161 acres in Sonapat, will manufacture new coaches for the Metro Rail. He said that wherever RoB-RuB is not available on National Highway, State Highway and district roads in the state, RoB-RuB will soon be constructed. Approval for this has been received from the Railway

Ministry.

The Chief Minister pointed to the transformative efforts in the healthcare sector, adding that in 2014, there were only 6 medical colleges with 700 MBBS seats. However, due to the persistent efforts of the current government, the number of medical colleges is on track to reach 26, significantly increasing the available MBBS seats to 3500.

He emphasized that the double-engine government is not solely focused on infrastructure but is also actively engaged in bringing about positive changes in the social sector and enhancing the overall ease of living. This multifaceted approach is aimed at ensuring the happiness and well-being of society at large.

Virtually addressing the people of the state after inaugurating 60 Amrit+ Sarovar across the state from Dult village in the Tohana assembly constituency of the Fatehabad district, Khattar urged the citizens of the state to use water judiciously and avoid wastage. Emphasizing that water is precious, he encouraged people to develop the habit of using available water wisely and reusing it.

Khattar said that to rejuvenate ponds in the State, the Haryana Pond and Wastewater Management Authority has been established, and the

Authority has been directed to survey the ponds available in the state. According to the survey, a total of 19,649 ponds have been identified in the state, with approximately 18,000 ponds in rural areas and 900 ponds in urban areas. Out of these ponds, about 11,000 are polluted, and efforts are being made for their rejuvenation, he informed.

He said that farmers have excessively used chemical fertilizers, resulting in increased crop yield but deteriorating soil quality. He said that due to the formation of a compact layer in the soil due to chemicals, rainwater is not seeping into the ground, causing waterlogging and marshy conditions in many areas. Not only that, but the excessive use of chemical fertilizers has led to serious diseases like cancer today. To overcome this problem, there is a need to shift towards natural farming, said Sh. Manohar Lal.

Khattar appealed to farmers to opt for alternative crops instead of paddy for water conservation and solving water logging issues. For this, the government has implemented the Mera Pani Meri Virasat scheme, providing an incentive of Rs. 7,000 per acre to farmers who refrain from cultivating paddy. So far, farmers have left paddy cultivation on 1,74,000 acres of land.

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhu on Wednesday sanctioned Rs 100 crore for enhancing and strengthening the infrastructure of Shimla town with an aim to increase tourist footfall and facilitate the local people.

"Rs 55 crore would be spent on underground power cables in Shimla which would ensure proper ducts facilities," he said in a statement, adding that the move will help provide uninterrupted power supply to the consumers even during heavy snowfall and adverse weather in the town.

Sukhu said the Himachal Pradesh government would also spend Rs 45 crore for improvement and widening of Circular Road in the state capital. He said the decongestion of the road would go a long way in facilitating the local public and tourists and ensuring smooth flow of vehicular movement.

He directed the Public Works Department (PWD) to remove all the bottlenecks on this road for the convenience of the commuters.

"The present state government had initiated various schemes to attract more tourists to the state and a target of around five crore tourists had been fixed and necessary infrastructure was being created for their convenience" the chief minister said. He said these steps will enhance the

aesthetic appeal of Shimla town besides restoring its old glory.

CM ALLOCATES RS 13 CRORE FOR FOUR HELIPORTS

Chief Minister Sukhu has allocated Rs. 13 crore for the construction of heliports at Rakkad and Palampur in Kangra district, Reckong Peo in Kinnaur district and in Chamba. He said that the Government was making earnest efforts to construct heliports at all the district headquarters in the State so that air connectivity could be provided to the tourists as well as the local people. He added that Himachal has hilly geographical terrain and construction of heliports in the State would go a long way in attracting tourists, saving their time. He said that heliports would also prove boon to provide prompt assistance to the local residents in case of any emergency.

Sukhu said that in addition to the Horticulture and Hydropower sectors, Tourism sector can also play a vital role in strengthening the economy of the State, adding that keeping this in view, the Government was providing priority for the tourism sector as thousands of families are associated either directly or indirectly with this sector. He said that the State Government was making all-out efforts to strengthen the tourism infrastructure to facilitate tourists.

PM calls NCC cadets, NSS volunteers Amrit Peedhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Ahead of Republic Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with NCC cadets and NSS volunteers in the national Capital on Wednesday. “Your generation is called GenZ in your language. But I will call you Amrit Peedhi...” the PM told NCC, NSS cadres. Reiterating India’s resolve to become a developed nation by 2047, the Prime Minister emphasised the importance of the next 25 years for the future of India and the present generation. “It is the Government’s resolve to fulfill all the dreams of the Amrit Generation, create countless opportunities, and remove all obstacles in their paths”, the Prime Minister said. He stated that the discipline, focused mindset and coordination witnessed in today’s performance are also the basis for realising the dreams of Amrit Kaal. The Prime Minister reiterated that ‘Nation First’ should be the

guiding principle of the Amrit Generation. The Prime Minister also told the young audience never to allow despair to set in their lives. Stressing the importance of every small contribution, PM Modi, stressed “Yahi Samay hai Sahi Samay hai, Ye Aapka Samay Hai - This is the right time, this is your time.” Stressing the importance of the present moment, the Prime Minister asked the youth to impart strength to their resolve to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat. And to expand the horizon of knowledge so that Indian geniuses could give new direction to the world and gain new capabilities so that India could solve the world’s problems. He elaborated on the steps for creating new avenues for youth to realize their full potential and mentioned creating new opportunities in newly opened sectors. PM Modi gave examples of creating new opportunities in the space sector, push towards Ease of Doing Business, creating a private sector in the



defence industry, establishing the National Research Foundation and creating modern educational facilities to cater to the 21st century. Mentioning the Government’s decision of Bharat Ratna for Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur, PM Modi marked this as the government’s good fortune and underlined the need for the young generation of today to know about the great personality. The Prime Minister recalled his rise despite extreme poverty and social inequality as he became Chief Minister and always maintained his down-to-earth humility. The Prime Minister also mentioned reforming the education system in India which allows attaining higher education in the mother tongue and not being bound to a particular stream or subject. Encouraging the youth to engage in research and innovation, the Prime Minister mentioned Atal Tinkering Labs which inspire creativity and innovation. He underlined that the govern-

ment has created new opportunities for girl students who want to make a career by joining the army. “Now, girl students can also be admitted to various Sainik schools”, the Prime Minister said urging them to move forward with full confidence. “Your efforts, your vision, your potential will take India to new heights”, he added. Throwing light on his connections with NCC, the Prime Minister said that institutions like NCC, NSS or cultural camps make the youth aware of society and civic duties. He informed about the creation of another organization - ‘My Yuva Bharat’ and urged the youth to register as ‘My Bharat’ Volunteers. During this Republic Day Celebration, the Prime Minister highlighted the multiple opportunities to witness multiple programs, visit various historical places and meet experts. “This will be an experience that you will remember for the rest of your life. Every year whenever you watch the Republic Day parade, you will

remember these days and you will also remember that I told you this”, Modi said. He also urged them to record their experiences and learnings from the Republic Day celebrations which can also be shared with the Prime Minister in writing or video recording on NaMo App. “Today’s young generation can stay connected with me continuously through the NaMo App”, PM Modi emphasised. Concluding the address, the Prime Minister expressed belief and faith in the strength of the youth. He urged them to study hard, be a conscientious citizen, protect the environment, avoid bad habits and be proud of the nation’s heritage and culture. “You have my blessings, my best wishes”, PM Modi concluded. Union Minister of Defence, Shri Raj Nath Singh, Union Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, and Union Ministers of Tribal Affairs, Shri Arjun Munda were present on the occasion among others.

PM to interact with young voters today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will speak to a large number of young voters on the National Voters Day on Thursday through a programme organised by the youth wing of the ruling BJP. Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) president Tejasvi Surya said that young voters played a key role in electing Modi as Prime Minister in 2014 and then his re-election in 2019. “They are very enthusiastic for electing Modi ji as prime minister for a third term,” he told reporters, claiming that there have been unparalleled opportunities for youngsters in the BJP-led NDA government. The unemployment rate is at an all-time low amid the rapid

pace of economic growth and huge boost to infrastructure which has directly and indirectly benefitted the youth in a big way, he said. Surya said lakhs of young voters will virtually connect with the prime minister at nearly 5,000 places across the country. It is historic as this is the first time a prime minister will be interacting with young voters at such a scale, he said, asserting that such an exercise will encourage their participation in elections and deepen the country’s democratic roots. There are over seven crore voters in the 18-25 years group, he noted, adding that the government has brought numerous schemes and policies to help them, including by establishing many new IIMs, IITs and medical colleges.

I bow to Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday paid heartfelt tributes to two-time Bihar Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur, who has been named for the country’s highest civilian award Bharat Ratna, on the occasion of his 100th birth anniversary, acknowledging his significant contributions to social justice and unwavering commitment to the welfare of the people. Modi said Thakur’s relentless pursuit of social justice created a positive impact in people’s lives. Sharing his write-up on the pioneering backward caste leader, Modi posted on X, “I bow to Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur Ji on his birth centenary. On this special occasion, our Government has had the honour of conferring the Bharat Ratna on him. I’ve penned a few thoughts on his unparalleled impact on our society and polity.” Overcoming numerous obsta-

cles, Thakur achieved a lot and worked for societal betterment, the prime minister said. Thakur’s most significant contributions to India was perhaps his role in strengthening the affirmative action apparatus for the backward classes, with the hope that they were given the representation and opportunities they deserved, he said. His decision was met with heavy opposition but he did not bow to any pressure and his policies laid the groundwork for a more inclusive society, where one’s birth did not determine one’s fate, the prime minister wrote in an article which appeared in many newspapers on Wednesday. Modi said his government over the last 10 years has walked on Thakur’s path, bringing in schemes and policies that have brought transformative empowerment. The prime minister said, “He belonged to the most backward strata of society but he worked for all the people, He had no trace of bitterness in him, which is what



makes him truly great.” He said the life of ‘Jan Nayak’, as Thakur came to be known as, revolved around the twin pillars of simplicity and social justice, and his simple lifestyle and humble nature resonated deeply with the common people till his last breath. “Those who worked with him recall how he preferred to spend his own money for any personal matter, including his daughter’s wedding. During his tenure as Chief Minister of Bihar, a decision was taken to build a colony for political

leaders but he himself did not take any land or money for the same,” he said. When Thakur passed away in 1988, several leaders went to his village to pay tributes and were moved to tears seeing the condition of his house, he noted. Looking at his torn kurta at an event to mark the birth-day of socialist icon Jayaprakash Narayan in 1977, Chandrashekhar, another political stalwart, asked people to donate some money so that Thakur could buy a new kurta, but the then Bihar chief min-

ister donated the amount to the CM Relief Fund, he recalled. Modi said social justice was most dear to Thakur and his political journey was marked by monumental efforts to create a society where resources were distributed fairly, and everyone, regardless of their social standing, had access to opportunities. He took a distinctly anti-Congress line because he was convinced very early on that the Congress had deviated from its founding principles, Modi said. Education was a subject very close to his heart and he worked throughout to improve education facilities for the poor, the prime minister said. One of the biggest tragedies of our polity has been that barring a few leaders like Thakur, the call for social justice was restricted to being a political slogan, he said. Modi added, “Inspired by Karpoori Ji’s vision we implemented it as an effective governance model. I can say with confidence and pride that Jan Nayak

Karpoori Thakur Ji would have been very proud of India’s feat of freeing 25 crore people from the clutches of poverty in the last few years.” Today, when people from OBC, SC and ST Communities are becoming entrepreneurs due to MUDRA Loans, it fulfills Thakur’s vision of economic Independence, he said. “Likewise, it was our government which had the privilege of extending SC, ST and OBC reservation. We also had the honour of setting up the OBC Commission (which was opposed by Congress, sadly), which is working on the path shown by Karpoori Ji,” he added. As a person belonging to the backward classes himself, Modi said, he has much to thank Thakur for. He said, “Unfortunately, we lost Karpoori Ji at a relatively young age of 64. We lost him when we needed him the most. Yet, he lives on in the heart and minds of crores of people due to his work. He was a true Jan Nayak!”

Researchers find correlation between energy drink consumption, poor sleep



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Marketed as mental and physical pick-me-ups, energy drinks are popular with college students and young people in general. However, a significant correlation between the consumption of energy drinks and poor sleep quality, as well as insomnia, has been revealed in a large Norwegian study published in the journal BMJ Open. The study, conducted among college students, found that the higher the frequency of energy drink consumption, the fewer hours of nightly sleep students experienced. Even occasional consumption, defined as 1-3 times a month, was linked to an increased risk of disturbed sleep. Energy drinks contain an average caffeine content of 150 mg per liter, along with sugar, vitamins, minerals, and amino acids, said the study, drawing on over 53,000 participants aged 18 to 35 and indicated that daily consumption led to around half an hour less sleep than occasional or no consumption. Both men and women who reported daily consumption experienced associations with waking after falling asleep, taking longer to fall asleep, and poorer sleep efficiency.

Insomnia was also more prevalent among those reporting daily consumption compared to occasional or no consumption. Sex differences were noted in energy drink consumption patterns, with women more likely than men to report never or seldom consuming energy drinks. The study highlights a dose-response association, indicating that as energy drink consumption increased, so did the risk of sleep problems across various aspects, with the strongest associations found for short sleep duration. The observational nature of the study conducted by researchers Siri Kaldenbach, Mari Hysing, A Strand and Børge Sivertsen from various top research institutes and Hospitals in Norway, means that causation cannot be definitively established, and reverse causality (poor sleep leading to energy drink consumption) could also be a factor. Nonetheless, the findings suggest that the frequency of energy drink consumption may be a modifiable risk factor for sleep issues among college and university students. Concurring with the study observation, AshimSanyal, CEO of Consumer VOICE, a consumer rights organization working in the field of cardiovascular health for sever-

al years said that this should serve as yet another wakeup call for the Government and ensure a clear and interpretive Front of Packaging labels (FOPL) so that a buyer knows what he/she is purchasing. “Consumers have a right to make informed choices on the foods they eat. Having a simple Warning Label on packaged foods will help consumers identify foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt,” he said. These products are clearly also root causes for NCDs affecting individuals across all age groups and regions. According to Kavita Devgan, noted nutritionist and author, “Some so-called health/energy drinks for children actually fall under the dangerous HFSS (High Fat Salt Sugar) category and can lead to obesity, diabetes, and other related problems from an early age. “Parents often introduce these sugary drinks to children as early as 2 years thinking that they will supplement the missing nutrition from their children’s diet, But these sugar-laden drinks can add a lot of extra sugar to their diet and may increase the risk of lifestyle diseases among children. So parents must read the labels carefully before introducing any new packaged food in their child’s diet.”

Delhi needs neighbours aid to beat smog woes: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Amid the blame game between the national Capital and its neighbouring States over the issue of emitting pollution, a review carried out by the University of Surrey and regional Government officials in Delhi has said Delhi needs the help of its rural neighbours to finally beat its killer smog problem. Professor Prashant Kumar, founding director of Global Centre for Clean Air Research (GCARE) at the University of Surrey, said: “Air pollution doesn’t respect city boundaries – and so it must be tackled at regional level. If cities like Delhi want to avoid the lethal smog seen in recent years, they’ll need neighbouring rural areas to help them. “We know this approach works



– we’ve seen success in places like Mexico City and Los Angeles. By working together, we can tackle air pollution.” In most Indian cities (60%), the air is over seven times more polluted than it should be. This has huge health implications. Some of this pollution comes from neighbouring rural areas

– from crop burning, wood stoves, or power plants. Yet measures to tackle urban smog usually ignore rural sources. Instead, they focus only on measures within the city limits – like boosting public transport or controlling pollution from industry and building sites. The GCARE review “A critical

review of managing air pollution through airshed approach” published in ScienceDirect recommends tackling air pollution at a regional level instead. This means identifying the wider area where a city’s pollution is produced – its so-called “airshed”. The organization has enlisted a slew of measures such as regional air quality plans should be drawn up – which has worked well in places like Mexico City and Los Angeles. “Smog forecasts” could be produced with better monitoring. Satellites could spot bonfires and other sources of pollution. Scientists could then predict how it would interact with weather conditions. “Airshed Councils” could help local, regional and federal agencies co-ordinate their efforts. Dr Anwar Ali Khan, Senior Environmental Engineer on

the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, said, “Delhi’s neighbouring States have an important role to play in helping save lives in our city – and in their areas too. We need an action plan with a sound scientific basis, and we need better monitoring. “This requires cities, governments and others to work together. A joined-up approach is the only way to defeat this deadly health hazard.” Dr Mukesh Khare, Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology, said, “A significant portion of air pollution stems from sources outside city limits, which requires a shift from city-specific to region-specific emission reduction targets. The establishment of an airshed will be a critical tool for effective air quality management and planning.”

Genetic markers linked to premature ageing reversed in children with diet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

A genetic marker linked to premature aging was reversed in children with obesity during a six-month diet and exercise programme, according to a recent study led by the Stanford School of Medicine. Children’s telomeres — protective molecular “caps” on the chromosomes — were longer during the weight management program, then were shorter again in the year after the program ended, the study found. The research has been published in Pediatric Obesity. Like the solid segment at the end of a shoelace, telomeres protect the ends of chromosomes from fraying. In all people, telomeres gradually shorten with aging. Various conditions, including obesity, cause premature shortening of the telomeres. The new study is the first to link a behavioral eating and

physical activity program for weight management in children with obesity to healthy changes in average telomere length. The discovery may help scientists understand how the biological benefits of losing weight, eating healthier and being more physically active occur. The findings also imply that telomere length may be a good marker for measuring the benefits of healthy dietary changes, physical activity and weight management, as changes in telomere length appeared to be somewhat independent of traditional markers such as body mass index. “We saw that the recommended behaviors everyone knows about — eating fewer high-fat or high-sugar foods and fewer calories, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time — can slow down biological aging associated with obesity in children,” said the study’s senior author, Thomas Robinson.

“It’s remarkable to see effects on the chromosomes with behavioral treatments,” he said. Understanding how behavior changes to reduce obesity are biologically linked with other conditions such as heart disease and diabetes would help scientists understand how the process might be slowed or reversed. “We know a lot about cardiovascular risk for adults, but for kids, we’ve just said ‘obesity is bad’ yet we don’t know, biologically, how cardiovascular risks linked to obesity start in children,” said the study’s lead author, David Rehkopf, ScD, associate professor of epidemiology and population health and of medicine. “To have this biological measure with a strong genetic component turn out to be changeable when we give kids resources to be healthier, especially over a short period of time, was very interesting and exciting,” Rehkopf said.

Murmu inaugurates Kaushal Bhawan



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday inaugurated Kaushal Bhawan – a new building of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship here. According to a statement here, the President visited the exhibition stalls set up by the beneficiaries of various initiatives of the Government such as PM Vishwakarma, PM JANMAN, Skill Acquisition and

Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and interacted with them. The Kaushal Bhawan whose foundation stone was laid in March 2019 will provide office space for the Ministry as well as its associated organisations – the Directorate General of Training, the National Council for Vocational Education and Training and the National Skill Development Corporation.

नगर परिषद कालिका के प्रोपर्टी टैक्स रिकॉर्ड अनुसार
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कार्यकारी अधिकारी
नगर परिषद, सरिसा

with Police Station (Kathlath City) No. 184/1 dated 10.04.2015. Now, the undersigned (Magor), the present owner, of the said vehicle has provided Conveyance Deed/Sale Deed to the office of Sub Registrar/Tehsildar, District Magistrate, Punjab National Bank Ambala Road, Ambala. The undersigned finds the original Conveyance Deed/Sale Deed, the same be handed over to the undersigned (Police Station Office/other office). However, if the undersigned is a criminal action. Further, any person who has any objection can make an application for cancellation of this notice.

Manager, Punjab National Bank
505 e-mail id:- bo0248@pnb.co.i

Up, up and away!

The Indian stock exchange overtakes Hong Kong’s, securing fourth place globally

In what must come as happy news for its economy, India's stock exchange has surpassed Hong Kong's to become the fourth largest global equity market. This accomplishment underscores India's economic resilience and its growing significance in financial arena. The surge of India's stock exchange to this reputable position is due to a confluence of factors. Foremost among these is the comprehensive economic reforms in recent years. Measures such as the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the establishment of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) have created a business-friendly environment, fostering investor confidence. Simultaneously, India has witnessed a steady inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI), driven by initiatives like 'Make in India' and liberalised FDI norms. These efforts have positioned India as an attractive destination for global investors. Technological advancements have played a pivotal role in transforming the Indian stock market into a more accessible and efficient platform. The widespread adoption of online trading platforms, mobile applications and other technological innovations have democratised investment, expanding the investor base. India's stock market has exhibited resilience during global economic challenges, navigating the uncertainties brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. This ability to weather economic storms and rebound swiftly has reinforced investor confidence on both domestic and international fronts. The implications of India's stock exchange securing the fourth spot on the global stage are profound. This achievement is expected to attract increased foreign capital, stimulating economic growth, job creation



and supporting infrastructure development. Furthermore, the higher global ranking enhances India's visibility and credibility as an investment destination. The thriving stock market has the potential to translate into capital appreciation for individuals and institutions, thereby potentially boosting consumer spending and overall economic activity. However, amid these positive developments, challenges such as market volatility, regulatory concerns and geopolitical factors must be accounted for. A responsive regulatory framework is crucial to ensuring the stability and integrity of financial markets. Unfortunately, many cases of insider trading and unscrupulous practices have come to light. The sad part is that SEBI, entrusted to safeguard investor interests and regulate the market, has often failed in controlling the frenzy which results in wiping away a sizeable amount of small investors' money. That is a concern to be addressed immediately and SEBI must be made more powerful to deal with unscrupulous brokers and entrepreneurs. Indeed, India's stock exchange securing the fourth position globally is a momentous achievement that reflects growing appeal for investors. As India continues to enact reforms, attract foreign investment, it is poised for sustained economic growth. Managing challenges proactively will be essential to ensuring the long-term stability and vibrancy of our markets.

PICTALK



Students in traditional Punjabi attire during the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade 2024, in Amritsar

Policy reforms needed to boost manufacturing

By creating an environment conducive to manufacturing, India can attract investments and become key player in the global manufacturing hub

With the swift expansion of India's manufacturing sector, the country is poised to become a leading global manufacturing force. Currently positioned among the top three preferred global manufacturing locations, India has the potential to boost its exports to an impressive USD one trillion by 2030. However, within the spectrum of various supply chains, the challenges and opportunities of Indian manufacturing are evident in the wooden pallet sector. To consolidate its position in the pallet industry, essential policy reforms are necessary for sustainable growth and global leadership. Indeed, critical policy changes are required for India to smoothly transition into a global manufacturing hub, ensuring enduring growth and competitiveness on the international stage. Infrastructure Development India needs to focus on developing robust infrastructure, including transportation, power, and telecommunications, to support the manufacturing sector. The government should invest in building modern industrial parks,



logistics hubs, and efficient transportation networks to reduce manufacturing costs and improve competitiveness. **Sustainable Manufacturing** In the era of increasing environmental awareness, sustainable and eco-friendly manufacturing practices are becoming imperative. The government should encourage manufacturers to adopt green technologies and sustainable processes by providing incentives and enforcing regulations that promote environmental responsibility. This not only aligns with global trends but also enhances the reputation of Indian products in international markets. **Simplified Regulations** The regulatory environment in India is complex, and businesses face bureaucratic hurdles. Streamlining regulations and creating a more business-

friendly environment will encourage investment and growth in the manufacturing sector. Implementing a single-window system for approvals, clearances, and licenses can facilitate ease of doing business. Skilled Labour Development India's education system needs to adapt to the changing needs of the economy by providing relevant skills training. Addressing the shortage of skilled workers in the manufacturing sector is crucial for its growth. The government should focus on creating appropriate skill sets among the workforce to meet the demands of modern manufacturing. **Government schemes** The government has introduced Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes to promote domestic manufacturing and increase India's share of global exports. These schemes encourage investments in manufacturing and provide incentives for various sectors, contributing to the growth of the manufacturing industry. **Foreign Investment** India's trade policies and foreign investment regulations

play a significant role in attracting global manufacturers. The government should continue to focus on policies that promote domestic manufacturing, reduce import dependence, and encourage foreign investment in the manufacturing sector. **Tax Reforms** A competitive and stable tax regime is essential for attracting investment. India needs to rationalise its tax structure, ensuring that it is transparent and predictable. Reducing corporate tax rates, providing incentives for research and development, and promoting innovation through tax breaks will encourage manufacturing companies to invest and operate in India. Becoming a global manufacturing hub requires a comprehensive and coordinated effort from the Indian government, industry players, and other stakeholders. The success of these reforms will not only boost the economy but also create employment opportunities and enhance India's standing in the world of international trade and commerce. *(The writer is an Industry expert, views are personal)*



JAY SHAH

Bharat Ratna: Honouring the legacy of Jan Nayak

The Bharat Ratna, conferred posthumously to Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur, gives a fitting tribute to his work and ideals

The celebration of Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur's birth centenary has been marked by a momentous announcement from the Indian government, bestowing upon him the prestigious Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in the nation. Renowned for his relentless dedication to reshaping social justice, Karpoori Thakur has left an indelible mark on the lives of millions. His remarkable journey, from the marginalized barber community to the pinnacle of political leadership, is a testament to his unwavering commitment to social reform.

In the dynamic tapestry of Bihar's socialist movement, Karpoori Thakur's name resonated alongside stalwarts such as Ram Vilas Paswan, Sharad Yadav, and Chandrashekhar. Emerging from a disadvantaged background, he surmounted numerous obstacles to not only enhance his social standing but also to champion the cause of those on society's periphery. His enduring influence on the underprivileged persists, symbolizing mental fortitude for the backward society. The government's decision to posthumously honor Karpoori Thakur with the Bharat Ratna underscores the extraordinary legacy of this Bihar-born socialist leader. A statement from Rashtrapati Bhavan lauds him as a trailblazer of social justice and an inspirational figure in Indian politics. The award serves as a fitting tribute to his lifelong dedication to uplifting the deprived sections of society and his relentless pursuit of social justice. Karpoori Thakur's life was a testament to simplicity and social justice, pillars that defined his persona as the people's hero. From his unassuming lifestyle to his humility, he endeared himself to the common folk. Anecdotes abound, such as the incident with Chaudhary Charan Singh, where he refused personal gains even when offered a plot of land during his tenure as Chief Minister. In 1977, another instance showcased his simplicity when he joined party leaders in a torn kurta for a celebration in Patna. Despite offers for a new kurta, he



chose to donate the money to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund, embodying his selfless nature. The Bharat Ratna announcement, made a day before his centenary, elevates Narendra Modi's standing among the Bihari and socialist public. Karpoori Thakur, a champion of social justice, envisioned a society where resources were equitably distributed, and opportunities were accessible to all, irrespective of social status. His political journey, beginning in the 1950s, saw him win every election, reflecting the trust bestowed upon him by the people. Serving as Chief Minister from 1970 to 1971 and later from 1977 to 1979, he aligned himself with the working class, laborers, and small farmers. As the Education Minister, he championed the abolition of English in matriculation exams and focused on improving education facilities for the underprivileged. Participating in the Quit India Movement as a youth, Karpoori Thakur remained unwavering during the Emergency, earning praise from leaders like J.R. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, and Charan Singh. His pivotal role in strengthening affirmative action for backward classes, despite strong opposition, laid the foundation for a more inclusive society. Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur, hailing from the most back-

“THE POSTHUMOUS CONFERRAL OF THE BHARAT RATNA UPON JAN NAYAK KARPOORI THAKUR STANDS AS A POIGNANT RECOGNITION OF A LEADER WHOSE LIFE WAS DEDICATED TO THE SERVICE OF THE MARGINALISED AND THE UPLIFTMENT OF THE DOWNTRODDEN

ward section of society, stands as a beacon of inclusivity and a true people's hero, making the Bharat Ratna bestowed upon him a fitting tribute to his monumental contributions to Indian society. The recognition posthumously bestowed upon him not only honors his memory but also serves as an inspiration for future generations to continue the pursuit of social justice and equality. As India reflects on the life and legacy of this exceptional leader, it is a reminder that the struggle for a just society is an ongoing journey, and the ideals championed by Karpoori Thakur still remain relevant. The posthumous conferral of the Bharat Ratna upon Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur stands as a poignant recognition of a leader whose life was dedicated to the service of the marginalized and the upliftment of the downtrodden. As we commemorate his birth centenary, this prestigious award serves as more than a tribute; it is a testament to the enduring impact of his vision for a just and inclusive society. Karpoori Thakur's legacy is multifaceted, embodying simplicity, humility, and an unwavering commitment to social justice. His journey from a humble background to the echelons of political leadership serves as an inspiration, proving that resilience and dedication can break through societal barriers. The government's decision to bestow the Bharat

Ratna upon him is not merely a recognition of past achievements but a call to contemporary and future leaders to emulate his principles. In a time when the pursuit of social justice remains a critical imperative, Karpoori Thakur's life provides a roadmap for leaders to navigate the complexities of governance with integrity and compassion. As Narendra Modi's government makes this historic announcement, it resonates not only with the people of Bihar but with the entire nation. It underscores the importance of recognizing and celebrating leaders who prioritize the well-being of the most vulnerable in society. The Bharat Ratna for Karpoori Thakur is a bridge between the past and the present, connecting the ideals of a bygone era with the challenges and opportunities of today. In honouring Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur, India acknowledges the pivotal role he played in shaping a more inclusive society and encourages a new generation of leaders to champion his ideals. As the nation pays tribute to this true people's hero, the Bharat Ratna becomes a symbol not only of recognition but also a call to action, urging us all to carry forward the torch of social justice and equality in our ongoing pursuit of a more just and compassionate India. *(The writer is a senior journalist, views are personal)*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BAIL PROCESS DELAYS

Sir — Indian judiciary is known to move at a snail's pace. As much as bail is a matter of right it is equally important that the right is accorded expeditiously to individuals. In bail orders, there should not be undue delay in the orders of the court reaching the prison authorities. The Supreme Court has said that despite its repeated directives, High Courts are delaying adjudication of bail applications. With the exception of an intervening application, all bail matters have to be decided within two weeks of being filed and all anticipatory bail within six weeks, the top court has reiterated again recently. This order came after an anticipatory bail application was kept pending for judgment for one year by a High Court after it was initially heard. Though bail is a temporary privilege by definition, the nonuniformity in its interpretation has, sometimes, led to chaos. Despite the sheer number of bail applications filed before them, High Courts should evolve a mechanism for their speedy disposal because Section 436 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) defines bailable offences and the underlying principle behind granting of bails by courts, as "personal liberty". Freedom and personal liberty are fundamental rights of a citizen as laid down by Article 21 of the Constitution. **Ganapathi Bhat | Akola**

POLITICAL ALLEGATIONS

Sir — Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said that the Union Home Minister once had termed the National People's Party (NPP) led Meghalaya government "the most corrupt" in the country but later allied with them. Addressing the public in Ri Bhoi district, Rahul Gandhi said, "Meghalaya is not ruled from here but from Delhi. This is not acceptable. The nation is facing the highest levels of unemployment in the last 40 years. Rahul Gandhi reiterated his attacks on Prime Minister Narendra

Coffee plantation in Odisha



The Odisha state cabinet has approved a coffee plantation for sustainable livelihood (CPSC) scheme with an outlay of 1,144 crore. Under this scheme, Coffee plantations in the state will be extended to one lakh from ten thousand acres. The scheme will be implemented in the six districts in the state. Koraput, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, and Gajapati will benefit from this scheme.

Additionally, women's Self-help groups will be involved in raising coffee nurseries which will benefit more than fifty thousand farm families in the region. Recently, Coffee has emerged as one of the major production from Odisha due to its agro-friendly climate and support from the state machinery. The coffee produced in the state has already gained international recognition. Coffee is a profitable commercial crop because of its growing popularity in the market. Good quality coffee production on a large scale will make a scope for export to other countries. This scheme will encourage the tribal people of the area to engage in these activities and earn profits. This will boost the economy, tourism, and scientific education in these six districts. If distribution and marketing are done properly Odisha's coffee will spread more and get worldwide recognition through this initiative.

Deba Prasad Nayak | Dhenkanal

Modi for "not visiting Manipur" and said that the ideology of the Bharatiya Janata Party has destroyed the idea of Manipur. Politics of hatred and violence have torn the state apart. Prime Minister after so many months has not bothered to visit Manipur. Is Manipur, not an Indian state?" Congress leader said. Earlier in February last year, the Union Home Minister had said that the Meghalaya government was filling its coffers with poor people's money and said that it is the most corrupt government in the country. BJP and NPP were partners in the outgoing government but fought the assembly polls separately. After the Assembly poll results, the BJP came into coalition with the NPP by extending support. With this, it is a double standard game which is unfortunate. **Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai**

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM SUMMIT

Sir — The 'Back to Basics' strategy, embraced at the World Economic Forum

(WEF) summit in Davos, fell short with elaborate discussions and superficial intentions. Conversations about war-inflicted economic crisis barely captured the scenes. The looming threats of Greenwashing, market volatility, erosion of the tax base through havens, and other critical economic issues were largely neglected. While the IMF anticipates a substantial economic downturn in 2024 alongside mounting debts, the Davos meeting appears devoid of any therapy. Furthermore, the persistent notion that 'Europe's problems are the world's problems' continues to resonate, disadvantaging the ailing Global South. Following a lacklustre COP28 and now the WEF, the desertification of multilateralism is paving the way for the return of Cold War-era bloc politics.

Abhisek Panji | Bhubaneswar

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FIRST COLUMN

TO STAY BLESSED,
TAKE SHELTER IN GOD

Those who take shelter in God and have faith in him are under His protection



Let us examine in detail some of them. Money is most sought after by almost one and all. Is it a shelter? Yes, it provides material objects, comforts in life, etc. But are these sufficient for quality of life? If they were, rich people would be peaceful, happy and secure. Are they? Because money cannot buy these. One has to go to God for them. One has to do spiritual activities to please God. This is the way the System works. Let us agree that money has an important role in our lives, but it cannot be our shelter. By the way, God can provide what we lack and provide security for what we have, if we remain in His shelter. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 9.22)The next most sought-after shelter is a sense of enjoyment like eating tasty food, watching something exciting, etc. These are fine if they are appropriate for our needs. (6.17) Otherwise, as the verse tells us our troubles will not reduce. Troubles there must be in this world, an impermanent place of miseries. (8.15) Rather our sufferings will increase manifold if we seek shelter in sex, considered the highest sense of pleasure. It must always be within the limit of dharma to be acceptable. (7.11) Then, there are many, who take shelter in work. They are called workaholics. A new addiction has arrived. These are our cell phones. People are forever checking it for messages, and information, and what happens? The Internet takes charge of us through provocative ads and promises of easy money. One corrupts and the other fools. It has become a pandemic, far from being a shelter.



Everyone is looking for security, beginning with a toddler. He gets it from his parents, especially from his mother. One can understand this, as this is nature's arrangement. But as we grow, we need to make the right choices. We don't; some of us seek from influential persons, and now bogus gurus. Everything has a price, but people generally don't seek it from God, where it is best available. Why? They are not prepared to pay its price, which is to surrender to the Almighty. If one does, troubles will come and go, because God will help. (18.58) Otherwise, they will take their time, as destined. Yes, many turn to God in distress. (7.16) God appreciates it also. (7.18) But again one has to deserve such help by pleasing God by spiritual acts. (18.65)But the modern man chooses to sleep over proper action. Sleeping pills have become quite common. Eat them and everything will be fine. Does it become? Seeking shelter in greed is a common refuge, fueled by the prevailing materialism that drives the pursuit of quick wealth. However, success is not solely determined by greed or hard work; destiny plays a crucial role. Even the poorest work diligently, challenging the notion that wealth is solely a result of effort. The human psyche often grapples with negative emotions such as anger and revenge, leading to a loss of inner peace. The alternative proposed is seeking refuge in God. Amidst life's uncertainties, relying on God's protection is advocated to avoid potential misfortunes. Actively seeking shelter from God instills confidence and invites abundant grace into one's life. Surrendering to God's guidance in the spiritual journey attracts positive fortune, transcending the challenges posed by human nature. Although the decision may contradict inherent tendencies, spiritual intelligence can overcome such resistance. Associating with spiritually wise individuals in satsang proves beneficial in navigating this transformative journey. Once embarked upon, the spiritual path becomes irreversible, guided by the munificence of God.

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

Has the Non-Aligned Movement lost its plot?



Acknowledging the paradoxical essence of the Non-Aligned Movement, let us openly recognise the recent assembly's inherent absurdity

Following the opulent Davos event, the World Economic Forum of Klaus Schwab, gathered by Western elites, scrutinized topics ranging from the implications of AI to the looming threat of mysterious Disease X, a surge of anti-Netanyahu sentiments emerged in Kampala. This sentiment was notably expressed by members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during their gathering. The choice of location held historical significance, situated around 53 kilometres from the site of Operation Entebbe, where Benjamin Netanyahu's brother tragically lost his life almost five decades ago. Over the years, Kampala and Entebbe have undergone transformative changes, witnessing the rise and fall of rulers. Yoweri Museveni, Africa's fourth-longest-serving head of state, now leads NAM, a leader with a complex history, having ousted the tyrannical regimes of Idi Amin and Milton Obote and faced serious accusations of crimes against humanity. The irony lies in Museveni now advocating for justice in Gaza and accountability against Israel, encapsulating the conflicting ideologies within NAM.

Addressing the paradoxical nature of NAM, let's candidly acknowledge the absurdity of its recent gathering, which diverted attention from pressing global issues. While many member states grapple with internal conflicts and political chaos, the organization indulges in verbose deliberations. Though we are passing a moment of need, it is crucial to refrain from romanticizing historical achievements and confront current failures. Instead of lamenting only the plight of Palestinians, perhaps NAM should focus on alleviating the tangible struggles of its member countries. If they genuinely wanted to help Palestinians, redirecting financial resources towards essentials such as drinking water and medicine could have a more meaningful impact. Providing victims with necessities rather than holding conferences to indulge in rhetoric would be a more effective use of public funds, emphasizing the organization's responsibility and accountability. Despite its historical significance, the NAM finds itself in a state of decline, resembling a fading relic. Decades have passed since the departure of its original leaders, leaving the organization with waning influence. The current members show little intent to breathe new life into this slowly deteriorating entity. It is essential to grasp the reality that the heyday of NAM is long gone. The organization, which once played a pivotal role, now struggles for relevance. The lack of a cohesive vision and commitment among member countries hastens NAM's natural demise. The time has come for a critical reassessment of its purpose and the genuine dedication of member nations to its survival.

The architects of the NAM were visionary leaders from Europe, Asia, and Africa, including Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Jawaharlal Nehru (India), Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Sirimavo Bandaranaike (Sri Lanka), and Sukarno (Indonesia). These eminent figures envisioned not only the destiny of the Third World and developing nations but also recognized the crucial role of international peace and security for humanity. Their collective insight emphasized that freedom from superpower rivalry, the cessation of colonialism and imperialism, and global peace required collaboration, not division. The founders aimed to shield newly inde-



DESPITE ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, THE NAM FINDS ITSELF IN A STATE OF DECLINE, RESEMBLING A FADING RELIC. DECADES HAVE PASSED SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF ITS ORIGINAL LEADERS, LEAVING THE ORGANISATION WITH WANING INFLUENCE

pendent countries from the pressures of bloc politics. However, what began as a utopian dream evolved into a stagnant organization, a consequence of strategic missteps rather than a natural progression. This year's NAM conference in Uganda, like its predecessors, appeared incapable of achieving substantive outcomes beyond consuming time and resources ostensibly devoted to addressing political crises. It is undeniable that this floundering organization lacks a viable future, and the persistent squandering of public funds yields no palpable benefits for human development. Despite being recognized as the largest multi-state organization after the United Nations, the NAM's discussions on global challenges have been confined to mere oratory, lacking the capacity to resolve crises. The platform, once rooted in the Bandung Principles, has devolved into a sanctuary for vacuous communication, funded by the hard-earned money of citizens in member countries.

Since the inception of NAM, the so-called third-world and developing countries have witnessed numerous military conflicts, often initiated and sustained without hindrance by the West and the Soviet Union. The territories of NAM member countries became pawns in the geopolitical objectives of these power blocs, with ruling elites aligning with either the Soviet or Western camps for political survival. Noteworthy conflicts such as the Vietnam War, the Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the Soviet-Afghan War, the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, the Bosnian War, the Rwandan genocide, the Kosovo War, the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Syrian civil war, and the Yemeni Civil War unfolded in the Global South. The NAM's failure to collectively and responsibly implement its principles contributed to this tragic legacy, as accountability and responsibility could have prevented

such widespread suffering. Sadly, attempting to resuscitate a moribund enterprise inevitably invites chaos, yielding neither renewed hope nor the impactful contributions promised at its inception. This is the predicament in which the NAM finds itself, failing to live up to its proclaimed principles while catering to the interests of a privileged few. No amount of picturesque portrayal can conceal the stark reality, as the structure of NAM stands as a façade masking inherent falsehood and decay. During this year's conference, leaders reiterated the narrative of member states breaking free from colonialism but grappling with new forms of inequality and hegemony, conveniently neglecting the role of their own hegemonic politics and corruption in fostering these disparities.

As discussed at the conference, in the era of globalization, leaders perceive economic concentrations, while the rest of the world sees mere markets or resources. The pandemic underscored the detachment of the smallest needs of these countries from distant production centres. However, amidst politically correct and universalist narratives that neglect traditions, the conference amounted to little more than eloquent words in a spurious sermon, devoid of constructive significance and laden with political hypocrisy. While the dream of a multipolar world is commendable, its realization remains elusive without collective agreement. Proposals for economic decentralization and regional production lack substance if member states, lacking capital management, persist in dependence on Western financial markets and facilitate capital outflow to Western countries through money laundering, rendering the pursuit of economic independence a delusion. Changing the global order necessitates both practical and sincere measures, including the establishment of regional economic hubs, resilient

supply chains, predictable mobility, and reliable data flows. Person-centred policies promoting sustainable lifestyles and digital public infrastructure exemplify the potential benefits of technology. Prioritizing relationships while respecting sovereignty and ensuring viability, especially in addressing food, energy, and health security, as well as promoting women-led development, remains critical. However, since the end of the Cold War in 1991, the foundational principles of the Non-Aligned Nations were shattered. Attempts to recreate the movement faced a lack of consensus among member state leaders. Instead, these states formed selective ties to advance political goals, rendering the "non-aligned" policy a mere pseudo-vocabulary. Unfortunately, leaders within the movement engaged in arbitrary activities, using the platform to cover up abuses rather than addressing them.

As the old world order gave way to a new multipolar reality post-Cold War, the NAM struggled to adapt to emerging dynamics. Instead of collectively facing the challenges, many leaders prioritized narrow political goals, hindering the movement's relevance in the changing world. Faced with the need to redefine its purpose and adapt to new challenges, the movement encountered various forms of sabotage and unrest. The failure to interpret challenges during this transitional period affected several organizations within the movement. Ironically, many leaders refuse to acknowledge the end of this history, preventing the birth of a redesigned and reinvented global order that could contribute to achieving a multipolar world. Consequently, the idea of a multipolar world remains but a day-dream.

(The writer is a Sri Lankan journalist and worked as a communications consultant for the Government of Sri Lanka; views are personal)

Combating the deepfake menace necessitates stern legal measures

Securing truth in the age of synthetic realities is more difficult than ever before. It must be curbed before it becomes unmanageable

The use of deepfake technologies has made it easier to impersonate another person physically or verbally these days. Sachin Tendulkar, the Cricket Legend, is one of the recent victims of deepfake, where in a morphed video, he is shown endorsing a gaming app and explaining how easily money can be drawn using this app. Rashmika Mandana to Alia Bhat, famous Indian Actresses, fell prey to deepfakes, hitting their reputation and prestige not only as respected Indian actresses but also as women. Some time ago, Telangana Minister KT Rao, after becoming a deepfake victim, wrote to the Election Commission and mentioned the incident and its effect on voters and the public. Seeing these incidents hap-



pening frequently, it can be easily predicted that deepfake technology may achieve an unprecedented level of realism

– blurring the lines between real and synthetic. These incidents also reflect a major concern about the misuse of deepfake technologies in the spread of disinformation and misinformation that is directly hitting the informational security of society at large. In layperson's language, deepfakes are images or videos of a person's likeness or other related things that have been digitally altered in a bid to misrepresent what happened in reality such as facial expression manipulation, face morphing, face swap, face generation and full body puppetry. The synthetic media not only inflict individual harm but have a profound impact on organisations, governments, and society at large. The deleterious effects of deepfakes transcend mere person-

al consequences, encompassing psychological, financial, and societal realms; they erode the trust that underpins organizations, sow doubt in the halls of justice, and may even threaten the foundations of democracies. Imagine a world where your carefully crafted reputation can be shattered in an instant by a fabricated video. Where companies become pawns in blackmail schemes orchestrated through manipulated footage. Where legal proceedings lose their legitimacy as the authenticity of evidence becomes suspect. This dystopian reality is no longer fiction; it's the chilling consequences of deepfakes. The IT Rules 2021 provides a complete list of prohibited content under rule 3(1)(b). Intermediaries are already

bound to act in case of removals, blocking, or complaints regarding any deepfake content posted on their platform. There are speculations that the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is soon to come up with new provisions under the IT Rules, 2021 to curb the prevalence of deepfakes. As per the author's understanding, to restrain the spread of deepfakes on the intermediary's platform, there are two ways in which IT Rules, 2021 may be amended. First, to define 'deepfake' and put it in the prohibited category of content under rule 3(1)(B) of the IT Rules, 2021. By doing this, automatically all the other due diligence requirements on intermediaries will apply in case of deepfakes as well. However, the

major consequences of deepfake, misinformation, and impersonation are already included in the prohibited category of the list. Deepfake is emerging as a service company. The increased demand for deepfakes has also led to the establishment of several companies that deliver deepfakes as a product or even online service. These services are intended for use by marketers to personalise videos, eliminating the need to record a video for each recipient. Essentially, these services make producing a deepfake video as easy as editing text. Hence, the most appropriate and effective way to restrain deepfake is to directly regulate these companies that provide such deepfake technology. Second, deepfake may be regulated under

the proposed Digital India Act by introducing a new class of online platforms, i.e., AI Synthesis Online Platforms (as the name may be called), and providing separate rules for their compliance. The proposed Digital India Act may include a few obligations for AI Synthesis Online Platforms. First, requiring them to ensure adherence to all the existing cyber and data protection legislation in India. Second, such online platforms, in order to ensure transparency, should provide information regarding the number of users of such platforms, their platform's management rules, adopted technologies, tools deployed, and any other relevant information. Third, they may be obliged to deploy technological tools for recognizing false

and damaging information created using services of the platform, implement a real-identity information authentication system, and adopt a review mechanism of synthetic data. It should also be obligatory on such platforms to tag or label those contents that are generated by using deepfake technologies. In view of the rising deepfake incidents and the government's apparent concern for the same, it is probable that we may not have to wait for long for the necessary regulations as well as the Digital India Act to come into existence.

(Siddhartha is Sr Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi and Bhawna is a techno-legal policy professional; views are personal)

‘UK has no plans for conscription’

AP ■ LONDON

The UK government said on Wednesday it has no plans to introduce conscription, after the head of the British Army said a “citizen army” would be needed to fight a future war with a country like Russia. Chief of the General Staff Gen. Patrick Saunders said preparing for a potential land war would have to be a “whole-of-nation” undertaking. He praised European nations closer to Russia for “prudently laying the foundations for national mobilization.”

Saunders, who has long argued for more military spending and is due to leave his job this year, said that “within the next three years, it must be credible to talk of a British Army of 120,000.”

“But this is not enough,” he added during a speech at the International Armoured Vehicles conference in London. “Taking preparatory steps to enable placing our societies on a war footing when needed are now not merely desirable but essential.”

He said “Ukraine brutally illustrates that regular armies start wars; citizen armies win them.”

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s spokesman, Max Blain, said the government “has no intention” of introducing conscription.

“The British military has a proud tradition of being a voluntary force. There are no plans to change that,” he said. He added that “engaging in hypothetical wars” was “not

helpful.” Defence Secretary Grant Shapps has also used stark language about the threat to the UK. Last week he referred to Britain “moving from a post-war to pre-war world.” Despite that, the government has no plans to increase the size of the army from its current level of about 74,000 full-time troops, down from 102,000 in 2006. The government says it will increase military spending from just over 2 per cent of GDP to 2.5 per cent — still much less than at the height of the Cold War.

The British Army conscripted soldiers during World War I, and again during and after World War II, but it has been an all-volunteer force for most of its 364-year history.

Maldives oppn parties express concern about ‘anti-India stance’

PTI ■ MALE

Calling India as the “most long-standing ally,” the two main opposition parties in Maldives on Wednesday expressed concern about the government’s “anti-India stance.”

The open support by the two parties — the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and the Democrats — came a day after the Maldives government said a Chinese ship, equipped to carry research and surveys, will be docking at a Maldivian port after being permitted by the Male government to make a port call for replenishment.

The permission to allow the Chinese ship comes amid strained ties between India and Maldives after its recently-elected President Mohamed Muizzu made Beijing as his first port of call early this month soon after assuming office. Traditionally, New Delhi has been the first port of call for a Maldivian President.

“The current administration appears to be making a



In picture, Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu during official talks in Beijing, earlier this month.

AP/PTI

stark pivot towards an anti-India stance. Both, the MDP and The Democrats believe alienating any development partner, and especially the country’s most long-standing ally will be extremely detrimental to the long-term development of the country,” the two

opposition parties said in their assessment on “the direction in foreign policy” of the Maldivian government.

“Consecutive governments of the country must be able to work with all development partners for the benefit of the people of the Maldives, as the

Maldives has traditionally done. Stability and security in the Indian Ocean is vital to the stability and security of the Maldives,” they told a joint news conference. MDP’s chairperson and former Minister Fayyaz Ismail and the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, MP

Ahmed Saleem, along with Democrats party president MP Hassan Latheef and the Parliamentary Group Leader, MP Ali Azim addressed a joint press conference to flag the issues. The two parties committed to work together on several governance-related issues and expressed concern on another set of issues including the foreign policy and lack of transparency.

The MPs of the two parties together hold 55 seats in the 87-member house. The joint statement was posted on the official websites of the two parties and their official X handles too.

The other issues of concern included a lack of transparency in the financial status of the state and the lack of transparency in the MOUs and Agreements that the Government is signing, especially, with foreign parties, although no country was named in the statement.

The opposition also criticised the attempts at censoring the media and meddling with the freedom of the press.

Building fire kills 39 people in China

PTI ■ BEIJING/ NANCHANG

At least 39 people were killed, nine injured and some others still trapped in a building fire in east China’s Jiangxi province on Wednesday, official media reported. The fire broke out at a street shop in Xinyu city, the local fire response emergency headquarters was quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua news agency.

At least 39 people were killed and nine others injured in the blaze, while some others are still trapped on the site, the report said. Videos circulating on social media showed a column of thick, dark smoke billowing from the building, and fire trucks and ambulances were at the scene of the accident.

The building where the fire broke out had internet cafes and training institutions, Central China Television reported.

The cause of the fire is unclear and an investigation is underway. Following the mishap, Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered steps to



curb repeated occurrences of such accidents and to protect people’s lives and property and social stability. Fatal fires in China are not uncommon due to lax enforcement of building and safety standards.

On Jan 20, at least 13 students were killed when a fire broke out in a school dormitory in central China’s Henan province. All the victims were third-grade students. In November last year, 26 people died after a large fire ripped through an office building in Luliang city in Shanxi province.

A hospital fire in Beijing last April claimed the lives of at least 29 people - mostly patients - and triggered an investigation which saw 12 people detained by police for questioning.

China working to de-escalate tensions in Red Sea

AP ■ BEIJING

China, the world’s biggest exporter, says it is deeply concerned about tensions in the Red Sea that have upended global trade by forcing many shippers to avoid the Suez Canal. China has been in “close communication with all parties concerned and making positive efforts to de-escalate” the situation in which Iran-backed Houthi rebels have attacked international ships with missiles, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a daily briefing on Wednesday.

China calls for a halt to the harassment and attacks on civilian ships and urges all relevant parties to avoid fanning flames in the area and jointly ensure the safety and security of the route in the Red Sea,” Wang said. Since November, the Iranian-backed Houthis have launched at least 34 attacks on shipping through the waterways leading up to Egypt’s Suez Canal, a vital route for energy and cargo coming from Asia and the Middle East onward to Europe.

The Houthis, a Shiite rebel group that has held Yemen’s capital Sanaa since 2014 and

been at war with a Saudi-led coalition backing Yemen’s exiled government since 2015, link their attacks to the Israel-Hamas war. However, the ships they’ve targeted increasingly have tenuous links to Israel — or none at all. “We are deeply concerned about the recent escalation of the Red Sea situation. The Red Sea is an important international trade route for goods and energy,” Wang said. Wang also referenced the Gaza conflict, linking it to the Red Sea tensions, saying, “The priority now is to end the fighting in Gaza as soon as possible to avoid further escalation and prevent the situation from getting out of control.”

“China is willing to work with all parties to cool down the situation and maintain security and stability in the Red Sea,” Wang said.

China exported more than \$3.5 trillion in good in 2022, the last year for which figures were available. That was about \$1.5 trillion more than the United States, the world’s No. 2 exporter. Some of the world’s largest container shipping companies and oil giant BP have been sending vessels on longer journeys around Africa that bypass the Red Sea. In response

to the growing impact on global trade, the United States and a host of other nations have created a new force to protect ships. At least 90% of the container ships that had been going through the Suez Canal are now rerouting around Africa and the Cape of Good Hope, according to Drewry, a maritime research consultancy.

The cost to ship a standard 40-foot container from China to northern Europe has jumped from \$1,500 to \$4,000, according to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy in Germany. But that is still far from the \$14,000 seen during the pandemic. The delays contributed to a 1.3% decline in world trade in December, reflecting goods stuck on ships rather than being offloaded in port. The US and its allies have been striking targets Washington has said are involved in the attacks against US forces in Iraq and Syria and were threatening US military and commercial vessels in the Red Sea. China has maintained close ties with Iran, largely based on investment and oil imports, and last year hosted talks resulting in the restoration of Tehran’s diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia.

‘Shipments affected by Houthi assaults’

Jerusalem (AP): Qatar, one of the world’s top exporters of liquefied natural gas, warned Wednesday that its deliveries had been affected by ongoing attacks by Yemen’s Houthi rebels on shipping over Israel’s war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The statement by QatarEnergy came as an explosion struck near a ship Wednesday travelling through a crucial strait near Yemen, though no damage or injuries were reported, the British military said. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but suspicion immediately fell on the Houthis.

Ships carrying liquefied natural gas from Qatar had been delayed previously before heading through the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. That’s where the Houthi attacks have snarled shipping in a key route for Asia and the Middle East to ship cargo and energy to Europe.

Qatar, which has served as a key mediator between Hamas and Israel, has yet to see any of its ships attacked, however. A statement from its state-owned Qatar Energy producer said

that its “production continues uninterrupted, and our commitment to ensuring the reliable supply of LNG to our customers remains unwavering.” “While the ongoing developments in the Red Sea area may impact the scheduling of some deliveries as they take alternative routes, LNG shipments from Qatar are being managed with our valued buyers,” the statement said. The statement suggests QatarEnergy’s cargos now are travelling around Africa’s Cape of Good Hope, likely adding time to their trips. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, an organisation monitoring Mideast waterways overseen by the British military, reported a blast Wednesday near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait off Yemen. The explosion happened some 100 metres (325 feet) from the vessel, but caused no damage and its crew is safe, the British said. The Houthis, who have been launching attacks on ships since November over Israel’s war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, did not immediately acknowledge the incident. The

US and the UK have launched rounds of airstrikes targeting suspected missile storage and launch sites used by the Houthis over the attacks.

EXPLOSION STRIKES NEAR SHIP

An explosion struck near a ship on Wednesday travelling through a crucial strait near Yemen, though no damage or injuries were reported, the British military said. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but suspicion immediately fell on Yemen’s Houthi rebels. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, an organisation monitoring Mideast waterways overseen by the British military, reported the blast happened near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait off Yemen.

The explosion happened some 100 metres from the vessel, but caused no damage and its crew is safe, the British said.

The Houthis, who have been launching attacks on ships since November over Israel’s war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, did not immediately acknowledge the incident.

Fighting in Gaza leaves patients stranded

AP ■ RAFAH (GAZA STRIP)

Israeli forces battled Palestinian militants Wednesday near the main hospital in Gaza’s second-largest city of Khan Younis, where medics said hundreds of patients and thousands of displaced people were unable to leave because of the fighting.

Israel has ordered residents to leave a swath of downtown Khan Younis that includes Nasser and two smaller hospitals as it pushes ahead with its 3-month-old offensive against Hamas. The United Nations humanitarian office said the area was home to 88,000 Palestinians and was hosting another 425,000 displaced by fighting elsewhere.

The aid group Doctors Without Borders said its staff was trapped inside Nasser Hospital with some 850 patients and thousands of displaced people because the surrounding roads were inaccessible or too dangerous. Nasser Hospital is one of only two hospitals in southern Gaza that can still treat critically ill patients, the group said. Gaza’s Health Ministry also said the hospital had been isolated.

The Israeli military said its forces were battling militants inside Khan Younis after completing their encirclement of the city the day before. It said aircraft were striking targets as part of the operations there and had also targeted suspected militants in central and northern Gaza.

Thousands of people fled south from Khan Younis on Tuesday toward the town of Rafah. The UN says some 1.5 million people — around two-thirds of Gaza’s population — are crowded into shelters and tent camps in and around Rafah, which is on the border with Egypt. Even there, Palestinians have found little

safety, with Israel regularly carrying out strikes in and around the town. Palestinian witnesses said that in recent days Israeli soldiers and tanks had pushed into parts of Muwasi, a sandy area along the coast that Israel had declared a safe zone, where tens of thousands of people were living in tents without basic services.

In all, some 1.7 million people have been displaced within Gaza, according to the UN refugee agency. Most have fled from the north, where Israel’s air and ground offensive has reduced entire neighbourhoods to shelled-out wastelands, raising the question of whether residents will ever be able to return.

Gaza’s Health Ministry says the offensive has killed at least 25,490 people — the majority women and children — and wounded another 63,354. Its count does not dif-

ferentiate between civilians and combatants. UN officials have expressed fears that even more people could die from disease, with at least one-quarter of the population facing starvation. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to press ahead with the offensive until “complete victory” against Hamas, which started the war with its assault across the border on Oct 7, killing some 1,200 people and abducting another 250.

ISRAELI DIVISIONS OVER WAR AIMS

Netanyahu says Israel is also committed to returning the over 100 hostages that remain in captivity after most of the others were freed in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners during a November cease-fire. But many Israelis, including at least one member of Netanyahu’s War Cabinet, say that’s impossible

without reaching another agreement with Hamas. The militant group says it won’t release any more hostages until Israel ends its offensive. Families of the hostages are also calling for a deal, and have staged increasingly aggressive protests against Israel’s leaders, even interrupting a parliamentary committee meeting Monday.

BUFFER ZONE IN GAZA

Hamas was still attacking Israeli forces, even in some of the most devastated areas, and firing rockets into Israel. An attack Monday near the border killed 21 Israeli soldiers, the military’s biggest loss of life in a single attack since Oct 7.

Israeli media said the troops were working to create an informal buffer zone about a km (half a mile) wide along the border to prevent militants from attacking Israeli communities near Gaza.

Donald Trump wins New Hampshire Republican primary

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump has defeated Indian-American politician Nikki Haley in the New Hampshire Republican primary, continuing his march toward the party’s presidential nomination and a possible final contest with President Joe Biden in the November 5 election. With three-quarters of the votes counted, Trump, 77, was leading 55 per cent to 44 per cent. Although only two states have voted so far, Trump’s victory in Tuesday’s primary underscored his dominance of the Republican Party.

The former president won a landslide in Iowa’s caucuses last week. Trump’s victory is remarkable, considering he faces 91 criminal charges, including those related to seeking to overturn the 2020 presidential election. But Haley, 52, the former South Carolina governor and ambassador to the United Nations, vowed to fight on, giving a feisty speech to supporters on Tuesday night in which she questioned the former president’s mental fitness and warned Republicans that renominating Trump would lead the party to defeat.

Speaking after the results, Haley - who campaigned hard in the state - congratulated Trump, saying he “earned it”. But she said the race was “far from over” with “dozens of states left to go”. “I’m a fighter, and I’m scrappy,” Haley, Trump’s last remaining rival in the Republican nomination race, said. Haley said when she started, there were 14 of them in the race, and she was polling at two per cent in the polls. “And now we’re the last one standing next to Donald Trump,” Haley said. “A Trump nomination is a Biden win and

a Kamala Harris presidency,” she said.

“And the next one is my sweet state of South Carolina,” she said. Haley is hoping a strong showing in South Carolina could propel her into the March 5 Super Tuesday contests. Trump said that Haley “had a very bad night” and was “doing a speech like she’d won” when she lost.

Trump called her “delusional”. “Who the hell was that imposter that went up on that stage that went before and claimed victory?” he asked.

Team Haley hit back almost immediately, describing his speech as a “furious and rumbling rant”.

Notably, Trump is the first non-incumbent Republican presidential candidate to win both the Iowa Caucus and the New Hampshire primary back-to-back. Trump is the only Republican candidate to have won the New Hampshire primary thrice.

“This is a decisive win for Donald Trump tonight,” former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy told Fox News in an interview. He said that Haley must withdraw from the race in favour of Trump.

In a statement, the Trump campaign asked Haley to drop out of the race. Haley does not have a path to victory. Instead, if Haley stays in the race, she will play an active role in advancing the re-election of Harris-Biden, it said. “Nikki Haley said she’s running to stop the re-election of Harris-Biden. Yet, without a viable path to victory, every day she stays in this race is another day she delivers to the Harris-Biden campaign,” said Taylor Budowich, CEO of Make America Great Again Inc.

Indian American couple convicted after forcing cousin to work at gas station

Washington (PTI): An Indian-origin Sikh couple has been found guilty of exploiting their cousin by compelling him to work extended hours at their store, subjecting him to physical abuse, threats, and confiscating his immigration documents, a US attorney has said. Harmanpreet Singh, 30, and Kulbir Kaur, 43, were found guilty of conspiracy to commit forced labour and other charges after the pair forced the victim, Singh’s cousin, to work at Singh’s North Chesterfield convenience store for little pay, the Department of Justice said in a statement on Monday.

According to court documents, the victim — who was a minor at the time — came to the US in 2018 after the couple promised to help him enrol in school. After arriving, Singh and Kaur took the boy’s immigration documents and immediately put him to work, prosecutors said. According to court documents, the victim was forced to sleep in an office inside the store for days at a time. He was denied access to food, and the couple also refused his requests to return to India and forced him to overstay his visa. Prosecutors said Singh also slapped and kicked the victim when he requested his immigration documents and tried to leave. On several occasions, Singh also threatened the victim with a gun when he tried to take a day off and leave the store. Prosecutors said the abuse and forced labour started in March 2018 and continued through May 2021. Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division said the Singh couple exploited the victim so they could keep him working for their profit.

US strikes three facilities in Iraq

Washington (AP): The US military struck three facilities in Iraq on Tuesday, targeting an Iranian-backed militia in retaliation for missile and drone attacks on American troops in Iraq and Syria over the past several days, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said.

The US strikes hit militia facilities in western Iraq, near the Syrian border, US Central Command said. “At President Biden’s direction, US military forces conducted necessary and proportionate strikes on three facilities used by the Iranian-backed Kataib Hezbollah militia group and other Iran-affiliated groups in Iraq,” Austin said in a statement. “These precision strikes are in direct response to a series of escalatory attacks against US and Coalition personnel in Iraq and Syria by Iranian-sponsored militias.”

N Korea appears to demolish ‘reunification arch’ as Kim turns against ties with South

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea appears to have torn down a huge arch in its capital that symbolized reconciliation with South Korea, a week after leader Kim Jong Un dismissed decades of hopes for peaceful reunification with the war-divided peninsula’s south, according to satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press on Wednesday. South Korea’s military also said Wednesday that North Korea fired several cruise missiles into waters off its western coast.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last week described the Pyongyang monument as an “eyesore” and called for its removal while declaring that



the North was abandoning long-standing goals of a peaceful unification with South Korea and ordered a rewriting of the North’s constitution to define the South as its most hostile foreign adversary.

Satellite images from Planet Labs PBC appeared to show the destruction of Pyongyang’s

Monument to the Three Charters for National Reunification, also called the Arch of Reunification. An image Tuesday clearly showed the arch missing along a roadway.

Clouds and snow cover made it difficult to ascertain when North Korea tore down the monument, but it appeared to be within the last few days. NKNews, a website focused on North Korea, first reported on the satellite images.

The arch was a 30-metre (about 100-foot) tall structure that looked over a highway leading to the city of Kaesong near the border with South Korea. The cruise missile launches were North Korea’s second known launch event of

the year, following a January 14 test-firing of the country’s first solid-fuel intermediate range ballistic missile, which reflected its efforts to advance its line-up of weapons targeting US military bases in Japan and Guam. South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said Wednesday that the US and South Korean militaries were analyzing the latest launches. It did not immediately confirm the exact number of missiles fired or their specific flight details.

“Our military has increased surveillance and vigilance and is closely coordinating with the United States while monitoring for further signs and activity from North Korea,” the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

Imran Khan warns his party candidates

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has warned his party candidates to launch their poll campaigns peacefully, failing which their tickets to contest the February 8 elections will be cancelled, according to a media report on Wednesday. The 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder made the statement while talking to reporters at Adiala jail in Rawalpindi on Tuesday after the hearing of the cipher case, the Geo News reported. PTI-backed candidates are struggling to launch their election campaign amid a crackdown on the party supporters. Asking his party's candidates to take out "massive rallies" and organise public gatherings to show the strength of the PTI in their constituencies, Khan war-ned that he would replace "inactive" nominees with "suitable candidates" if the party electioneering did not pick up steam by Sunday. Khan, who is facing multiple cases, has been incarcerated at high-security Adiala Jail since August last year. His party's electoral 'bat' symbol — a major voter driving force was taken away this month. Furthermore, the party — PTI-Nazriati — with which it sought an alliance also backtracked from its commitment. However, the PTI has vowed not to boycott the polls and run without its iconic electoral symbol. Since the 'bat' symbol

has been taken away, all its candidates will be running with different signs.

EX-PAK AMBASSADOR REJECTS MENTION OF 'THREAT' IN CIPHER

Pakistan's former ambassador to the US and a key witness has rejected the mention of the words "conspiracy" or "threat" in the secret document at the centre of controversy in the cipher case. Involving jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who also is a senior leader from his party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI), the cipher case pertains to a piece of paper, purported to be a diplomatic cable — the cipher — that Khan had waved at a public rally on March 27, 2022.

Naming the US, Khan had claimed that it was 'evidence' of an "international conspiracy" to topple his government. Khan and Qureshi, accused of mishandling it for political purposes, were indicted in December 2023 and both have pleaded not guilty.

During a hearing on Tuesday at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, former Ambassador Asad Majeed gave a first hand account to the special court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain about his meeting with a top US government official in March 2022. The News newspaper reported on Wednesday. Majeed was the ambassador of Pakistan to the United States from

January 2019 to March 2022.

Bringing out details about the meeting in public domain for the first time, Majeed said, on March 7, 2022, Assistant Secretary of the US Department of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu was invited to a working lunch, which was a pre-arranged meeting hosted at Pakistan House in Washington.

Communication took place in the meeting, so a cipher telegram was sent to the foreign secretary. The deputy head of Mission and defence attaché were also present in the meeting.

"In the meeting, both sides knew that minutes of the meeting were being taken. The conversation in the meeting was reported to Islamabad in cipher telegram. There was no reference to the words 'threat' or 'conspiracy' in the secret cipher telegram," he said. Majeed further told the court that he was also called to the National Security Committee meeting. "And in the meeting, it was decided to issue demarche. I had proposed to issue the demarche."

He said that the cipher issue was a setback for Pakistan-US relations.

Majeed is one of the 25 witnesses who have recorded their statements in the cipher case, which was launched on August 15 last year. Earlier on Monday, Pakistan's former foreign secretary Sohail Mahmood said that the copy of the controversial cipher had not been returned to the foreign min-

istry until his retirement in September 2022.

PAK EC TO HOLD MOCK TEST OF TRANSMISSION TECH

Pakistan's top electoral watchdog will conduct a mock test of its online system on Friday to transmit and tabulate the results of the February 8 general elections, a media report said on Wednesday. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has prepared the Election Management System (EMS) app for the transmission of results from each polling station to a centralised system where tabulation of all results would be completed.

Through a letter addressed to all four provincial election commissioners, the ECP issued standard operating procedures and guidelines to hold a mock exercise of EMS on January 26, the Dawn newspaper reported. According to the letter, all returning officers (ROs) must certify and finalise Forms 28 and 33 in the EMS and map the presiding officers to polling stations till January 25. The said forms carry details of candidates and the number of polling stations in each constituency, according to the report. The top election body's letter added that dummy Form-45 will be provided to all ROs on Thursday, and they will ask the presiding officers to send results of one-two pages of each National Assembly and Provincial Assembly constituency from their mobile app on Friday at 5 pm.

'Pita didn't violate law, can remain lawmaker'

AP ■ BANGKOK

Thailand's Constitutional Court ruled Wednesday that popular progressive politician Pita Limjaroenrat, who was blocked from becoming prime minister even though his party placed first in last year's election, did not violate the election law and can retain his seat in Parliament. Pita had been suspended from the legislature pending the court ruling on whether he violated the law by owning shares in a media company. He was the executor of his father's estate which included stock in ITV, a company that is the inactive operator of a defunct independent television station.

The court agreed with Pita's contention that ITV was not an operator of a media business. By law, political candidates are prohibited from owning shares in any media company when they register to contest an election.

Pita was forced to step down as leader of the progressive Move Forward Party when he was suspended from Parliament. The party's election victory last year reflected a surprisingly strong mandate for change among Thai voters after nearly a decade of mil-

itary-controlled government. But the party was denied power by members of the conservative unelected Senate.

The Senate, whose members were appointed by the military, joined the elected lower house in casting votes to choose a prime minister under a constitution that was adopted in 2017 under a military government. The Move Forward Party now heads the opposition in Parliament.

The nine-member panel of judges ruled 8-1 in Pita's favour on Wednesday.

"ITV did not operate any newspapers or media businesses, therefore, the shareholding didn't violate the Constitution's Article 98. According to the above reasoning, the accused member's parliamentary status isn't suspended," the ruling said.

"I'm happy and will keep working as planned," Pita said after the verdict.

About 40 supporters who had gathered outside the court with signs and flowers cheered Pita as he walked out.

"There is justice for the people. At first, I didn't trust the court but now I see justice," said Jiraporn Bussawaket, 76.

Pita still faces another serious legal challenge this month.

Thousands forced out of their homes after 7.1 quake in China

Uchturpan (AP): As aftershocks continued to rock western China on Wednesday, more than 12,000 people were staying in tents and other shelters, lighting bonfires to fend off the freezing weather. The previous day, a magnitude 7.1 earthquake in a remote part of China's Xinjiang region killed three people and left five injured, while damaging hundreds of buildings.

The quake caused significant damage amid freezing temperatures, but the toll on lives and property was relatively light, owing to the sparse population around the epicenter in Uchturpan county, near the border with Kazakhstan.

Footage shown by state broadcaster CCTV on Wednesday showed evacuees eating instant noodles in tents with bonfires providing heat.

Jian Gewa, a 16-year old student in Uchturpan, said he was in the bathroom when the quake began. The entire building shook violently.

"I just thought I had to get myself to safety as quickly as possible," Jian said.

He was evacuated to a school where he was staying in a dorm room with his grandfather, joining about 200 others. Local officials said they planned to check houses' stability before people could return.

The earthquake hit in a sparsely populated area with clusters of towns and villages scattered across an otherwise barren winter landscape. A two lane highway runs from the city of Aksu about 125 kilometers (78 miles) to the area, through frozen brown flatlands on one side and craggy outcroppings on the other. Power lines and an occasional cement factory are virtually the only signs of human presence.

China restores diplomatic relations with Nauru

AP ■ BEIJING

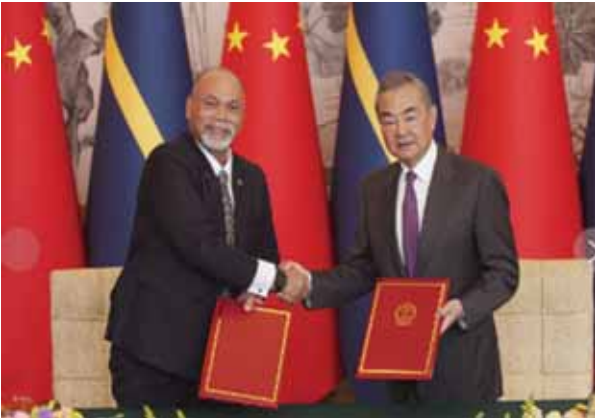
China and Nauru formally restored diplomatic relations Wednesday after the tiny Pacific island nation cut its ties with Taiwan earlier this month, in a further move by Beijing to isolate Taipei's democratic government. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Nauru's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Lionel Aingimea at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, and Wang said the resumption of ties "once again demonstrates to the world that adherence to the one-China principle is an irresistible historical trend."

Aingimea said Nauru recognized that Taiwan is part of China, despite the fact that the People's Republic of China has never governed the island and that Taiwan's 23 million people overwhelmingly reject Beijing's claims to sovereignty over them.

"We look forward to the practical cooperation that's going to happen between Nauru and China. The prospect is bright," Aingimea said.

Nauru's announcement on Jan. 15 came just two days after Taiwan elected a new president and left the self-governing republic with only 12 remaining diplomatic allies, although it enjoys strong unofficial relations with the US, Japan and most other major nations.

American officials expressed disappointment with the decision. The United States has diplomatic relations with China but also maintains extensive unofficial ties with Taiwan, including selling it fighter jets and other weaponry for its defense. Nauru first established diplomatic ties



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Nauru's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Lionel Aingimea.

with Taiwan in 1980, then switched to Beijing in 2002, then back to Taiwan in 2005, amid allegations that both sides were paying off or otherwise pressuring Nauruan officials. China claims Taiwan as its territory and doesn't recognize its government or its right to diplomatic recognition, participation in global bodies such as the United Nations or any official contact with foreign political entities. "This policy change is a significant first step in moving forward with Nauru's development," Nauru's government said in a news release announcing the severing of relations with Taiwan.

China has been gradually poaching Taiwan's diplomatic allies, partly to punish the ruling Democratic Progressive Party that advocates maintaining the status quo under which Taiwan has its own government, military and de facto independent status outside of the control of the PRC.

Ten countries have switched ties from Taipei to Beijing since the initial election of DPP President Tsai Ing-wen

in 2016.

China says that Taiwan must come under its control at some point and has staged military drills around the island to demonstrate its determination.

At the time of the break with Nauru, Taiwan's Deputy Foreign Minister Tien Chungkwang accused China of purposefully timing the news to the election of current Vice President Lai Ching-te as the island's new leader. He said China's authoritarian one-party Communist government's intention was to "attack the democracy and freedom that the Taiwanese people are proud of." Taiwan now has official ties with 11 countries and the Vatican. Seven are in Latin America and the Caribbean, three are in the Pacific islands and one is in Africa. Nauru's switching of relations has further intensified the focus on Taiwan's remaining allies, most of which are developing nations seen as vulnerable to China's global influence and willingness to offer hefty financial inducements.

Death toll in SW China landslide rises to 34

Beijing (AP): The death toll from a landslide in a remote, mountainous part of southwestern China rose to 34 on Wednesday, while 10 people remained missing, Chinese state media reported. The disaster struck early Monday in the village of Liangshui in the northeastern part of Yunnan province.

Search and rescue operations continued amid freezing temperatures and falling snow.

More than 1,000 rescuers were working at the site with the help of excavators, drones and rescue dogs, the Ministry of Emergency Management said Tuesday. Two survivors were found Monday and were recovering at a local hospital.

State news agency Xinhua, citing a preliminary investigation by local experts, said the landslide was triggered by the collapse of a steep cliff top area, with the collapsed mass measuring around 100 metres (330 feet) wide, 60 metres (200 feet) in height and an average of 6 metres (20 feet) in thickness. It did not elaborate on what caused the initial collapse.

Aerial photos posted by Xinhua showed the side of a heavily terraced mountain had spilled over several village homes. More than 900 villagers were relocated. Zhenxiong county lies about 2,250 kilometres (1,400 miles) southwest of Beijing, with altitudes ranging as high as 2,400 metres (7,900 feet).

Rescuers struggled with snow, icy roads and freezing temperatures that were forecast to persist for the next days. Heavy snow has been falling in many parts of China, causing transportation chaos and endangering lives. Last week, rescuers evacuated tourists from a remote skiing area in northwestern China where dozens of avalanches triggered by heavy snow had trapped more than 1,000 people for a week. The avalanches blocked roads, stranding both tourists and residents in a village in Altay prefecture in the Xinjiang region, close to China's border with Mongolia, Russia and Kazakhstan.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This public notice is being issued under the instruction of our clientess, Mrs. Nilima Gupta W/o Mr. Shyam Hari Gupta, resident of F-5/6, DLF City Phase-I, near Community Centre, Sikanderpur Ghosi, Gurugram, Haryana-122002, who intends to purchase the property bearing no. A-10/22, situated in DLF Phase-I also known as DLF Outub Enclave Complex, Gurugram, Haryana, for a valuable consideration, owned and possessed by Mr. Vijay Kumar Khanna s/o Late Sh. R.P. Khanna, resident of A-301, Aurelia, Pan Card Club Road, Baner, Pune- 411045, for the sale of which he has entered into an Agreement to Sell with Mr. Toshank Dhingra S/o Narendar Dhingra, residing at 31A, Anubhav Apartment, Sector-13, Rohini, New Delhi- 110085 on 18th December, 2023 and Mr. Toshank Dhingra by virtue of the terms in his agreement has agreed to nominate his right under his agreement to sell thereby executed an agreement to sell with our clientess on 22nd January, 2024.

This public notice is being issued with a view to make certain that there is no encumbrance to the property bearing A-10/22, situated in DLF Phase-I also known as DLF Outub Enclave Complex, Gurugram, Haryana, accordingly, if any persons has any right, title or interest in the above said property of any nature whatsoever, either through Shri Vijay Kumar Khanna or Mr. Toshank Dhingra, may feel free to submit their written objection or their claim over the property bearing no. A-10/22, situated in DLF Phase-I also known as DLF Outub Enclave Complex, Gurugram, Haryana and any objection against the aforementioned agreement(s) to sell.

The objections, if any, along with the justifiable grounds, must be submitted in writing within twenty (20) days from the date of this publication to the undersigned at the following address:

Date: 25.01.2024
Place: New Delhi
N.P. Singh Associates
Advocates & Solicitors
G-3, L.G.F. South Extension,
Part-II, New Delhi- 110049
Cont. No.: 011-46020893, 46020894
E-mail: np.singhandassociates@gmail.com

China to boost property lending to support its slowing economy

Bangkok (AP): China's central bank said Wednesday it will cut the ratio of reserves banks must hold as part of a slew of measures to support the slowing economy. The announcement by the People's Bank of China prompted a surge in share prices, with Hong Kong's benchmark jumping 3.6%.

Chinese stock markets have languished in recent months as investors pulled money out, discouraged by a faltering recovery from the shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A sell-off earlier in the week was followed by unconfirmed reports that the government planned to get state-owned investment companies to funnel offshore funds into the markets to help staunch the losses. The central bank's moves appear to be part of a concerted effort to stabilize the markets and instill greater confidence in the outlook for the world's second-largest economy.

Central bank Gov. Pan Gongsheng said the deposit reserve requirement would be

cut by 0.5 percentage points as of Feb. 5. Pan said that would inject about 1 trillion yuan (USD 141 billion) into the economy. As of December, the reserve requirement ratio was 7.4%.

Pan told reporters in Beijing that the central bank also plans to issue a policy soon on lending to property developers to help support the industry.

China's economy is recovering, he said, allowing ample room for policy maneuvers. "At present, our country's financial risks are generally controllable, the overall operations of financial institutions are sound, and financial markets are operating smoothly," the government website China.com cited Pan as saying.

The economy expanded at a 5.2% annual pace in the October-December quarter, enabling the government to attain its target of about 5% annual growth for 2023. But the recovery remains uneven, and most forecasts say the economy will grow more slowly in 2024.

OFFICE OF THE PROJECT MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION UNIT, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM
GHINGARIKHAL, RANIKHET, DISTT.- ALMORA 263645

Letter No.: 03/Camp Haldwani/

Date: 23-01-2024

E-Tender Notice

1. Name of the work:- CONSTRUCTION OF APPROACH ROAD AT GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE ALMORA, DISTRICT- ALMORA

2. Estimated Cost:- Rs. 55.92 Lakh (Without GST)

3. Period of Completion:- 02 Month

4. Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:- 25-01-2024 (17.00 hrs)

5. Online Bid submission: End date:- 07-02-2024 (17.00 hrs)

6. Date & Time of Technical bid Opening:- 09-02-2024 (11.00 hrs)

7. Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:- Project Manager, Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.

8. Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:- 27-01-2024 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager, Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.

9. For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in

PROJECT MANAGER

NAGAR NIGAM DEHRADUN
Telephone: 0135-2714074, Website: www.nagarnigamdehradun.com
Email: nagarnigam.ddn@gmail.com

Nagar Nigam Dehradun invites Request for Proposal (RFP) For Scientific Dumpsite Remediation of Legacy Waste and Land Reclamation through Bio-mining, Resource Recovery and Rejects Disposal at Danda Lakhaund site, Dehradun from eligible bidders having experience as indicated in the RFP document. Interested bidders are requested to procure the RFP document up to 13.02.2024 from e-tenders portal of government of Uttarakhand. Pre-bid meeting is scheduled at 12:00 noon on 31.01.2024. Any Addendum/Corrigendum including date of extension will be uploaded only on www.uktenders.gov.in. The Municipal Commissioner have right to cancel tender at any stage without giving any reason. The last date for online submission of bids is 13.02.2024 at 3:00PM.

Municipal Commissioner
Nagar Nigam Dehradun

No 26/Legacywaste/2023-24 Date: 24.01.2024

SL Parliament approves Online Safety Bill

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lankan Parliament on Wednesday approved with amendments the controversial Online Safety Bill that seeks to regulate online content amid criticism from the opposition that claimed it will stifle freedom of speech.

As many as 108 parliamentarians voted for it while 62 voted against the bill that was passed after a two-day debate. The new legislation would lead to the establishment of the Online Safety Commission which is empowered to make punitive rulings on offenses.

A false statement on line would be liable, if convicted, to an imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or to a fine not exceeding five hundred thousand Sri Lankan rupees.

At the committee stage proceedings, the government went ahead presenting the amendments, which had come from the Supreme Court that checked its constitutionality. The apex court had ruled to amend at least 31 of the full 57 clauses of the bill. The main opposition

leader Sajith Premadasa's assertion to speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena to postpone the committee stage claiming the action was unconstitutional was ignored by the chair.

Earlier, the bill was severely criticised as one which impinged the freedom of expression. The opposition argued, citing the Asian Internet Coalition (AIC), that the bill would hamper efforts to invite foreign investment. The opposition also vowed to repeal it when in power.

The AIC had said, "The proposed legislation, in its present form, poses significant challenges that, if not addressed comprehensively, could undermine the potential growth of Sri Lanka's digital economy."

During the day one of the debate on Tuesday, the opposition urged the Speaker to postpone the two day debate accusing the government of rushing through with it. They cited insufficient public consultation.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM
E-32 JUDGE FARM HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (PIN 263139)

Letter No.: 195/Nivida-Anubandhi/Ranikhet/08

Date: 23-01-2024

E-Tender Notice

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Tender Value (Rs. In Lakh)	Period of Completion
1.	Construction of Remaining Works of Community Health Centre at Lamgarha, Distt. Almora.	Rs. 134.40	12 Months
2.	Repair & Renovation work at Bipin Chandra Tripathi Kumaon Engineering College Dwarahat Block Dwarahat, Distt. Almora.	Rs. 90.90	12 Months

3. Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:- 25-01-2024 (10.00 hrs)
4. Online Bid submission: End date :- 08-02-2024 (17.00 hrs)
5. Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :- 10-02-2024 (11.00 hrs)
6. Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid :- General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Haldwani.
7. Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place :- 30-01-2024 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.
8. For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in

GENERAL MANAGER

Office of the Superintending Engineer
3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh
Email : sepwdpth@rediffmail.com

Letter No. : 364 / 962C(Yata 'C')-03/2024

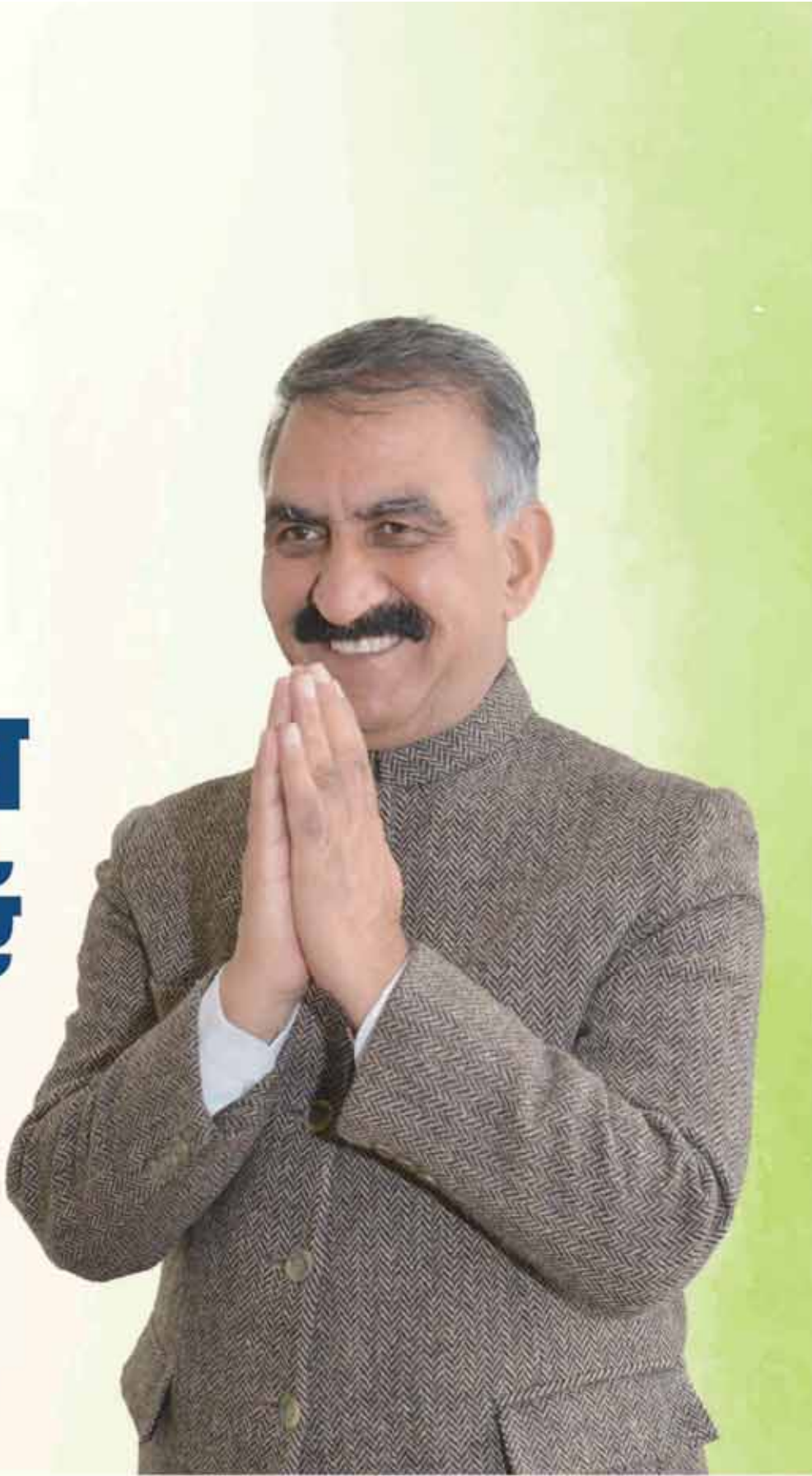
Date : 23/01/2024

National Competitive E-Tender Notice

The Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (**Two Bid System**) on behalf of "Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand" for following works in anticipation of sanction. All other information will be available online from date **27-01-2024** at 5.00 PM onward on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Earnest Money (in Lac)	Cost of Tender (in Rs.)	Validity of Tender (day)	Period of Completion (months)	Contractor's Category of Registration
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	PD PWD Pithoragarh Under Honorable Chief Minister's announcement No. 539/2023, the work of asphaltting of the motor road from Km. 2 of Madmanle Dobans motor road to Barmo under Didihat assembly constituency of Pithoragarh district Under the state plan. (Length- 3.125 Km.).	3.00	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	12	Category 'B' & above for Road works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/Govt. undertaking.
2	PD PWD Didihat Improvement and asphaltting of Vinayak to Ghasad motor road in Didihat assembly constituency of Pithoragarh district Under the state plan. (Length- 3.00 km).	2.90	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	12	Category 'B' & above for Road works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/Govt. undertaking.
3	PD PWD Champawat Upgradation work of Circuit House building located in Champawat.	10.50	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	06	Category 'A' & above for Building works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/Govt. undertaking.

सभी प्रदेशवासियों को 54वें पूर्ण राज्यत्व दिवस की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ



सूचना एवं जन संपर्क विभाग, हिमाचल प्रदेश

www.himachalpr.gov.in | [HimachalPradeshGovtIPRDept](#) | [Diprhimachal](#) | [Dprhp](#)

From Milestones to Green Horizons: Himachal Pradesh's 54-Year Saga of Development and Vision

H.P. Statehood

As Himachal Pradesh celebrates its 54th Statehood Day today this moment invites all to unravel the rich tapestry of development woven into the state's journey way back from the year 1971. Beyond the ceremony, this day serves as a poignant reminder of the landmark announcement by then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, bestowing full statehood upon Himachal Pradesh, marking its historic ascent as India's 18th state from the Ridge draped in snow.

On this auspicious occasion, tribute is paid not only to Mrs. Indira Gandhi but also to those luminaries who have significantly shaped Himachal's destiny. Among them, the first Chief Minister, Late Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar, a visionary leader, who played a pivotal in securing full-fledged statehood, stands as a trailblazer. Alongside him, the contributions of successive Chief Ministers and visionary leaders have been instrumental in making Himachal as the most developed and what we see today.

We are indebted towards those stalwarts who have led Himachal Pradesh to its zenith amongst all the hilly states. A special tribute to the resilient and hard working people of Himachal, whose dedication towards progress has been the driving force. Their unwavering commitment deserves heartfelt recognition on this momentous day, showcasing that Himachal Pradesh's journey is not just a narrative of leaders but a saga written by its people.

In the ongoing journey of development, the present state government, since assuming office on 11th December 2022, has consistently displayed unwavering dedication. Right from the beginning, the government has worked tirelessly to serve the people, ensuring relief and development to reach to every section of the society. The government, has navigated through the challenges, showcasing economic resilience, particularly at a time when the state is under a debt of Rs. 75 thousand crore inherited from the previous government. Himachal Pradesh's economic progress is like a well-woven tapestry, created through the hard work and commitment of its people. Under the diligent leadership of Congress Government the state is experiencing positive trans-

formation. No stone has been left unturned to enhance the well-being of the citizens and steer the state toward continued progress and prosperity.

The state was hit with the worst ever Natural calamity of the decade, etching deep wounds in the collective memory of the people of the State. In the face of adversity, State Government emerged as a beacon of hope, rescuing over 75 thousand stranded tourists and 15,000 vehicles from various locations.

Amidst the wreckage, 2944 homes lay completely ravaged, while 12304 suffered partial damage. As many as 422 Shattered shops and 7250 demolished cow sheds further compounded the devastation. Responding with unwavering resolve, the government allocated a special relief package of Rs. 4500 crore, elevating compensation by 25 times. Reconstruction aid for houses was increased from Rs. 1 lakh 30 thousand to Rs. 7 lakh being disbursed to the affected.

In a commitment to comprehensive aid, the Government has also orchestrated free ration, cooking gas and monthly financial support in form of rent of Rs. 5,000 in rural and Rs. 10,000 in urban areas upto March 31, 2024 to the families who were staying in relief camps.

The Present State Government's developmental saga is an unwavering commitment to inclusive governance, where social welfare schemes transcend mere political gestures to become robust pillars of progress. The reinstatement of the Old Pension Scheme stands as a testament to the government's commitment to the 1.36 lakh NPS employees.

The State government's unwavering dedication to its citizens is illuminated through the 'Sarkar Gaon Ke Dwar' initiative, where Ministers and MLAs actively engage with communities, swiftly addressing their concerns. The groundbreaking 'Revenue Lok Adalats' at Tehsil and Sub-Tehsil levels have successfully settled more than 6,500 partition and Mutation cases. These transformative endeavors underscore the government's commitment to fostering connectivity and promptly resolving the grievances at the doorsteps of the people, marking a new era of responsive governance.

Himachal Pradesh stands as a



SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU
CHIEF MINISTER
HIMACHAL PRADESH

pioneering state with initiatives like the Mukhya Mantri Sukh Aashray Scheme, introducing a legal framework for orphans. In a remarkable gesture, 4,000 orphans have been granted the status of "Children of the State" under this scheme. This goes beyond festive grants, extending to bearing the expenses of education and providing pocket money exemplify the love and parental care for the orphans.

In a resolute commitment to youth empowerment, the government initiates recruitment for over 21,000 positions. In the education sector, 5,291 posts are filled, including 1,070 TGT Arts, 776 TGT Non-Medical, 430 TGT Medical, 494 Shashtri and 2,521 JBT positions. Simultaneously, the HP Public Service Commission facilitates the filling of 530 lecturers, enhancing

academic excellence.

For ensuring effective law and order, the government plans to recruit 1,226 police personnel, with 30 percent of police constable posts reserved for women. The Jal Shakti Department fulfills 10,000 positions, including 4,500 Para Workers, Multi-Purpose Workers, and Para Fitters. The Van Mitra Scheme introduces 2,061 environmental stewards championing sustainable practices. Additionally, the Health Department appoints 1,450 professionals, and 874 Patwari roles contribute to efficient land administration. The government's commitment extends further with 90 positions of Junior Engineer (Civil) in PWD and 25 in Work Inspector, showcasing strategic resource allocation for transformative governance.

To ensure educational excellence, the state government is to introduce the English from Class 1st in all government schools from this academic session. In tandem, the visionary Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar Vidyarthi Rin (Loan) Yojana empowers aspiring students with loan facility up to Rs. 20 lakh at a nominal one percent interest rate, facilitating access to pursue engineering and technical courses.

Additionally, the government introduces cutting-edge programs like Drone Mechanics, Artificial Intelligence, and other New Age Courses in ITI and Polytechnic institutions. These initiatives usher in a transformative era in educational enrichment, showcasing the state government's dedication to establishing a dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

In the realm of public health, a significant Rs. 100 crore is allocated for the pioneering initiation of Robotic Surgery across medical colleges. Transforming health institutes into Model Health Institutes and deploying six medical experts in each of the 50 constituencies prioritizes healthcare accessibility. The Chief Minister Medical Assistance Fund extends substantial financial aid of Rs. 1.60 lakh for treating severe illnesses, reflecting the government's unwavering dedication to holistic well-being. These visionary initiatives chart the course

for a brighter and healthier future.

The Government is steering Himachal towards becoming a Green Energy State by March 31, 2026, through the strategic utilization of hydropower, hydrogen, and solar energy. Demonstrating a commitment to sustainable development, each assembly constituency will have two Green Panchayats.

In a bold initiative effective from January 2024, e-vehicles take center are to replace with electric vehicles on all departments. Private e-vehicles are incentivized with a 50 percent renewable energy provision at e-Charging Stations.

The progressive e-vehicle policy earmarks 54 locations for charging stations in the initial phase. The government has signed MoUs for Green Hydrogen and Ammonia Projects, attracting an investment exceeding Rs. 4,000 crore and creating over 3,500 employment opportunities. The foundation stone for a Rs. 220 crore solar power plant in Pekhabela is laid, promising an annual income of about Rs. 27 crore 71 lakh for the state, making a monumental leap towards the government's aspirations of green energy.

In its endeavor to build a healthy society, the government is committed to providing a nurturing environment for women and children. A substantial boost has been given to the Vidhya Punarvivah Yojana, increasing assistance from Rs. 65 thousand to an impactful Rs. 2 lakh. In a commitment to the well-being of girls under the Indira Gandhi Balika Suaksha Yojana Scheme uplifts families, granting Rs. 2 lakh after one daughter and Rs. 1 lakh after two daughters. To fostering social security a Bill amends the Himachal Pradesh Ceiling on Land Holdings Act, 1972, providing equal rights to daughters in ancestral property. Apart from this significant decision has been made to raise the eligible age for marriage for girls from 18 to 21 years, with corresponding amendments in relevant rules and acts. Additionally, the approval of 41,799 social security pension cases demonstrates our commitment to providing essential pension benefits.

In a resolute drive against corruption, the current government has implemented a zero-tolerance policy, swiftly disbanding the Himachal Pradesh Staff

Selection Commission, Hamirpur, following the discovery of leaked examination question papers. A new State Selection Commission, emphasizing transparent selection processes based solely on merit, has been established.

Addressing fiscal concerns, the government has successfully reduced the lease period for government land from 99 to 40 years. The ground breaking excise policy yielded a substantial increase of Rs. 846 crore in revenue, while auctioning liquor retail shops brought a remarkable 40 percent boost for the State. Concurrently, empowering the Financial Powers of Engineers in the PWD department and streamlining the tender process reduced project initiation time from 51 to 20 days, ensuring swifter project execution.

The government's commitment to economic growth is evident in the establishment of a state Investment Bureau. The approval of e-Stamping reflects dedication to promoting investment and improving the Ease of Doing Business under a Single Roof. At a recent investor meet in Shimla, the government unveiled 29 projects worth Rs. 8,468 crore, marking a significant stride towards creating job opportunities for 12,584 state youth.

In a resolute bid to propel tourism, our government is embarking on transformative schemes, allocating an impressive Rs. 3,000 crore for the development of Kangra district which is poised to become the 'Tourism Capital' of this state. An additional Rs. 100 crore has been earmarked to initiate and enhance adventure Activities at Pong Dam, fortifying the state's tourism infrastructure. Himachal Pradesh recently gained global acclaim in adventure tourism, hosting a world-class Para Gliding competition at Bir-Billing, Kangra. The inaugural Himachal Pradesh Flying Festival at Junga, Shimla, marked a significant milestone in the state's tourism endeavors. The introduction of air flights from Amritsar to Shimla and Kullu further enhances accessibility, catering to the convenience of both tourists and locals.

In a strategic move to fortify air services, government is undertaking the construction of 16 Heliports across all district headquarters and tribal areas, including the expansion of Kangra Airport.

Furthermore, tourism promotion extends to the emphasis on Rope-Way construction, enhancing the overall visitor experience.

For the welfare of tribal communities, a substantial allocation of Rs. 857 crore has been made under the Tribal Area Development Program for the fiscal year 2023-24, with Rs. 335 crore proposed in central schemes. The commitment to rapid road development is evident with the construction of 750 kilometers of new roads, and refurbishing of 1500 Kilometers. Noteworthy additions include 43 new bridges, connecting 23 villages with road facilities. Re-Tarring encompasses 1,000 kilometers, complemented by the construction of 210 new buildings. In response to the challenges posed by last year's rainy season, the government did a herculean task by swiftly restoring 2,173 roads. Notably, 18 new Bailey Bridges and 27 suspension bridges were erected. A substantial investment of Rs. 40 crore in new machinery underscores our commitment to efficient road maintenance.

The government has ushered in transformative initiatives in the agriculture and horticulture sectors also. In a historic move, apples were purchased on kilo basis (based on weight) for the first time, ensuring fair pricing to the orchardists. The forthcoming year will witness the implementation of Universal Carton, further securing equitable returns for horticulturists. Notably, there has been a landmark increase of over one and a half rupees in the support price of apple, mango, and lemon fruits, signaling a boost for the farming community. To address the challenges faced by apple-dominated areas during natural disasters, Rs. 110 crore has been allocated for road restoration, demonstrating the government's commitment to the welfare of the farming community. The monumental Rs. 1292 crore HP SHIVA project aims to establish farms in 400 clusters, covering six thousand acres of land and benefiting 15 thousand farmers and gardeners in its first phase. The project includes provisions for solar fencing and irrigation facilities, fostering sustainable agricultural practices.

Promoting climate and region-friendly farming, the government initiated the Him Unnati Yojana, aimed at boosting the production of milk, vegetables, fruits, and other cash crops

through structured incentives. The Rs. 500 crore Him Ganga scheme is dedicated to developing the milk-based rural economy, facilitating the transportation of milk from farmers to Chilling Point. Additionally, the establishment of the Milk Processing Plant in Dhagwar at a cost of Rs. 250 crore Kangra will be a milestone enhancing milk production.

Furthermore, to support farmers, gardening equipment, fertilizers, and pesticides are made available at affordable rates through HPMC, with 38 MOUs signed for direct purchase from producing companies. Substantial subsidies of 50 percent for women farmers and 40 percent for others are provided on agricultural equipments. Rs. 100.42 Crore Modern fruit mandi was inaugurated at Prala in Theog, district Shimla which reinforces the dedication to providing fair prices for products like wine, vinegar, and juice.

Under MNREGA, the state government has increased daily wages for laborers from Rs 224 to Rs 240 in general areas and from Rs 280 to Rs 294 in tribal areas, reflects commitment to the welfare and prosperity of the labour force.

In this fiscal year, the government aims to attract a staggering investment of Rs. 20 thousand crore, and intends creation of 40 thousand direct and 50 thousand indirect employment opportunities across various sectors. The implementation of the e-Office system in all government departments ensures transparency, earning the state the title of a Progressive state in the Digital Innovation Award. The groundbreaking Him Data Portal integrates departmental data, while the 'Him Parivar' database ensures accurate family records, marking a paradigm shift.

On the 54th Statehood Day of Himachal Pradesh, the state government has pledged to work collectively for economic growth, welfare, and administrative improvements. This Statehood Day is a reminder of the collective journey, aiming for a future of sustainable progress.

4 NATIONS HOCKEY TOURNEY IN SOUTH AFRICA

INDIA PLAY OUT 2-2 DRAW AGAINST FRANCE

AP ■ CAPE TOWN

The Indian men's hockey team failed to live up to its expectations after a bright start to draw 2-2 against France in its second game of the Four-Nation Tournament here on Wednesday. Mandeep Singh (8th minute) and Amit Rohidas (19th) scored for India, while France came back in the contest with goals from Timothee Clement and B Gaspard in the 37th and 59th minutes respectively. The Indians had earlier

defeated France 4-0 in their tournament opener on Monday. The match began with both the teams showcasing their defending prowess to hold off the opposition. India broke the resistance with Mandeep scoring the first goal for his side. Rohidas doubled India's lead early in the second quarter as they took control of the proceedings with a solid 2-0 lead. France started showcasing urgency to get back to level terms, but the Indian defence managed to thwart their dangerous attacks.



Zverev ousts Alcaraz to move into Australian Open semis

AP ■ MELBOURNE (AUSTRALIA)

Alexander Zverev made no mistake with his second chance to close out a win over No. 2-ranked Carlos Alcaraz on Wednesday night and moved into an Australian Open semifinal against two-time finalist Daniil Medvedev. The sixth-seeded Zverev was a up a break in the third set and missed a chance to serve it out but the Olympic champion didn't blink when he got another chance in the fourth, finishing off a 6-1, 6-3, 6-7 (2), 6-4 victory. Alcaraz won Wimbledon last year and was the only player to beat 10-time Australian Open winner Novak Djokovic in a Grand Slam match in 2023. The 20-year-old Spaniard won't get the chance in Australia this time. It was Zverev's first win over a top-5 player at a Grand Slam, and the reward was a spot in the semis for the seventh time at a major. Medvedev, a two-time finalist in Australia, outlasted ninth-seeded Hubert Hurkacz 7-6 (4), 2-6, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 to make it to the semifinals at Melbourne Park for the third time in four years. Djokovic will play Jannik Sinner in the other semifinal. Zverev said he'd been taking some beatings from Medvedev recently but "maybe this will be it. Maybe this will be the place." No. 12-seeded Zheng Qinwen and Ukrainian qualifier Dayana Yastremska won women's quarterfinals on Day 11 and will play their first Grand Slam semi when they meet after a night sleep. The sixth-seeded Zverev was on top of Alcaraz early, getting 16 of his 18 first serves into play in the first set and

winning the point on all but two of them. He got three set points when Alcaraz netted an attempted backhand drop shot and closed it out with an ace after 29 minutes. In the second set, Alcaraz had break points in the sixth game but couldn't convert and Zverev took it away from him with two service breaks to lead 2-0. The German was serving for the match at 5-3 in the third, just after midnight, when Alcaraz broke for the first time. Alcaraz got back to 5-5 when he chased a shot into the doubles alley and knocked a backhand down the line, beaming a big smile and shaking his racket in a gesture that suggested: "Hello, still here." He won the last seven points of the tiebreaker to make it 2-1, flashing a big smile after earning four set points when he chased a ball wide and hit a forehand passing shot. After an exchange of service breaks to open the fourth, Zverev got another chance to close out the match after breaking in the ninth game. After clinching the win, the Olympic gold medalist let out of a scream of relief and shook his arms in celebration at about 1:20 a.m. Local time. Medvedev's celebration was more like a sigh of relief. He led 4-2 in the fourth set but No. 9 Hurkacz rallied to force a fifth and took it to a grueling four hours. The 2021 U.S. Open champion took the decisive break in the seventh game of the fifth and held on for victory, capped with a drop shot. "I'm so destroyed right now," Medvedev, his hands clasped behind his head, said in his on-court interview.

Mani qualifies for main draw of WTT Star Contender Goa

PTI ■ MAPUSA (GOA)

Indian table tennis player Nithya Mani qualified for the main draw of the ongoing WTT Star Contender Goa after winning her final qualifying round match at the Peddem Indoor Stadium here on Wednesday. Chennai-based Nithya won a nail-biting contest against England's Tin-Tin Ho 3-2 (11-7 6-11 5-11 11-9 11-7) in a women's singles qualifying Round 3 match to move into the main draw, scheduled to take place from Thursday. In the women's singles category, Ayhika Mukherjee lost 1-3 (11-5 9-11 6-11 6-11) to Turkey's Sibel Altinkaya, while Spain's Sofia Zhang beat Diya Chitale 3-1 (11-5 6-11 14-12 11-0) in the qualifying round 3 to move into the main draw.



Sutirtha Mukherjee went down 1-3 (8-11 7-11, 12-10 4-11) against Hanna Ryu in women's singles qualifying round 2 to exit the tournament. In the men's singles category, Sathiyar Gnanasekaran lost 2-3 (7-11 11-7 6-11 11-7 8-11) against Vincent Picard of France in qualifying round 2 stage. Senegal's Ibrahima Diaw then

got the better of Manav Thakkar 3-0 (12-10 11-6 11-7) in the qualifying round 3. Jeet Chandra and Payas Jain made their way into the main draw in the men's doubles category as they registered a comfortable 3-1 (11-13 11-7 12-10 11-4) win over compatriots Yashansh Malik and Abhinandh Pradhivadhi.

Do not think anyone will ever come close to Djokovic: Tomic

PTI ■ CHENNAI

With the Australian Open currently on, defending champion Novak Djokovic has once again been dubbed as a favourite to retain the title, and former world No. 17 Bernard Tomic of Australia firmly believes there will be no one to challenge the great Serbian. Djokovic is the leading Grand Slam winner in the Open Era of tennis. He also has the chance of winning the most Grand Slam titles across eras, as another win would allow him to surpass the all-time record of Margaret Court. Djokovic is eying his 25th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open. Tomic, who has lost to Djokovic on all six instances in the ATP circuit, dubbed him a "freak" and also the "G.O.A.T.", besides adding that to beat him, one has to play at the highest level at all times.



"I was lucky enough to beat Djokovic at the Hopman Cup 11 years ago (chuckles). He is a freak. "You have no choice but to play at the highest level to beat him. And, if you lower your level even the slightest against him, you will lose," he told PTI in an exclusive interaction on the sidelines of an ongoing ITF

event here. "I firmly believe he will win the (ongoing) Australian Open. And if he does win, anything is possible. He can even touch the 30-Slams mark. He is the greatest of all time, for sure." Tennis has mostly been defined by the 'Big 3' era, which has been dominated by Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Djokovic. But, with the era on the verge of ending, it is likely to open the doors for other players to assert their dominance in Grand Slams. Talking on the same, Tomic admitted that the trio has raised the bar quite high for the sport in current date, besides terming the era as the "toughest". However, he firmly believes there will be players coming up and dominating the circuit in about 10 years from now. "Like it or not, everything goes forward in life. Time moves on, and different players come in.

Kiran, Sen enter second round; Prannoy, Srikanth exit in Indonesia Masters

AP ■ JAKARTA

Lakshya Sen and Kiran George advanced to the second round but HS Prannoy and Kidambi Srikanth made early exits after suffering narrow losses in their respective opening matches at the Indonesia Masters Super 500 badminton tournament here on Wednesday. World No. 19 Sen, who is looking to qualify for the Paris Olympics, avenged his Malaysia Open first-round loss to China's Weng Hong Yang with a 24-22 21-15 win in his opening round match here. The 23-year-old George, who had won Super 100 titles at 2022 Odisha Open and 2023 Denmark Masters, bounced back from an opening game reversal to eke out a 18-21 21-16 21-19 win over France's Toma Junior Popov in another opening round match. George, also a product of Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy, had qualified for the main draw after registering twin wins on Tuesday. Sen will now face either Malaysia Open champion Anders Antonsen of Denmark or Indonesia's Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo in the next round, while George will be pitted



against China's Lu Guang Zu. However, world no. 8 Prannoy, who had reached the semifinals at India Open Super 750 last week, lost to former world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore 18-21 21-19 10-21 in his opening round match. The 31-year-old Indian, who claimed maiden bronze medals at the Asian Games and world

championships last year, had lost in the first round at the Malaysia Open Super 1000 tournament as well. For former world no. 1 Srikanth, it was yet another day when he had to return empty handed despite putting up a brave effort against Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia, ranked 10th.



Dabang Delhi beat Haryana Steelers

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Ashu Malik pulled off two raid points in dying seconds to help Dabang Delhi beat Haryana Steelers 35-32 in the Pro Kabaddi League contest here on Wednesday. Vinay picked up three raid points as the Steelers took 4-2 lead in the fifth minute. However, Ashish and Vikrant effected brilliant tackles and helped Dabang Delhi take 6-5 lead soon after. Malik pulled off a brilliant raid as the Delhi side continued to forge ahead. Malik caught out Jaideep Dahiya and Yogesh tackled Ashish as Dabang inflicted the first all out of the match. Siddharth Desai effected a raid and Rahul Sethpal tackled Manjeet, but the Delhi side still held a decent lead at 14-9. Vishal Bhardwaj and Yogesh picked up tackle points in quick

succession as Dabang stayed ahead 15-10 in the 17th minute. The Steelers tackled Manjeet in the last few minutes of the first half, but the two teams went into the break with Delhi leading 18-13. Desai pulled off a double-point raid in the opening minutes of the second half and narrowed the gap between the two sides. The Steelers rode on the momentum and inflicted an all out to take 23-21 lead. Desai continued to showcase brilliant form as the Steelers surged ahead 27-24 in the 30th minute. However, the Delhi side fought back and levelled the scores at 28-28. Desai effected a raid to help the Steelers inch ahead, but Malik pulled off a magnificent raid soon after and locked the scores at 31-31. Malik then effected two brilliant raids in the dying seconds of the game and helped the Delhi side clinch a thrilling win in the end.



Classifieds

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Kuldip Singh S/o Jaswant Singh R/o H.No. 104, Street No. 4, Hira Colony, Bahadurgarh, Distt. Patiala (Punjab) have changed my name to Kuldeep Singh.

I, No. JC-244804Y RIS Major. Kulwinder Singh S/o Fateh Jang Singh Unit: 60 Armed C/o 56 APO, R/o Village Barnala, P.O Dhankaur, Distt. Ambala, Haryana declare that in my Service record D.O.B of my Wife Daljeet Kaur is wrongly mentioned as 30-07-1976 whereas her true and correct D.O.B is 30-07-1975.

I, Lavankumar V son of No. JC-42360M Rank: SUB. Name: Vijayarangan A Unit: 6 Mech Inf C/o 56 APO, Patiala, have changed my name from V Lavan Kumar to Lavankumar V due to wrongly entered in my father's service record/ sheet roll.

I, Savita Arora D/o Darshan Pahwa R/o House No. 2603/8, 7-B, Krishana Nagar Gamri, District Kurukshetra, have changed my name from Savita Pahwa to Savita Arora.

I, Mosam W/o Ramesh Kumar Vill. Kathwar, Kaithal Have Changed My Name Mosmi Devi.

I, Amritpal Singh S/o Gajjan Singh Vill. Jhinwerheri Tehsil Pehowa Distt. Kurukshetra Have Changed My Name Amritpal Singh.

I, Kiranpreet Kaur W/o Gurjinder Singh Sidhu R/o VPO. Tajpur, Distt. Jalandhar have changed my name from Kiranpreet Kaur to Kiranpreet Kaur Sidhu, after marriage.

I, Monika W/o Charanjit Chahal R/o VPO. Talhan, Distt. Jalandhar, Punjab have changed my name from Monika to Monika Chahal.

I, Inderjit Kaur W/o Resham Singh R/o Ward No. 11, VPO. Lohian Khas, Tehsil Shahkot, Distt. Jalandhar-144629, Punjab have changed my name from Inderjit Kaur to Inderjeet Kaur.

I, Rajvinder Kaur W/O Tarlochan Singh R/O Village Bhakhriana, Post Office Kotli Than Singh, Tehsil Phagwara, District Kapurthala, Punjab, India-144403 Have Changed My Name As Rajwinder Kaur.

I, Poonam W/O Suresh Kumar R/O H.No.66, Ward No.3, Garhdiwala, District Hoshiarpur Have Changed My Name From Poonam To Poonam Poonam.

I, Karamjit Kaur D/O Mukhi Mahinder Singh W/O Mandip Singh R/O VPO. Kahri District Hoshiarpur Punjab Have Changed My Name To Kaur Karamjit.

I, Surjit Kaur W/O Jatinder Kumar R/O Village Salempur Musalmana Post Office Randhawa Masandand District Jalandhar Punjab Have Changed My Name From Surjit To Surjit Kaur.

I, Amanjit W/O Jujhar Singh R/O Vpo. Kukran District Hoshiarpur Punjab Have Changed My Name To Amanjeet.

I, Prince Pardeep S/O Amarjit Singh R/O Vpo. Taragarh Tehsil And District Hoshiarpur Punjab Have Changed My Name From Pardeep To Prince Pardeep.

I, Rahul S/O Sanjeev Kumar R/O H.No.125 Nai Abadi Geeta Nagar Hoshiarpur Punjab Have Changed My Name To Singh Rahul.

I, Manjit Singh S/O Mula Singh R/O 679 E Block First Floor Bhai Randhir Singh Nagar Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Manjeet Singh.

I, Chhinder Pal Kaur W/O Gurdev Singh Kalsi R/O Patti Makko Vpo. Daudhar Sharki (Moga) Punjab Have Changed My Name To Shinder Kaur Kalsi.

I, Sukhvir Singh S/O Sukhchain Singh R/O Dangian Distt. Ludhiana Punjab 142035 Have Changed My Name To Sukhvir Singh Virk.

I, Reetu Mehta w/o Sh. Sanpreet singh R/o H.No. 14/663, Hisar Road, khairpur, Sirsa have changed my name to Ritu. Concerned note.

I, Sneh Bala Monga w/o Sh. Darshan Kumar Monga R/O Ward - 3, Near Pahwa Resort, Giddarbaha, Sri Muktsar Sahib have changed my name to Sneh Bala. Concerned note.

I, Devi Kamla W/O Surjit Lal R/O H.No.-271, Ward No.13, Gopal Nagar Gurdaspur, Tehsil/Distt- Gurdaspur, Punjab. Declare That My Given Name As Kamla And My Surname As Devi.

I, Surjeet Lal S/O Bishan Dass R/O H.No-271, Ward No.13, Gopal Nagar Gurdaspur, Tehsil/Distt- Gurdaspur, Punjab. Declare That Changed My Name Surjeet Lal And My Dob 01-01-1929 Is Wrong. But My Name Surjit Lal And My Dob 01-04-1951 Is correct.

I, Yogita Chauhan W/O Anil Kumar R/O Flat-12c, Annanta Lifestyle, Zirakpur, Mohali, Have Changed My Name From Yogita Chauhan To Yogita Dhunna. Yogita Dhunna @ Yogita Chauhan Is One And The Same Person.

I, Parmod S/O Roshan Lal R/O Village Ratauli Tehsil Pillu Khara Distt. Jind Have Changed My Name From Parmod To Parmod Kumar.

I, Pala Ram S/O Munshi Ram R/O Village Taloda Khari Distt Jind Declare Change My Name, From Pale Ram To Pala Ram And In Future My Name Is Pala Ram

I, Puran Chand S/O Sita Ram R/O H.No. 43, Near Telephone Exchange Kismat Nagar, Babyal ,Ambala Cantt 133005 (Haryana) Hereby Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Puran Chand To Puran Chand Sharma. Concerned Note

I, Rajesh Harjei S/O Davinder Kumar Harjai R/O House No. 4-A Rajinder Nagar Ambala Cantt Haryana That I Have Changed My Name From Rajesh Harjai To Rajesh Harjai . Concerned Note

I, No.4198642w Chm Ajit Singh Resident Of Village- Sirohi, Post- Sirohi, Tehsil- Neem Ka Thana, District- Sikar, State- Rajasthan, Pin-332714, Have Changed My Daughter Name From Priyanshu To Priyanshu Kanwar Vide Affidavit No.In-Pb68529891926753v Dated 18 Dec 2023 Before Notary Public Pathankot

I, Genda Kanwar Mother Of No.4198642w Chm Ajit Singh Resident Of Village- Sirohi, Post- Sirohi, Tehsil- Neem Ka Thana, District- Sikar, State- Rajasthan, Pin-332714, Have Changed My Name From Genda Kanwar To Gend Kanwar Vide Affidavit No.In-Pb67844253325254v Dated 15 Dec 2023 Before Notary Public Pathankot

I, No.4198642w Chm Ajit Singh Resident Of Village- Sirohi, Post- Sirohi, Tehsil- Neem Ka Thana, District- Sikar, State- Rajasthan, Pin-332714, Have Changed My Son Name From Saurabh Singh Sekhawat To Saurabh Singh Vide Affidavit No.In-Pb67546245647386v Dated 15 Dec 2023 Before Notary Public Pathankot

I, No.15729734h Sigm Yogender Kumar Resident Of Village- Sihoul, Post- Sihoul, Tehsil- Palwal, District- Palwal, State- Haryana, Pin-121102, Have Changed My Name From Kashmiri Dob From 06 June 1973 To 01 Jan 1970 Vide Affidavit No.35737 Dated 16 Nov 2023 Before Notary Public Palwal (Haryana)

I, Abhishek Son Of No.Jc-432627f Sub Ramesh Chand Resident Of Village- Kutthwar, Post- Beena, Tehsil- Balh, District- Mandi, State- Himachal Pradesh, Pin- 175002, Have Changed My Name From Abheeshek To Abhishek Vide Affidavit No. 07aa 331543 Dated 20 Jan 2024 Before Notary Public Sunder Nagar (Hp).

I, Baljinder Singh S/O Sukhwinder Singh R/O Vill Dhurian (Ugoke) Teh Patran (Patiala) Have Changed My Name Baljinder Singh Sidhu To Baljinder Singh.

I, Karamjeet Kaur W/o Baljinder Kumar R/o Vill Dosanjh Khurd, Muthadda Kalan (Jalandhar) have changed my name to Karamjit Kaur.

I, Gurwinder Singh S/o Karam Singh R/o Bhai Dhai Wala Tehsil Khadur Sahib District Tarn Taran have changed my minor Son Name from Harjodh Singh to Singh Harjodh.

I, Jaspal Singh S/o Rakha Ram R/o Kala Manj Road W.No.3 Mukerian Teh-Mukerian (Hoshiarpur) have changed my name from Jaspal to Jaspal Singh.

I, hitherto known as Sandeep Kaur Bajwa W/o Vikramjeet Singh Bajwa R/o Vill: Mehatpur Po. Mansoorpur Teh-Mukerian (Hoshiarpur) Punjab, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Sandeep Kaur.

I, Gurwinder Kaur W/o Baljit Singh R/o Tajpur (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Gurwinder Kaur Sumal.

I, Charna S/o Chuhar Singh R/o Vpo Rurka Kalan, Patti Rawal ki, Tehsil Phillaur, District Jalandhar, Punjab (India)-144031 have changed my name Charna to Charanjit Rindi.

I, Varinder Kumar S/O Raj Kumar R/O Vpo Mahal Tehsil Phillaur District. Jalandhar, I Have Change My Name From Varinder Kumar To Given Name Varinder And Surname Kumar.

I, Puneet Kumar S/o Dharuv Raj Sharma R/o 4/117 Gali No-2 Krishna Wali Tarn Taran, Teh and Distt Tarn Taran have changed my name as Punnet Kumar to Puneet Kumar Sharma.

I, Mamta Devi W/o Puneet Kumar Sharma R/o 4/127 Gali Station Wali, Tarn Taran, Teh and Distt Tarn Taran have changed my name after marriage as Mamta Devi to Mamta.

I, Dharuv Raj S/o Karam Chand R/o H/No-4/127 Gali Station Wali Ward No-5 Tarn Taran, Teh and Distt Tarn Taran have changed my name as Dharuv Raj to Dharuv Raj Sharma.

I, Amanpreet Kaur Khosa D/o Harjeet Singh, W/o Navdeep Singh R/o Village Kahanpura, Po. Shahpur (Fatehgarh Sahib) have changed my name after marriage as Amanpreet Kaur.

I, Cheema Rajendra Shishan Singh S/o Shishan Singh Cheema R/o W.No.21, Mandi Gobindgarh (Fatehgarh Sahib) have changed my name to Rajender Singh Cheema.

I, Manjit Kaur W/o Maghar Singh R/o Vpo Bagrol, Po Kamalpur Distt. Sangrur. I have changed my Name from Manjit Kaur to Manjeet Kaur.

I, Amandeep Kaur Kaler W/o Manjeet Singh Brar R/O Village Ratta Khara Tehsil Jalalabad District Fazilka have changed my name to Amandeep Kaur Brar.

I, Manjeet Singh S/o Sukhmandar Singh R/O Village Ratta Khara Tehsil Jalalabad District Fazilka have Changed my name to Manjeet Singh Brar.

I, Ranjana W/o Kushpreet R/o Vpo Bazidpur Tehsil & District Ferozepur have changed my name Ranjana to Ranjana Sharma.

I, Manjeet Kaur W/o Gurdev Singh R/o 103, Ward 7, Mohalla Pritam Singh, Raja Sansi, Amritsar have changed my name to Manjit Kaur.

I, Sukhdev Singh S/o Joginder Singh R/o Village Rukna Begu Tehsil and District Ferozepur given name as Sukhdev and Sirmame as Singh.

I, Anu Arora alias Anuradha W/o Mohan Arora R/o H. No. 16-C, Green Enclave, Near RSD Raj Ratan School Ferozepur City, Punjab, have changed my name to Anu Arora.

I, Supriya W/o Pratty Munjal, R/o St. No. 06 Gobind Nagri Abohar, Fazilka Punjab - 152116 have changed my name and shall after be known as Supriya Munjal.

I, Rajinder Singh Jaswall S/o Harnek Singh Jaswall R/o Old City, Kotkapura (Faridkot) have changed my name to Rajinder Singh.

I, Mandeep Kaur Bhullar D/o Gurdev Singh R/o VPO. Kamiana (Faridkot) have changed my name to Mandeep Kaur.

I, Pankaj Alias Pankaj Kumar S/o Sh. Subhash Chand Permanent R/o #766, Milk Road W.No.13 Krishna Colony Naraingarh Teh-Naraingarh Distt Ambala (Hr) Pin-134203, have changed my name from Pankaj to Pankaj Kumar.

I, Raminder Singh Alias Ram Chand S/O Sharam Singh R/O H No 110 Medical Campus Faridkot Punjab Have Changed My Namt To Raminder Singh.

I, Suman Rani W/o Parveen Kumar R/o Vill. Barheri P.O. Mandhar, Teh. Radaur, Distt yamunanagar have changed my name from Suman Rani to Suman Bala.

I, Salinder Kumar S/o Amarjit, Vill. Alamgir, Kala Sanghian, Distt. Kapurthala (Punjab) India declare that Salinder Kumar and Sulinder Kumar are the name of one and same person. He is called by Both the names.

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INDIA SPINBALL VS ENGLAND BAZBALL

Rohit men bank on spin for first strike

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

India's unalloyed dominance at home over the last 12 years will be put through its most unique examination till date when Rohit Sharma's side faces a trend-defying England in the first match of what promises to be a stirring five-Test series from Thursday.

No team has been as invincible as India at home since their 1-2 defeat against the Three Lions led by Alastair Cook in 2012, stitching together a bull run of 16 successive series wins, including seven series sweeps. If one further breaks down the stats, India have lost just three Tests out of 44 they played in their own backyard in this phase, and this is a power walk even beyond the all-conquering West Indies in the '80s or Australia of the turn of the century.

Several factors have contributed to this astonishing run over the last decade, including favourable pitches,



bowlers who knew how to exploit those tracks and batters who churned out runs like popcorn from a vending machine. But two players have stood head and shoulders above the

rest in these conquests — off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin and left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja. From Thursday, the Ash-Jaddu duet will be on show here at the RGI Stadium,

where the pitch is expected to turn and grip as the match moves towards its conclusion. England already have a taste of what these two can do from their past visits here, and they will be worried, particularly

about Ashwin. The 37-year-old still retains the burning zest of a 17-year-old to keep improving his craft and since 2012, Ashwin has grabbed 283 wickets from 46 Tests averaging a shade

over 19. Jadeja might often get viewed as a supporting act to Ashwin, but in his own right, the Saurashtra man is a potent threat, and his deliveries that dart on straight could confuse the batters on a turner. Jadeja has taken 191 wickets from 39 Tests in the period where Ashwin kicked up a bedlam in opposition ranks to ensure that they don't get breathing space from both the ends. Together, they have bagged 500 wickets at an average of 21. In all likelihood, India will also include a third spinner to the combination in the form of either Axar Patel or Kuldeep Yadav, with the former having a better chance at the moment. England will be aware that no amount of preparation involving scruffing up pitches some 1600 miles away in Abu Dhabi will be enough to tackle this real menace, and in that sense, they will also need to tame the demons inside their own minds.



England frustration ends as rookie spinner Bashir gets visa

PTI ■ LONDON/HYDERABAD

England's Pakistan-origin off-spinner Shoaib Bashir was on Wednesday granted visa to play in the five-match Test series against India, ending a "frustrating" wait for the visiting side whose captain Ben Stokes felt "devastated" by the delay.

"Shoaib Bashir has now received his visa, and is due to travel to join up with the team in India this weekend. We're glad the situation has now been resolved," the England and Wales Cricket Board posted on its X (formerly Twitter) page on the eve of the first Test in Hyderabad.

The 20-year-old rookie, who plays for Somerset in the English county, was forced to head back to England from the team's Abu Dhabi training base after a prolonged wait for visa. His family is of Pakistani heritage but Bashir was born in Surrey.

The delay snowballed into a major controversy with a British government spokesperson demanding "fair" treatment for the youngster and Stokes hardly mincing words in expressing his outrage.

Bashir, who is a shock inclusion in the squad with a mediocre 10 wickets from just six first-

class games, was never in contention for a place in the squad for the opening Test. "When I first found the news out in Abu Dhabi, I did say we shouldn't fly until Bash gets his visa," Stokes said in the pre-match press conference on Wednesday.

"But that was a little bit tongue in cheek. I know it's a way bigger thing than doing that. That was probably just emotions around the whole thing. I'm pretty devastated that Bash has had to go through this," he added.

An unnamed British government spokesperson told 'ESPNcricinfo' that it wasn't the first time that citizens of Pakistani heritage faced a delay in securing Indian visas.

"The specifics of this case are a matter for Shoaib Bashir and the Indian Government. But we absolutely expect India to treat British citizens fairly at all times in its visa process.

"We have previously raised the issues British citizens with Pakistani heritage experience applying for visas with the Indian High Commission in London," he said.

India have, so far, not commented on the matter. Stokes hoped that Bashir would be able to join the squad by the end of this week.



It was a headache to decide between Axar and Kuldeep as third spinner: Rohit

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma on Wednesday admitted that the team management had a tough time making the third spinner choice between Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav for the opening Test against England but hinted that the former might just have made the final cut.

Behind Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, India are primed to pick a third spinner for the first Test against England, starting here from Thursday.

"If the wicket has bounce or if it doesn't have bounce, he (Kuldeep) still is a factor in those types of conditions because he's got superb variations. Obviously, he is a very mature bowler now from what he was a few years back," Rohit said in the pre-match press conference.

"He's not played a lot of Test cricket in India because of Ashwin and Jadeja. We've seen it in the past as well. With our middle-order (batting), in the past, a lot of us (batters) got an opportunity pretty late.

"But that's the reality of it, you can't hide away from it. But yes, he's a very tempting option," he added.

Although Rohit did not give away his final team for the match, he indicated that Axar might just be the one on the final team sheet.

He underlined the utility of

the left-arm spinner as an all-rounder, the strongest clue about the think tanks preference for this Test at least. He dispelled the notion that Axar packs similar abilities as Jadeja and, as such, he might slip down the pecking order. "Axar, you know, with his all-round ability, gives us that batting depth. The consistency that he's shown, playing in these conditions in Test cricket, also is an important factor for us.

"But it was a headache to decide who it is going to be for us. But I am not going to say who it is," said Rohit.

The 36-year-old also hoped that premier spinner Ashwin will deliver one more time in conditions familiar to him. "Ashwin, obviously, we know his class, we know his quality. Every time he plays the game for us, he tends to impress all of us by a notch (higher). We do appreciate that. "Every time he's gotten an opportunity, he's made sure to put the team ahead. He's shown it for a number of years now. So, yeah, I hope this series is no different for him, and he comes out and does what he does the best," said Rohit.

Ashwin is on the cusp of achieving twin milestones in his storied career.

The 37-year-old off-spinner is 10 wickets shy of the 500-wicket mark in Tests and he can also complete 100 career Test matches if he plays all the five Tests in the series.

Wood is an impact builder: Stokes

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

England captain Ben Stokes on Tuesday rated Mark Wood as an "impact builder" with high pace after they decided to enter the first Test against India, starting here from Thursday, with a solitary fast bowler and three spinners. Wood was preferred over veteran James Anderson for this match, and Stokes said the Durham man's ability to touch 150 clicks tilted the scales in his favour.

"Obviously, what he brings

with his high pace...he is a real impact builder. Bowling the 90 mile an hour with a reversing ball is obviously going to be very difficult to play against. He's another weapon which you can use out here with short, sharp spells, wanting him to be bowling as fast as he can and short periods. There're no worries about these long spells because that's how we're going to use him this week," said Stokes during his pre-match press meet here.

So, how did the team management handle the situation of



looking over a highly-experienced bowler like Anderson? Stokes said Anderson has taken the whole episode quite professionally.

"Jimmy's incredible professional. You never know how conditions might change and what you might feel as the best setup for your team. But now we're not looking at having to manage Jimmy or his workloads or anything like that. You know, we put him in the spot because we think he's one of the best performers," said Stokes.

However, Stokes asserted that he will not bowl in the series. The premier all-rounder is still recuperating from a knee surgery.

More intent expected from Indian batters against Ireland U-19 World Cup

PTI ■ BLOEMFONTEIN

India's young turks would be aiming for a more proactive approach while batting when they take on Ireland in the second group league encounter of the ICC U-19 World Cup here on Thursday. While India disposed off Bangladesh by 84 runs in what turned out to be an easier than expected opener, Ireland game will provide them with an opportunity to play differently before tougher opposition comes calling during the Super Six phase starting next week.

Ireland are coming into the game with a defeat against Bangladesh after beating min-

nnows USA in the opening game. For India, more than battling the opposition, it will be about raising the bar for themselves and playing the 50-over game, keeping the modern approach in mind, compared to the early 1990s style of play.

The skipper Uday Saharan, who scored 64 and top scorer Adarsh Singh (76), had strike-rates of 79 and 68 respectively, which is slightly unacceptable in modern times.

That India had two terrific but vastly different left-arm

spinners Saumy Kumar Pandey and Musheer Khan doing a fantastic job for them meant coach Hrishikesh Kanitkar didn't have much to worry about.

One hopes that Saumy, easily the best bowler by a distance in the first game, doesn't have too much of a shoulder problem that forced him to take a temporary break in the first game in between his first and second spells. On a sluggish Bloemfontein track, Indian batters would need to rotate the strike better and also find more gaps in the Powerplay overs.

Maxwell needs to hold up his end of bargain: McDonald

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Glenn Maxwell is a vital cog in Australia's white-ball set up but he must "hold up his end of the bargain" after his "less than ideal" incident in Adelaide, said head coach Andrew McDonald.

Last week Maxwell was hospitalised in Adelaide after he got too drunk after attending a concert by 'Six and Out', the band featuring former Australian pacer Brett Lee and passed out.

He wasn't kept in the hospital for long and was discharged soon after and is now back in training.

"I've spoken to Glenn, had a



good chat with him yesterday around the incident. Him looking after himself needs to be a consideration moving forward," McDonald was quoted as saying to Sydney Evening News.

"We've given him the opportunity to rest and rehab in that

period of time and I suppose the lessons for him around that would be to take up his end of the bargain in that space and take care of himself."

Maxwell was rested for next month's three-match ODI series against the West Indies at home and he took the opportunity to attend a golf event in Adelaide before the incident took place.

"We want to see Glenn Maxwell playing cricket for the next three to four years for Australia. Can he get to the next World Cup in 2027 in South Africa? Who knows. But, he's a key player in our white-ball formats," McDonald said.

SIRAJ WARNING

If England play Bazball, the match might get over within two days



"So, I think it'll be difficult to see Bazball here. But if they play it, it'll be good for us as the match may get over quickly." Talking about his preparations for the tour, Siraj said: "On their previous tour to India, the matches were getting over quickly. In that series (in 2021) I think I played two matches.

"In the first innings of one of these, I bowled five overs and took two wickets of Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow. So, the aim will be to control runs in how many ever overs I bowl. If I get wickets fine, but I'll have

to stay patient and continue building pressure on the batsmen." England are set to play five Tests against India. The 29-year-old Siraj has taken 68 wickets so far in 23 Tests since making his debut a little three years back in Australia. He said focussing on consistently hitting the right spot irrespective of the format and conditions has helped him in his career. "I bowl with the new ball, so my line and length remain the same. I don't change things whether it's the white ball or the red ball.

Roach sees plenty of promise in fellow fast bowler Shamar

AP ■ BRISBANE

West Indies veteran fast bowler Kemar Roach is predicting big things for the new guy on the team, 24-year-old fellow pacesman Shamar Joseph.

Ahead of the second Test — a day-night match — that begins Thursday at the Gabba in Brisbane, the 35-year-old Roach has 267 Tests wickets, placing him fifth on the all-time list for the West Indies.

In 2009, on his first Test tour, Roach shattered Ricky Ponting's elbow with a blazing bouncer that forced Ponting to retire hurt from the match.

Joseph took 5-94 on debut in the first Test in Adelaide last week, including the wicket of

Steve Smith with his first delivery. Australia won the first Test by 10 wickets in 2 1-2 days.

"The best advice I can give him is to build his own legacy and understand what you want from cricket," Roach said of Joseph.

"That's up to him to determine ... If it's monetary, or if it's just stats and statistics or whatever. There's gonna be a lot of distractions and he's a hot commodity right now."

"The (Twenty20) franchises are a big distraction but guys still want to relish red-ball cricket. Test cricket is still in the hearts of West Indian cricketers at home. It's just about us to provide support around it."

Roach says the early signs from Joseph were all positive.



"He is a very confident young man and has shared a lot of information with me. We have a lot of conversations," Roach said. "He has a good energy I love. I am happy to be around him and to be a part of his career at the start of it. Let's see how long and how good he can be at the end of it. He is destined to be good if he puts the work in." Meanwhile, Australia opener Usman Khawaja has been passed fit by Cricket Australia's medical team to play in Brisbane. And Travis Head is likely to play despite a recent positive COVID-19 test. Khawaja was struck in the head by a West Indies bouncer during Friday's short run chase in Adelaide.

The 37-year-old completed concussion assessments earlier this week, and has been approved to partner Steve Smith in Khawaja's home Gabba test.

"Khawaja was assessed again today and has no symptoms of delayed concussion," a Cricket Australia spokesperson said.

After a match-winning century in Adelaide, Head subsequently contracted COVID-19 but Australia captain Pat Cummins said the 30-year-old was progressing well in his recovery.

Head flew to Brisbane on Tuesday but decided to rest in the team hotel rather than join the Australian team for its late afternoon training session at the Gabba.

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44/24	CAD Draughtsman (Electrical)	1
45/24	CAD Draughtsman (HVAC)	2
46/24	CAD Draughtsman (Water Supply)	2
47/24	CAD Draughtsman (External Work)	1
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