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EMERGED STRONGER, SAYS ADANI ON
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Modi Fulcrum of BJP Manifesto

INSPIRES FIRST TIME VOTERS

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

At the head of the Lok Sabha elections in April-May this year, BJP president JP Nadda officially launched the party's 2024 election campaign, releasing a video featuring a theme song dedicated to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The theme song in Hindi, "Sapne Nahi Haqeeqat Bunte Hai, Tabhi Toh Sab Modi Ko Chunte Hai" (Not dreams, but (we) weave reality, that's why everyone chooses Modi), highlights how Modi delivered on his promises and fulfilled people's dreams after they elected him at a time when the country was in a "bad shape". The campaign song was released by Nadda at an event where Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed young voters virtually. In a virtual interaction with millions of first-time voters from across 5,800 locations in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited the nation's youth on Thursday to contribute to the Bharatiya Janata Party's manifesto for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He urged them to share their thoughts on the NaMo app. The Prime Minister expressed his anticipation of meeting some of the contributors soon. Additionally, he provided a link to the website narendramodi.in, where individuals can share their inputs for the BJP's manifesto. He



also called upon the connected youth through social media not only to vote but also to assist people whose names were not on the voters' list in getting them included. "I invite the youth of India to contribute to the BJP manifesto for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Share your thoughts on the NaMo App. I look forward to meeting some of the contributors myself in the future," said PM Modi. His social media post about the BJP manifesto came on the occasion of National Voters' Day, during which he also urged those who have not yet registered themselves as voters to do so. The song, presented as a 2-minute

and 13-second video, expresses the ruling party's confidence and emphasises that Modi is all set to become the Prime Minister for the third consecutive term. It features a photo of Modi performing dandavat pranam in front of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya. The video highlights the government's achievements in various sectors and the launch of schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Har Ghar Nal Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, and the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) that were introduced in the last 10 years of the Modi regime.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and others during the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of various developmental projects in Bulandshahr on Thursday

PTI

Gifts Bulandshahr with dream projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
BULANDSHAHR/NEW DELHI

After inaugurating and laying the foundation stone for development projects worth over Rs 19,100 crore in Bulandshahr ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Thursday that he merely heralds the call for development, while it is the people who sound the poll bugle for him. Touching upon the completion of the praan pratishtha ceremony in Ayodhya, the Prime Minister emphasised the priority of 'Rashtra Pratishtha,' urging its elevation to new heights. "We must strengthen the

path from Dev to Desh and Ram to Rashtra," PM Modi declared during a massive rally in Bulandshahr, western Uttar Pradesh. He said that the time had come to elevate "Rashtra Pratishtha" to greater heights, aiming to transform India into a developed nation by 2047. Modi also mentioned the late BJP leader and former UP CM, Kalyan Singh, saying that he would have been pleased to witness the development in Ayodhya. "This region gave us Kalyan Singh, who devoted his life to 'Ram Kaaj' and 'Rashtra Kaaj'," Modi remarked in Bulandshahr.

Highways on a high under Gadkari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) is poised to transition to a Quality-Cum-Cost-based selection system for bidding on various road construction and related projects, replacing the age-old L-1 least-cost selection process. This shift aims to enhance the quality of the undertaken works. Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister of Road Transport and



Highways (MoRTH), said, "The Ministry of Roads will soon adopt a qualitative tendering

process instead of the least-cost bidding process to promote quality and road safety in various projects. Qualitative tendering will facilitate the incorporation of safer road features in designs, considering the behaviour of road users. Gadkari lamented the fact that there have been several instances where officers in the ministry have omitted safety features in highway projects to reduce costs, ostensibly in the pursuit of financial viability.



French President Emmanuel Macron during his visit to the Amber Fort in Jaipur

PTI

Kerala Governor delivers knockout punch in Assembly

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI


The CPI(M)-led Kerala Government found itself in an embarrassing situation as Governor Mohammed Arif Khan concluded his address to the Legislative Assembly on Thursday, the opening day of this year's session. The Governor, after his customary salutations to the House, read out the concluding line of the policy statement and promptly left the House, all within a span of one minute. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan (also known as Karana Bhoothan) stood bewildered and perplexed as the Governor exited the House, leaving both the shocked treasury and Opposition benches aghast. This is the first incident of its kind reported from anywhere in the country. There is nothing surprising in this development. The policy statement given to the Governor by the Government for reading out in the House is complete nonsense. The State



Government has blamed the Centre for all its omissions and commissions, leading the Governor to skip the entire speech. However, according to PC George, a seven-time legislator and former chief whip of the Kerala Government, the Governor has done nothing wrong, as this incident was waiting to happen. He said what is interesting is the speeches to be delivered by the Congress during the discussion on thanking the policy statement.

"The Congress and the CPI(M) are constituents of the INDI Alliance, and Kerala is the only State where they are not together. If the Congress is sincere, its legislators should expose the failures of the government. We saw a woman assistant public prosecutor committing suicide in Kollam earlier this week due to the harassment meted out to her by the CPI(M) leaders. A physically challenged person committed suicide in Wayanad because the State government failed to provide

the monthly pension due to him, while the octogenarian Mariyamma, another pensioner, has been going around the state with a begging bowl soliciting financial help from good Samaritans, as the CPI(M) government has failed to reimburse her dues for more than a year," said George. The 63-page-long speech, intended to be read out by the Governor, was full of eloquence on Pinarayi Vijayan and a scathing attack on the Centre. While highlighting NITI-Ayog's praise for the 'unprecedented' progress made by the State in the Human Development Index, the Keralaeyam Global Show, and the Nava Kerala Sadass, which ended in a fiasco, the speech blamed the Centre for every setback suffered by Kerala, pointed out the veteran lawmaker. VD Satheshan, leader of the Opposition, blamed the CPI(M) and the BJP for the Governor's actions.



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LIC/MT/2023-24/18/Eng

The Pioneer wishes its readers Happy Republic Day. As the offices of The Pioneer will remain closed on the occasion of the Republic Day, the next issue of the paper will appear on January 28

Provide data on land permits for agriculture & horticulture in past 10 years: Raturi

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Additional chief secretary Radha Raturi has directed all the district magistrates to soon provide information to the Revenue department regarding land for which permission was granted from their level for agriculture and horticulture during the past 10 years. She clarified that the government's main aim behind the proposed land law is to protect the rights of the native residents and ensure justice to them. It is also intended at encouraging reliable investors to invest and generate employment opportunities in the State while also simplifying the investment

process. Chairing a meeting of the drafting committee related to the proposed land law, Raturi clarified to the DMs that the purpose behind the temporary stay on permission for land for agriculture and horticulture is to prevent misuse of land and to make the land law more logical and fair. This temporary stay is not aimed at discouraging industrial activities and investment, she stressed. The ACS directed all the district magistrates to dispel confusion and doubts among investors regarding this temporary provision. She further directed that the departments concerned must

promptly ensure verification of the applicants for investment in the State. Checking the reliability of the investors and simplification of the investment procedure is important to ensure that maximum investors are encouraged to establish enterprises and generate employment in the State.

Director general of police Abhinav Kumar, secretaries R Meenakshi Sundaram, Vinay Shankar Pandey and Deependra Kumar Choudhry were present in the meeting along with all DMs who attended the meeting virtually.

Congress hopes to woo Dalit voters with Kharge's Dehradun visit

GAJENDRA SINGH NEGI ■ DEHRADUN

The Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge will kick-start the campaign of the grand old party for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections by addressing a public meeting and workers conclave in Dehradun on January 28. Apart from galvanising the party cadre and its ancillary organisations, Kharge in his visit is likely to woo the formidable Dalit vote bank in the State. After his anointment to the coveted position of the Congress party president in the year 2022, Kharge has succeeded in creating an image of a powerful leader. Considering the fact that he was born in a Dalit family of Bidar district in Karnataka, Kharge commands respect in the Dalits and backward caste communities. The SCs constitute about 19 per cent of the population of Uttarakhand. As per the census data (2011) the SC population of the State stood at 18,92,516. In Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar districts the population of SCs is 28 per cent and 19.25 per cent respectively. The party hopes that Kharge will be able to attract the Dalit vote bank which used to vote for the Congress party but in recent years has split up.

Keeping the Dalit vote bank in mind the Congress high command had appointed veteran Yashpal Arya, a Dalit, as the leader of opposition (LoP) in the State Assembly after the party lost the 2022 Assembly polls to BJP. The appointment of Arya was made ignoring the claims of six-time MLA from Chakrata Pritam Singh and powerful leaders like Rajendra Singh Bhandari and despite the fact that Arya had come back to Congress from the ruling BJP only days ahead of the Assembly polls. Apart from the appeal of Kharge, the party hopes that Arya who is considered as the tallest Dalit leader in the State will push the SC votes into its kitty.

Faced by the formidable challenge of BJP which has swept all the polls held in the state after 2014 and is at present apparently riding a wave generated by the consecration ceremony of Ram temple in Ayodhya, the Congress party is fancying its chances in Haridwar, Nainital-Udham Singh Nagar and Almora- Pithoragarh parliamentary seats in Uttarakhand. This assertion of the party leaders is based on the fact that Dalits constitute a good part of the population in these three constituencies and become a potent factor when combined with the Muslim population in Haridwar and Nainital-Udham Singh Nagar seats. It is no wonder that the maximum number of contenders including former chief minister Harish Rawat and cabinet minister Harak Singh Rawat have thrown their hats for the party's ticket from Haridwar.

Senior journalist Jay Singh Rawat told The Pioneer that Kharge's visit will help the Congress party in winning back the confidence of Dalit voters in Uttarakhand. He recalled that the Congress party gained immensely when Yashpal Arya was the president of the State Congress.

Cong lying on Parade Ground permission issue, has already booked another venue: BJP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party has alleged that the Congress is indulging in propaganda regarding the district administration not providing permission for Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge's programme on the Parade Ground in Dehradun on January 28. BJP State media in-charge Manveer Singh Chauhan claimed that the Congress has already booked the Bannu school ground in Race Course for the event and is trying to unnecessarily create a dispute to gain sympathy and grab headlines. Congress leaders had alleged on Wednesday that the authorities were denying permission for Kharge's programme on Parade Ground. Responding to this, Chauhan said that the Congress is doubtful about the turnout in the said event. After checking various smaller grounds, it booked the Bannu school ground about one week ago and is making preparations accordingly, he averred. "In this episode, their attempt has been to follow their leader Rahul Gandhi's policy of creating dispute. This is why they levelled false and baseless allegations regarding the permission for Parade Ground to grab media headlines and spread confusion in the public," he said. Chauhan further claimed that the Congress had submitted its application for permission to the administration on January 24 and immediately held a Press conference alleging that the permission was denied whereas the officials have clarified that the request is being considered. The part of Parade Ground on which programmes are generally held had already been booked till January 29 and the Congress leaders know this. The Congress leaders are indulging in propaganda about permission for the ground being denied solely for the purpose of creating a dispute and gaining public sympathy, the BJP State media in-charge said.



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Name of Account holder	Description of the property to be auctioned	Reserve Price	Earnest Money
Mrs. Sumitra Devi W/o Budh Lal	Vehicle Regn No - UK-18/M-7060, Date of registration 18.02.2021, Chassis No. MA1NM2EU1M2A53870, Engine No. EUMZA30181 Model/Manufacturing year Mahindra XUV 300/2021, Make Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.	Rs. 7,50,000/-	Rs. 75,000/-

The EMD amount to be deposited with State Bank of India Jaspur in the form of Demand Draft/Cheque favouring "Branch Manager, State Bank of India Jaspur, on or before close of the business on **08-02-2024**.
Place of Online Auction: <https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome//ibapi/index.isp.start>
Authorised Officer
Date : 26.01.2024 Place : Jaspur STATE BANK OF INDIA, Jaspur (01812)



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Name of Account holder	Description of the property to be auctioned	Reserve Price	Earnest Money
Mr. Monish Khan S/o Arif Khan	Vehicle Regn No - UK-18/L-3813, Date of registration 14.02.2020, Chassis No. MAT627121KLN45995, Engine No. 1.5CRAIL01NP YW24020 Model/Manufacturing year Tata Nexon/2019, Make Tata Motors Ltd.	Rs. 6,25,000/-	Rs. 62,500/-

The EMD amount to be deposited with State Bank of India Bajpur in the form of Demand Draft/Cheque favouring "Branch Manager, State Bank of India Bazpur, on or before close of the business on **08-02-2024**.
Place of Online Auction: <https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome//ibapi/index.isp.start>
Authorised Officer
Date : 26.01.2024 Place : Bajpur STATE BANK OF INDIA, Bazpur



ले. ज. गुरमीत सिंह
पीवीएसएम, यूवाईएसएम, एवीएसएम, वीएसएम, (से.नि.)
राज्यपाल, उत्तराखण्ड



गणतंत्र
26 जनवरी
दिवस

संदेश

प्रिय प्रदेशवासियों,

75वें गणतंत्र दिवस की आप सभी को हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ। इस शुभ अवसर पर मैं राष्ट्रपिता महात्मा गांधी और भारतीय संविधान के प्रणेता बाबा साहेब आंबेडकर सहित सभी महान स्वतंत्रता संग्राम सेनानियों और संविधान निर्माताओं को अपने श्रद्धा-सुमन अर्पित करता हूँ। मैं इस अवसर पर देश की सुरक्षा में तैनात सैन्य बलों और सभी सुरक्षा एजेंसियों के जवानों को सैल्यूट करता हूँ जो देश की एकता और अखंडता की रक्षा के लिए अपना सबकुछ न्योछावर कर देते हैं। मैं देश की रक्षा में शहीद हुए वीर जवानों को नमन कर अपनी श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता हूँ।

गणतंत्र दिवस-2024 हमारे लिए कुछ खास है। हमने अपने गणतंत्र की स्थापना के 74 वर्ष पूर्ण करते हुए 75वें वर्ष में प्रवेश कर लिया है। आजादी के अमृत महोत्सव के साथ-साथ गणतंत्र का भी यह अमृत महोत्सव है इसलिए गणतंत्र के अमृत काल का यह कालखण्ड नए सपने, नए संकल्प और नित्य-नूतन सिद्धियों का समय है।

साल 2023 भारतवर्ष के लिए उपलब्धियों से भरा रहा। भारत ने जी-20 की अध्यक्षता कर पूरी दुनिया को जहाँ एक ओर वसुधैव कुटुंबकम का संदेश दिया, वहीं दूसरी ओर अपनी वैश्विक नेतृत्व की क्षमता को प्रदर्शित किया। चंद्रयान-3 लॉन्च कर भारत चांद के दक्षिणी ध्रुव पर लैंडिंग करने वाला पहला देश बना। दुनिया के सबसे तेज़ 5G रोलआउट को हासिल करना, डिजिटल पेमेंट में सबसे ऊपर रहना और सौर मिशन आदित्य एल-1 सहित एशियन गेम्स में 100 से अधिक मेडल जीतना दर्शाता है कि हम मिशन-2047 के सर्वश्रेष्ठ और विश्व गुरु भारत के लक्ष्य की ओर सही और स्पष्ट रूप से आगे बढ़ रहे हैं।

देश के विकास के साथ युवा उत्तराखण्ड भी प्रगति के पथ पर निरंतर अग्रसर है। देवभूमि उत्तराखण्ड ने बीते साल में विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में कई उपलब्धियां हासिल की। इसका नतीजा है कि 2025 में सशक्त उत्तराखण्ड का लक्ष्य हासिल होता नजर आने लगा है। प्रदेश की मातृशक्ति, युवा, सैनिक और किसानों को केंद्र में रखकर कई योजनाओं को धरातल पर उतारा जा रहा है। वर्ष 2023, उत्तराखण्ड में हुए, वैश्विक निवेशक सम्मेलन, छठें विश्व आपदा प्रबंधन सम्मेलन, रेलवे-रोपवे, रोडवे एवं एयरवे का तीव्र विकास, स्वास्थ्य और पर्यटन सहित कई क्षेत्रों में राज्य के लिए उपलब्धियों से भरा रहा। देश में हुए जी-20 सम्मेलन से जुड़ी तीन बैठकों की मेजबानी से उत्तराखण्ड ने इस वर्ष देश-दुनिया का ध्यान अपनी ओर आकर्षित किया। उत्तरकाशी के सिलक्यारा टनल रेस्क्यू ऑपरेशन के चुनौतीपूर्ण कार्य को देश एवं प्रदेश की लीडरशिप और एजेंसियों ने जिस कोऑर्डिनेशन, सजगता एवं कुशलता से अंजाम दिया वह देश-दुनिया के लिए उदाहरण बन गया।

देवभूमि उत्तराखण्ड आज हर क्षेत्र में लगातार आगे बढ़ रहा है। युवाओं, किसानों और मातृशक्ति के लिए चल रही योजनाओं से यह स्पष्ट है कि प्रदेश सरकार राज्य के हर वर्ग के लिए संवेदनशील होकर कार्य कर रही है। मेरा मानना है कि राज्य के विकास का नया अध्याय लिखने के लिए हर व्यक्ति के योगदान की आवश्यकता है विशेषकर मातृशक्ति, युवाशक्ति और साथ ही साथ पूर्व सैनिकों की अहम भागीदारी से उत्तराखण्ड को देश का सर्वश्रेष्ठ राज्य बनाया जा सकता है।

साल 2024 में हम सभी का समर्पण भाव, इच्छाशक्ति और कार्यशैली हमारे प्रदेश की दशा और दिशा तय करने वाली है, इसलिए उत्तराखण्ड को इस दशक में देश का विकसित और अग्रणी राज्य बनाने के लिए हम सबको पूर्ण संकल्प, सिद्धि और सामर्थ्य के साथ अपना योगदान करना होगा और प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी के कथन

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जय हिन्द!

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Will convene an Assembly session for implementing UCC: Dhami

Session to be convened after receiving report of expert committee

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has said that the five-member expert committee on Uniform Civil Code (UCC) has completed its work. He informed that a session of the Vidhan Sabha will be convened when the State government receives the report and the

reminds us about the sacrifice of the freedom fighters. Dhami said that the State government is working on the principle of Antyodaya for the development and welfare of the people standing on the last rung of the social ladder.

efforts are on in full swing to bring all the agreements on the ground. The CM said that work on Manaskhand Mandir Mala Mission is going on to develop the temples of Kumaon region on the lines of Char Dham Yatra. He said that the State government has provided 30 per cent reservation to the women of the State in the government jobs. Similarly Lakhpati Didi Yojana has been launched for women empowerment in which 1.25 women will be enabled to become lakhpati didis.

DM orders inquiry into death of cows in Kanji House

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Amid political slugfest between the Congress and the BJP over mistreatment and deaths of cows at the Kanji House in Dehradun, the district magistrate Sonika has ordered an inquiry in the case. The DM has also directed the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) to take over the operation of Kanji House in its hands. Sonika told the media persons on Thursday that the chief development officer of Dehradun has been directed to conduct an inquiry in this case. She added that the CDO has also been directed to start the process of deregistering the body handling the operation of the Kanji House. The DM added that strict action will be initiated against those responsible for mismanagement of Kanji House and deaths of cows sheltered there.

It is learnt that a preliminary inquiry by the municipal commissioner has revealed gross negligence in the operation of the Kanji House where the abandoned and stray cattle are kept.

Blaming the authorities for maltreatment and deaths of cows, an angry crowd had gathered at the shelter on Wednesday evening. The people alleged that many cows in the facility have died while many are on the verge of death. Videos showing dead and injured cows circulated on social media. The locals claimed that due to gross neglect cows have even gouged the eyes of some of the dying cows.

They also accused the administration of Kanji House of keeping more than 500 cows which is in excess of its capacity. The crowd

also claimed that the cows were not cared for and fed properly.

Meanwhile, the blame game between the ruling BJP and opposition Congress has started over the incident. Reacting sharply to the claim of the BJP spokesperson that the BJP government has increased the government grant per cow, the chief spokesperson of Uttarakhand Congress Garima Dasauni said that the BJP only plays the politics of cows but the fact is that the cows are not safe under the BJP rule. She said that the cows were kept in horrendous conditions and the conditions there were heartrending as about a dozen cows had died while some others were on the verge of death.

CM exhorts youths to exercise franchise in elections

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has exhorted the youths to exercise their franchise in the elections. He was addressing a conclave of

role in ensuring that the commitment of Viksit Bharat is fulfilled. He said that the youngsters who have attained the voting age should register themselves to exercise their right to vote. The increasing turnout in elections indicates that the people are getting increasingly aware about using their voting rights, Dhami pointed out. Stating that the Election Commission con-



new voters at the Roorkee College of Engineering on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister said that voters play a crucial role in strengthening democracy. Addressing the youths, he said that the first-time voters should exercise their franchise and also encourage others to vote in the elections. The chief minister further said that the youths will play an important

sistently undertakes awareness campaigns to encourage the citizens to vote, the chief minister said that the youths should also conduct such awareness campaigns in schools, colleges, other educational institutions and various areas to enlighten the youngsters and other citizens about the power of their vote. The local MLA Pradeep Batra and others were also present on the occasion.



UCC will be implemented in the State. The statement of the CM made on the eve of Republic Day assumes significance because the extended tenure of the expert committee headed by justice (ret'd) Ranajana Prakash Desai is ending on January 26. The assertion of the CM that the UCC will be implemented in Uttarakhand soon signifies that the State is on its way to become the only State in the country apart from Goa to have UCC.

He said that the State government has followed the policy of zero tolerance on corruption to implement a strict anti-copying law against copying and examination malpractices. The CM said that the State government is working dedicatedly in every field to fulfill the dream of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make Uttarakhand one of the leading States of the country by the year 2025.

The CM averred that agreements worth Rs 3.65 lakh crore were inked during the recent Global Investors Summit and that

Congratulating the people of the State, the CM said that the Republic Day

Light rain & snowfall likely in 5 mountain districts today

Minimum temperature drops to 4 °C in Dehradun on Thursday

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

At a time when the State is suffering from a considerable deficit of rain and snowfall this winter season, the weather in the mountainous regions is expected to take a turn on Friday. The State meteorological centre has forecast that very light to light rain-fall/snowfall is likely to occur at isolated places in Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag, Chamoli, Bageshwar and Pithoragarh districts today. The meteorological

centre has also issued a yellow warning (Watch) regarding the possibility of dense fog likely to occur at isolated places of Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar districts. Ground frost is likely to occur at isolated places in the mountainous regions of the State. Further, shallow to moderate fog is likely to occur in some parts of Dehradun, Pauri and Nainital districts today.


Meanwhile, the minimum temperature in Dehradun dropped two degrees below normal to four degrees Celsius on Thursday. The maximum temperature rising two degrees above normal to 21.6 degrees Celsius and sunny conditions provided some relief from the cold during the daylight hours. Similar conditions were experienced in other parts of the State with the maximum temperature in Pantnagar dropping three degrees below normal to 16.8 degrees Celsius and the minimum temperature dropping two degrees below normal to 2.9 degrees Celsius. In Mukteshwar, the maximum temperature of 12.5 degrees Celsius was one degree above normal while the minimum temperature was two degrees below normal at -0.4 degree Celsius. The maximum temperature in New Tehri dropped two degrees below normal to 13.4 degrees Celsius while the minimum temperature dropped a degree below normal to 1.9 degrees Celsius on Thursday.



FILE PIC

logical centre has also issued a yellow warning (Watch) regarding the possibility of dense fog likely to occur at isolated places of Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar districts. Ground frost is likely to occur at isolated places in the mountainous regions of the State. Further, shallow to moderate fog is likely to occur in some parts of Dehradun, Pauri and Nainital districts today.

The provisional State capital Dehradun is forecast to witness a partly cloudy sky today with mist/shallow fog likely to occur during the morning hours. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be about 22 degrees Celsius and



सत्यमेव जयते
Government of India

Greetings To All Fellow Citizens


On

75th

Republic Day

This is the ‘Amrit Kaal’ of Bharat’s development. Today, Bharat is filled with the reservoir of youth power, brimming with energy. Today, we are at a turning point where every effort of ours will strengthen the foundation of Bharat for the next thousand years.

- Narendra Modi



Live telecast of Republic Day celebrations from Kartavya Path from 9:00 a.m. onwards on Doordarshan network

CMC 22201/13/0231/2324



कार्यालय सहायक अभियन्ता, लघु सिंचाई उपखण्ड,

नरेन्द्रनगर टिहरी गढ़वाल

संख्या-384 / लॉसिं / निविदा / 2023-24

निविदा सूचना संख्या-07

दिनांक: 24 जनवरी 2024

-: अल्पकालीन निविदा :-

महामहिम राज्यपाल उत्तराखण्ड की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरी कार्यालय में निम्नलिखित श्रेणी के अनुसार विभाग में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से दिनांक 09.02.2024 को अपराह्न 2:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदाएं उसी दिन 2:30 बजे अपराह्न में उपस्थित ठेकेदारों अथवा उनके द्वारा अधिकृत प्रतिनिधियों की उपस्थिति अथवा अनुपस्थिति दोनों ही स्थिति में अधोहस्ताक्षरी या मनोनीत अधिकारी द्वारा खोली जायेगी। उक्त कार्यों की निविदाएं आज दिनांक 24.01.2024 से दिनांक 08.02.2024 तक किसी भी कार्य दिवस में प्रातः 10:00 बजे से सांय 5:00 बजे तक लघु सिंचाई उपखण्ड कार्यालय नरेन्द्रनगर से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। कार्यों से सम्बन्धित विस्तृत जानकारी एवं विभागीय शर्त आदि किसी भी कार्य दिवस में इस कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। उक्त तिथि को राजकीय / स्थानीय अवकाश होने की स्थिति में उक्त निविदा अगली तिथि को विक्रय एवं आमंत्रित की जायेगी।

क्र० सं०	कार्य का नाम	मद	विकास खण्ड	2% धरोहर धनराशि (₹0)	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य (₹0)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि (माह में)	निविदा की वैधता	पंजीकरण श्रेणी
1	Repair Of Building of Rajkiya Uchch Prathamik vidyalaya Taru	Deposit Work	जौनपुर	14000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
2	Construction of Intake Chamber and irrigation tank for solar scheme Than	NABARD	जौनपुर	12500.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
3	Installation of solar pump at scheme Than	NABARD	जौनपुर	13000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
4	Construction of Intake Chamber and irrigation tank for solar scheme Sabchundi to Kotakhal Jhanau	NABARD	देवप्रयाग	12200.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
5	Construction Irrigation Tank & Intake Chamber for Solar Scheme Dobh Maroda	NABARD	देवप्रयाग	12000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
6	Construction Irrigation Tank & Intake Chamber for Solar Scheme Kaniyadi	NABARD	देवप्रयाग	12000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
7	Construction Irrigation Tank & Intake Chamber for Solar Scheme Kafald Dell ka Aam se Gaon Kafald	NABARD	देवप्रयाग	11300.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
8	Construction Irrigation Tank & Intake Chamber for Solar Scheme Auni	NABARD	नरेन्द्रनगर	15200.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
9	Construction Irrigation Tank for Solar Scheme Kanda Lagga Daur	Khanji Nyas	नरेन्द्रनगर	11000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
10	Installation of solar pump at scheme Sabchundi to Kotakhal Jhanau	NABARD	देवप्रयाग	12000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
11	Installation of solar pump at scheme Dobh Maroda	NABARD	देवप्रयाग	12000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
12	Installation of solar pump at scheme Kaniyadi	NABARD	देवप्रयाग	12000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
13	Installation of solar pump at scheme Kafald Dell ka Aam se Gaon Kafald	NABARD	देवप्रयाग	12000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
14	Installation of solar pump at scheme Auni	NABARD	नरेन्द्रनगर	15100.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
15	Installation of solar pump and Distributory Pipe Line at scheme Kanda Lagga Daur	Khanji Nyas	नरेन्द्रनगर	15000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर
16	Constuction Of M.I. Scheme Band Gadera Se Sera Tok Paniyali	P.M.K.S.Y	देवप्रयाग	18000.00	1000+GST	3 माह	45 दिन	ई एवं उच्चतर

निविदा की शर्तें लघु सिंचाई उपखण्ड कार्यालय नरेन्द्रनगर में उपलब्ध है।

भवदीय

सहायक अभियन्ता लघु सिंचाई उपखण्ड, नरेन्द्रनगर

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Republic Day
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We believe in peace and peaceful development,
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— Lal Bahadur Shastri





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आज़ादी का
अमृत महोत्सव



24
जनवरी

गणतंत्र दिवस

की



माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी ने 21वीं सदी के तीसरे दशक को उत्तराखण्ड का दशक कहा है। हम प्रधानमंत्री जी के विजन के अनुरूप राज्य को हर क्षेत्र में आदर्श राज्य बनाने के लिये विकल्प रहित संकल्प के साथ काम कर रहे हैं।

पुष्कर सिंह धामी मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तराखण्ड

हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं

21वीं सदी के विकसित भारत के निर्माण के दो प्रमुख स्तंभ हैं। पहला, अपनी विरासत पर गर्व और दूसरा, विकास के लिए हर संभव प्रयास। आज उत्तराखण्ड, इन दोनों ही स्तंभों को लगातार मजबूत कर रहा है। ये दशक उत्तराखण्ड का दशक होगा।

नरेन्द्र मोदी प्रधानमंत्री



केदारनाथ बदरीनाथ धाम में 1300 करोड़ रुपये के पुनर्निर्माण/पुनर्विकास कार्य, चारधाम यात्रा के दौरान रिकॉर्ड 55 लाख से अधिक श्रद्धालुओं ने किये दर्शन।



मानसखण्ड मंदिर माला मिशन।



पर्यटन मंत्रालय भारत सरकार द्वारा उत्तराखण्ड को बेस्ट एडवेंचर टूरिज्म डेस्टिनेशन का अवार्ड।



रेल कनेक्टिविटी : ऋषिकेश-कर्णप्रयाग रेल परियोजना, वन्देभारत एक्सप्रेस ट्रेन, टनकपुर बागेश्वर रेल लाईन।



4000 से अधिक होम-स्टे विकसित, 16 ईको टूरिज्म डेस्टिनेशन का विकास।



मुख्यमंत्री सशक्त बहना उत्सव योजना के तहत महिला समूहों द्वारा निर्मित उत्पादों को प्रोत्साहन।



रोड कनेक्टिविटी : चारधाम ऑल वेदर रोड, दिल्ली-देहरादून एलिवेटेड रोड व अन्य राष्ट्रीय राजमार्गों का विकास।



रोप-वे कनेक्टिविटी : पर्वतमाला परियोजना, गोरीकुण्ड-केदारनाथ रोप-वे कनेक्टिविटी, गोविन्द घाट-हेमकुण्ड, सुरकण्डा देवी रोप-वे।



जमरानी बांध परियोजना को केन्द्रीय कैबिनेट की आर्थिक मामलों की कमेटी ने दी मंजूरी।



ग्लोबल इन्वेस्टर समिट 2023 के लिये 3.5 लाख करोड़ रुपये से अधिक के एमओयू।



स्टेट मिलेट मिशन में स्थानीय कृषकों से झंगोरा, मंडुवा, सोयाबीन एवं चौलाई का उचित मूल्य पर क्रय।



राजकीय विद्यालयों के साथ राजकीय सहायता प्राप्त (अशासकीय) विद्यालयों में कक्षा 1 से 12 तक के छात्र-छात्राओं को निशुल्क पाठ्य पुस्तकें।



2 हजार करोड़ रुपये की लागत से टिहरी लेक डेवलेपमेंट।



मिशन एप्पल के तहत राज्य में सेब के 500 बगीचों की स्थापना का लक्ष्य है। मिशन एप्पल का बजट दुगुना।



राज्य में सोलर पावर उत्पादन को प्रोत्साहित करने हेतु नई सौर ऊर्जा नीति लागू।



अन्योदय निःशुल्क गैस रिफिल योजना के तहत वर्ष में 3 गैस सिलिंडर रिफिल मुफ्त।

- देश का सबसे कठोर नकल विरोधी कानून।
 - लखपति दीदी योजना के तहत 1.25 लाख महिलाओं को लखपति बनाने का लक्ष्य।
 - पलायन रोकने तथा रिवर्स पलायन को बढ़ावा देने हेतु "मुख्यमंत्री सीमान्त क्षेत्र विकास योजना"।
 - मुख्यमंत्री महालक्ष्मी योजना व मुख्यमंत्री आंचल अमृत योजना।
 - मिशन दालचीनी, मिशन तिमरू, एरोमा पार्क व एरोमा वैली।

- राज्य में शहीद सैनिकों के परिवारों के एक सदस्य को रोजगार तथा विशिष्ट सेवा मेडल अवार्ड राशि में बढ़ोतरी।
 - राज्य की महिलाओं को सरकारी नौकरी में 30 प्रतिशत क्षेतिज आरक्षण।
 - दीनदयाल उपाध्याय सहकारिता किसान कल्याण योजना के अन्तर्गत किसानों को 3 लाख और स्वयं सहायता समूहों को ₹ 5 लाख तक की धनराशि का ब्याज रहित ऋण।

- हॉर्टिकल्चर को बढ़ावा देने के लिए 50 हजार पॉलीहाउस का बजट प्रावधान।
 - राज्य के युवाओं के लिए "विदेश रोजगार प्रकोष्ठ का गठन"।
 - समान नागरिक संहिता के लिये प्रभावी पहल।
 - अटल आयुष्मान योजना में 5 लाख रुपये तक का निशुल्क इलाज।

To each their own

Two major players in INDIA bloc plan to go it alone in LS polls. Where does it leave the Oppn grouping?

Despite the constituents' best efforts to paper over their differences and present a united facade, the worst apprehensions about the INDIA bloc are coming true. Its seat-sharing formula is just not taking shape. The much-hyped bloc, an alliance of 28 Opposition parties aiming to counter the BJP's dominance, seems to be unravelling. Recent announcements by key constituents indicate a shift in strategy, with prominent leaders opting for independent paths in the Lok Sabha elections. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's rejection of sharing seats with the Congress and AAP's decision to go it alone in Punjab are enough to upset the bloc's apple cart even before it could start its electoral journey. Mamata, the TMC chief and a key architect of the INDIA bloc, has signalled a fracture in the purported unity. She has emphasised the need for regional parties to assert themselves and prioritise State-centric issues over national alliances. This stance has added an element of unpredictability



to the bloc's future, as it challenges the idea of a united front against the BJP. As if Mamata's stance were not enough, AAP has also decided to go it solo. In Punjab, the party has declared its intent to contest the elections independently. It comes as a major blow to the INDIA bloc: In retaliation, the Congress could go it alone in Delhi and Haryana, effectively making it a three-cornered contest in Delhi, Punjab and Haryana.

The challenge for the INDIA bloc now lies in reconciling the divergent aspirations of its constituent parties and finding common ground to build a cohesive narrative on. It is, however, essential to acknowledge that the dynamics of Indian politics are fluid and alliances can evolve swiftly. The INDIA bloc could potentially reassess its strategy and work towards a more unified front as the general elections approach. The posturing by the TMC and AAP should make the INDIA bloc leaders go back to the basics and rework their strategy. It may find renewed purpose in addressing shared concerns while respecting the autonomy of individual parties. The success of the INDIA bloc at the hustings hinges on its ability to navigate internal differences. The bloc's initial promise lay in consolidating regional strength; for this, it must overcome fissures and present a coherent vision for governance at the national level. It needs to convince voters that a coalition of regional parties can provide stable and effective leadership, addressing both local and national concerns. Its success will depend on its capability to forge a common agenda, communicate it effectively to the electorate and demonstrate a united front against the ruling party. While the bloc's future appears uncertain at the moment, political landscapes are known for rapid transformations. The road to general elections will test the resilience and adaptability of the INDIA bloc, determining whether it can emerge as a potent force capable of shaping the national narrative and challenging the status quo.



Devotees take part in a religious procession to celebrate Thaipusam festival, in Chennai

PTI

Managing diversity in small and remote teams

Small companies managing multi-location teams thrive through clear communication, inclusivity and technological leverage

In the modern era of remote work and globalisation, small companies are increasingly embracing multi-location teams to tap into diverse talent pools and expand their reach. Effectively managing teams spread across different locations presents unique challenges and opportunities. Small companies can mitigate these challenges by exploring strategies that help to successfully navigate the complexities of managing multi-location teams. First and foremost, since technology has made remote working possible, it should be further leveraged for seamless communication. It is the cornerstone of managing multi-location teams. Small companies should invest in reliable communication tools that facilitate seamless collaboration. Platforms like video conferencing, project management software, and instant messaging can bridge the geographical gap. Having established a connection with the team, it is vital to ascertain clear communication protocols that are essential to avoid misunderstandings and ensure everyone stays informed. Establish guide-



lines for virtual meetings, project updates, and team communication channels. Consistency in communication practices helps maintain a sense of unity among team members, regardless of their physical locations. While written communication is valuable, face-to-face interactions build stronger connections. It is beyond doubt that distance can create a sense of isolation, making team building crucial for multi-location teams. It is therefore important to include virtual team-building activities, such as online games, virtual happy hours, or collaborative projects. These initiatives promote camaraderie and create a positive team culture. In a long-distance, multi-location work environment, clarity is the king. Clearly defining roles and responsibilities for each team member to avoid confusion and ensure accountability is a must. Small

companies should establish a transparent framework that outlines expectations and deliverables. This clarity minimizes the risk of duplication of efforts and promotes efficiency within the multi-location team. Utilizing the requisite project management tools play a pivotal role in coordinating tasks and projects across different locations. Small companies can benefit from using tools that enable real-time collaboration, document sharing, and task tracking. These tools enhance productivity and streamline workflows within the multi-location team. In addition, inclusivity is vital for the success of multi-location teams. Small companies should actively cultivate a culture that values diverse perspectives and contributions. Provide opportunities for skill-building, training, and career advancement for all team members, regardless of their location. This investment enhances individual capabilities. Another important aspect that helps to manage a small multi-location team is regular check-ins and feedback sessions to assess the well-being and

progress of each team member. Small companies should create an open and supportive environment where team members feel comfortable sharing concerns or ideas. Constructive feedback sessions help in addressing challenges and fostering continuous improvement. To enhance transparency in the multi-location teams, a centralized knowledge repository accessible to all team members is a vital requirement. This repository can contain important documents, project updates, and resources, ensuring that everyone has access to the information they need. This type of centralised hub enhances transparency and minimises the risk of information silos within the multi-location team. Last but not least, being a multi-location team, embrace and celebrate the diversity within the multi-location team. Small Companies should promote cultural awareness, acknowledging the unique backgrounds, customs, and perspectives of team members. (The writer is assistant professor at Amity University; views are personal)



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Taiwanese conundrum for mainland China

The best bet for the Chinese is to seek organic support for 'reunification' with the main land from the Taiwanese themselves. A coercive posture and rough language would not help

Contrary to Chinese assertions, insistences, and sensitivities to what it unilaterally calls 'Chinese Taiwan' or 'Taiwan, China', the Republic of China (ROC) or Taiwan has its own functional democracy, constitution and approximately 3,00,000 combatants protecting its territorial sovereignty. With mainland China claiming to represent One-China as the legitimate power, the battle of wits tilted in favour of mainland China in 1971, when the United Nations switched diplomatic recognition onto mainland China. Since then, mainland China has flexed its patent admixture of financial, military, industrial and diplomatic power to bludgeon support in its favour. Today, the fast-receding number of countries that recognize Taiwan has fallen to a meagre 12 countries. Even this list includes relatively 'lightweight' nations like St Vincent and the Grenadines, Eswatini and Tuvalu, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, Palau, Nauru, Holy See, Marshall Islands etc. Chinese President Xi Jinping has repeatedly warned against "Taiwanese independence separatism" and promised that Taiwan would "surely be unified". Xi's rhetoric is deeply suggestive and intimidatory. However, audiovisuals of choreographed brinkmanship aside, such a beligerent move would be anything but a cakewalk in terms of consequences for the Chinese. Practically, Chinese sabre-rattling is part of deliberately postured nationalism that is vital to buttress the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime, as the main lever of legitimacy i.e., socio-economic upliftment of the Chinese, is now under extreme stress. In the absence of economic prosperity, muscle-flexing against Taiwan distracts and galvanises the Chinese masses. The disproportionate Chinese military strength to Taiwan's militaristic preparedness on paper notwithstanding, the near-certain international reactions of sanctions and embargoes onto the Chinese if they were to attack Taiwan, would break the proverbial camel's back, in terms of fur-



ther economic sufferings for the Chinese masses. It could lead to unsustainable economic regression and societal discontent. It is a price that Xi Jinping simply cannot afford, especially as the economic upside of a forcible integration, would pale in comparison to the downsides of a plausible invasion. Besides, Taiwan is extremely well-fortified with missiles, early warning systems, precision-strike weapons, underwater mines, and other counter-attack capabilities that could inflict significant damage on any invasion attempt, irrespective of the ultimate result. In any case, the Chinese would have to mount a significant fleet and accompanying wherewithal which could easily alert of an impending invasion – a discreet and sudden Chinese attack, is next to impossible. Even the fact that a potential Chinese invasion would involve breaking through large urban squalors and cities, it would entail deadly urban warfare that has tested the skills of even hardened Israelis and Russians in recent times, let alone the untested Chinese PLA soldier. Urban warfare and associated 'costs' could lead to the undoing of any residual support the Chinese may have amongst the Taiwanese. The famed 'Taiwanese porcupine'

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XI JINPING HAS REPEATEDLY WARNED AGAINST 'TAIWANESE INDEPENDENCE SEPARATISM' AND PROMISED THAT TAIWAN WOULD 'SURELY BE UNIFIED'. XI'S RHETORIC IS DEEPLY SUGGESTIVE AND INTIMIDATORY

strategy is predicated on making a heavily laden Chinese invasion fleet face a prickly proposition and based on defensive survivability. The fact that such an invasion could draw the committed US forces would have its own resultant algorithms. So realistically the best bet for the Chinese is for organic support for 'reunification' with the mainland Chinese, by the Taiwanese themselves. This is not an unfathomable situation, given the existence of 'pro' China and 'anti' China sentiment amongst Taiwanese political parties. While the recent Taiwanese Presidential elections have brought back the decidedly 'anti-China' forces of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) with 40.05% of the popular vote (third successive victory), the fact that the other two parties have varied shades of 'pro-China' anchorage i.e., Kuomintang (KMT) and Taiwan's People Party (TPP), garnered 33.49% and 26.46% respectively, shows faultlines. It could be credibly argued that while the Taiwanese were aligned with DPP's nationalistic stand, there must have been anti-incumbency on local issues like low wages, unaffordable housing etc., that led to significant support for KMT and TPP. However, the competitive race

of identities in Taiwan has led to a steady assertion of locals identifying themselves as just 'Taiwanese' as opposed to 'Both Taiwanese and Chinese' or plain 'Chinese'. Yet, post the electoral results the Chinese foreign ministry reiterated, "Whatever changes take place in Taiwan, the basic fact that there is only one China", clearly signalling the continuation of stalemate and tensions. If the Chinese were to overdo the further sanctioning against provisions of an existing free trade agreement with Taiwan (or even suspend it altogether), it would lead to painful hardships for the Taiwanese, but also to further anti-Chinese sentiment that clearly cannot be countered by military superiority or plausible invasions. The best bet for the Chinese is to have the local Taiwanese perceive more socio-economic merit in 'unification' as opposed to 'independence', a battle that puts Beijing on the backfoot given stories coming out of Hong Kong or Tibet. So, the Chinese battle-rattle-tattle for crossing the straits in a purported invasion will continue, however, the costs to walk the talk will remain prohibitive. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FIR AGAINST RAHUL GANDHI

Sir — The under-pressure Assam police on Tuesday registered an FIR against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and other leaders for "wanton acts of violence" on Tuesday, Frustrated Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. The Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra is currently in Assam and the alleged acts of violence took place while the party supporters and leaders allegedly clashed with police personnel in their bid to enter Guwahati. Four police personnel were injured in the scuffle, Guwahati Police Commissioner Diganta Bora said. Under fear, Sarma had earlier in the day instructed the Director General of Police G P Singh to register a case against Rahul Gandhi for provoking the crowd to break the barricades. Gandhi said the chief minister directing the DGP to file a case against him shows "that they have fear in their hearts... They are afraid as the people of Assam are standing up as 'Tufan' and 'Andhi' (storm) against them". The barricades were erected along a highway to prevent Congress leaders and supporters taking part in the Yatra from entering the main thoroughfares of Guwahati, the largest city of the north-eastern state. As Congress supporters removed the barricades, a scuffle with the police personnel ensued leading to injuries suffered by state Congress president Bhupen Borah and leader of the opposition in the state assembly Debabrata Saikia. Gandhi alleged that while BJP president J P Nadda was allowed to take the same route earlier, Congress was not permitted.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

CONTRIBUTION OF NETAJI

Sir — The country can always remember the contribution of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to the freedom movement. His slogan 'Give me blood, I will give you freedom' sparked a new revolution in the country. The army 'Azad Hind Fauj' formed by him forced the British to leave India. The British had first handed over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the Azad

Yemen crisis



The US and Britain are carrying out joint air strikes on the positions of Iran-backed Houthi separatists active in Yemen, in retaliation for blocking and attacking fleets in the Red Sea. Not only this, America has once again declared Houthis as a terrorist group. But instead of solving the area's problems, they are becoming more complicated day by day. First of all, poor countries like Yemen, where today every area has fallen into the hands of fighters. The group of Arab countries, which includes Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, tried to control all the forces

opposing each other by entering that country but failed. Now an in-depth investigation has revealed that the UAE, while fighting there, has carried out many targeted killings with the help of money. American mercenaries were given a contract by the Emirati government to kill members of a specific group. Most of those killed by these mercenaries were members of 'Islah', the Yemeni branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. It is a popular international Sunni Islamist movement that no one has ever classified as a terrorist organization but is banned in many Arab countries. They are included in the United Arab Emirates where its political activism and support for elections is seen by the country's royal family as a threat to their rule. Had gone to Yemen to restore peace but started killing Islah members. This should be investigated by the United Nations. The dark deeds of the UAE should be exposed.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Hind Fauj and Netaji hoisted the tricolour there on 30 December 1943. Netaji had become synonymous with courage, bravery and patriotism. Netaji's death remains a mystery. The present Central Government has expressed gratitude to Netaji by celebrating his birthday as Parakram Diwas (23 January), making public all the files related to him and installing the statue of Netaji at India Gate. Netaji's life will always continue to inspire patriotism among the youth.

N Mateeni | Pune

BHARAT RATNA FOR THE JAN NAYAK

Sir — The centre has posthumously fulfilled a long-standing demand by announcing the Bharat Ratna award for the Former Chief Minister of Bihar, Karpooori Thakur, a dedicated leader committed to uplifting the poor and marginalized. As a notable figure in Bihar politics, Thakur's lasting impact on India's socio-political landscape is evident, offering hope and positivity to Dalits and backward classes. Hailing from

a backward class and affectionately known as the "Jannayak" or people's hero, Thakur embodied the ideals of Subhas Chandra Bose and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. His commitment to breaking caste boundaries was represented during his 28-day fast unto death in support of Telco labourers, showcasing his dedication to social justice and workers' rights. As Bihar's Education Minister, Thakur promoted Hindi, removed English as a compulsory subject, and became the first Chief Minister to enforce total alcohol prohibition, addressing crucial social issues and challenging established norms. His legacy is evident in the transformed India where individuals from backward classes now hold prominent positions. Karpooori Thakur's Bharat Ratna is not merely an award; it's a recognition of his unwavering pursuit of justice and equality, shaping a more inclusive and equitable India.

Preetiyukta | Bhubaneswar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

INDIA'S COMPLEX GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN 2024

India navigates global complexities amid elections and geopolitical uncertainties



Even as the world gathered to witness once in a lifetime event in the historic dusty small temple town of Ayodhya EAM Jaishankar was speaking about the changing concepts of multilateralism and international relations in the realigning world order in Kampala and Lagos, Nigeria. India's strategic focus on being the leading voice of the global south, at a time when major democracies including India, are going to face the elections and two wars are showing little signs of ebbing, have made the path a tad more difficult.

During its G20 presidency last year, India achieved a horizontal consensus, successfully obtaining a joint communique despite stark differences between Russia and the US. Impressively, India also brought the African Union, a pivotal constituent of the Global South, into the dialogue. However, the conflict in West Asia, teetering on the brink of genocide, is now extending from the Gaza Strip to the Red Sea. Pakistan and Iran, two major Islamic nations, engaged in reciprocal surgical strikes, each claiming to eliminate terrorist bases.

Iran's influence on certain terror groups obstructs crucial maritime routes in the Red Sea, resulting in increased shipping costs. Recently, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar visited Iran to discuss the imperative of secure maritime routes. Nevertheless, the broader Gaza Strip conflict and its potential impact on the upcoming US elections seem unlikely to subside. India has adeptly cultivated a strong bilateral and bipartisan relationship with the US over the past decade, despite occasional disputes on trade and human rights. It is evident that India views the US as a crucial ally in countering the military expansion of China, safeguarding security, and promoting fair practices in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. During the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) conference, the External Affairs



Minister (EAM) reiterated India's call for a multipolar world and the reform of global institutions, including the UN. India's longstanding demand for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council has faced opposition from China. Notably, tech billionaire Elon Musk has backed India's bid for a permanent seat. In the past decade, India has advocated for a multipolar world order, emphasizing each powerful nation's distinct sphere of influence. The Ukraine conflict has reignited tensions between Russia and Western powers, while bipartisan support in the US for containing China persists under President Biden. The upcoming 2024 election, where Republican Trump may challenge Biden, could elevate immigration issues and super nationalism, potentially shifting American international influence away from multilateralism.

The current Indian government, led by Prime Minister Modi, is perceived to have a positive rapport with Trump, should he return to power. However, potential challenges may arise regarding India's key concerns, as emphasized by the External Affairs Minister during the NAM summit. These concerns include establishing regional economic hubs, resilient supply chains, predictable mobility, and trusted data flows. People-centric policies, sustainable lifestyles, digital public infrastructure, food, energy, and health security, women-led development, prioritized connectivity with respect for sovereignty, and adequate resourcing for climate action and SDG realization are highlighted as crucial aspects.

If Trump returns to the White House in 2024, India's global climate change initiatives may lose US support. Immigration challenges, exemplified by a large influx of Indian citizens at US borders, could escalate. India's upcoming elections face the daunting task of convincing voters, particularly in border states, that China has not encroached on Indian territories. The year 2024 poses significant challenges for international relations.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Is the Government's debt sustainable?



The Government should take recourse to borrowings only for the creation of long-term assets. This will help generate income streams that can help in servicing the loans



Recently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has forecast that India's general government debt - it comprises the debts of the Centre and states - will overshoot 100 per cent of the GDP (gross domestic product) by the financial year (FY) 2027-28. Responding to this, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) clarified that this wasn't under a 'baseline scenario' - a jargon to describe normal economic conditions. It added the IMF was referring to a 'worst-case scenario' wherein a global shock would equally affect all countries. Is the government's debt sustainable? The government's debt is linked with how it manages its total expenditure vis-à-vis its total receipts or fiscal deficit (FD) which is excess of the former over the latter. The expenditure and receipts are broadly of two types viz. revenue and capital. Revenue expenditure (RE) is essentially consumption expenditure which does not result in the creation of assets. It includes expenses for the normal running of government departments and various services, interest charges on debt incurred by the government, subsidies and so on. Capital expenditure (CE) includes the money that the government spends on long-term assets such as property, plant, and equipment.

Revenue Receipts (RR) are receipts that neither create any liability nor lead to any reduction in the assets of the government. These comprise tax and non-tax receipts, duties and fines, and interest and dividends receipts on government investments and assets. Capital receipts (CR) are those receipts that either create liabilities or reduce the asset value of the government. These are loans raised by the government to fund long-term developmental needs. Ideally, RR should fully pay for the RE implying that revenue deficit (RD) - the difference between RR and RE - should be zero. The government should take recourse to borrowings only for the creation of long-term assets. Spending in this manner will help generate income streams that can help in servicing the loans thereby making such debt sustainable.

In reality, RR have consistently fallen



THE FINANCE MINISTRY EXUDES CONFIDENCE THAT THE CENTRE IS 'ON TRACK TO ACHIEVE ITS STATED FISCAL CONSOLIDATION TARGET' OF REDUCING FD TO 4.5 PER CENT BY 2025-26

short of RE leading to a revenue deficit which meant that the government was borrowing merely to finance consumption expenditure. Besides, even the loans taken for financing CE were not productively used. The result was an increase in debt to an unsustainable level. As a result, even in 2003-04 when the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act (2003) was passed by the then Vajpayee-led NDA - government, interest payments accounted for one-third of the RE.

Under the FRBM Act (2003), the Vajpayee government promised the elimination of RD by the year 2008. It also committed to reducing FD to 3 per cent of the GDP. Against these pledges, during 2008-09, RD was 4.7 per cent whereas, FD was 6.2 per cent.

In his budget speech for 2016-17, the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced the intent of the Modi government to review the FRBM) Act (2003) with a view to making the FD target more flexible. For this, he had set up a committee under Dr N K Singh. The committee recommended a "glide path" for the next six years, i.e., from 2017-18 to 2022-23. It recommended an FD target of 2.5 per cent, RD of 0.8 per cent, a combined Centre-state debt ceiling of 60 per cent, and a central debt ceiling of 40 per cent for the terminal year, i.e., 2022-23. Further, it fixed 3 per cent FD to be achieved during 2018-19. The committee also allowed the Union Government to breach the target - by up to 0.5 per cent - in the case of "far-reaching structural reforms with unanticipated fiscal implications."

In the amendment to the FRBM Act in the Finance Bill 2018-19, even while retaining the "escape clause" to cover unanticipated events, the government adopted the glide path of achieving a 3 per cent

FD by 2020-21 instead of 2018-19, which was mooted by the committee. Further, it set the debt limit at 40 per cent for the Centre to be reached by 2024-25 instead of the mandated 2022-23.

The relaxation in the glide path may be seen in the backdrop of the government missing the FD target for 2017-18 by 0.3 per cent and seeing no hope of achieving 3 per cent during 2018-19, as recommended by the committee.

In the Budget for 2020-21, the finance minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman had already invoked the escape clause of the FRBM (Amendment) Act to alter the FD targets for 2019-20 from 3.3 percent as provided in the Budget to 3.8 percent in the revised estimate and for 2020-21, from 3 percent - as per the glide path required under the Act - to 3.5 percent.

Seen in relation to the target set by the N K Singh Committee or even to the FRBM (Amendment) Act, the performance of the government had been off the mark. For instance, during 2018-19, the FD was 3.7 per cent against the 3 per cent required as per the Singh Committee. If deferred subsidy payments (DSPs) are also included (in those years, substantial amounts of major subsidy bills, viz., food, fertilizers, and fuel, were kept pending), the FD would be 5.7%. Likewise, for 2019-20, including DSPs, the FD would be 5.1 per cent.

Due to Corona pandemic, the year 2020-21 saw plunging revenue and ballooning expenditure. As a result, the FD zoomed to 9.1 per cent against BE of 3.5 per cent. Being an exceptional year, a comparison with the glide path may not be apt.

In the following year, even as the pandemic waned and the economy rebounded, in her budget speech for 2021-22, Sitharaman fixed the FD target at 6.9 per cent saying her

goal was to achieve 4.5 per cent by the year 2025-26. The actual FD for 2021-22 was lower at 6.7 percent. For 2022-23, she set the target at 6.4 per cent describing this as 'advancing on the road to fiscal consolidation'. The actual was precisely at 6.4 per cent. For 2023-24, she kept the target at 5.9 per cent. It is likely that even this would be achieved.

From the above, the finance ministry exudes confidence that the Centre is "on track to achieve its stated fiscal consolidation target" of reducing FD to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. This is misleading. To reset the fiscal trajectory making it substantially relaxed and then claim that fiscal numbers are well on track looks amusing. Let us not forget that even as per the FRBM (Amendment) Act, the Centre should have achieved 3 per cent in 2020-21.

Against this, the actual FD during 2021-22 and 2022-23 was more than two times whereas during the current year, it is expected to be nearly twice this level. The RD at 4.1 per cent during 2022-23 and 3 per cent during 2023-24 (expected) is 4 to 5 times the 0.8 per cent level as recommended by the NK Singh Committee. The debt to GDP ratio of the Centre is around 60 per cent against the 40 per cent mandated as per the amended Act.

As per the FRBM Act (2003), the FD was to have come down to 3 per cent by 2008. Against this, we are talking of 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. As per the Act, RD was to become 'Zero' by 2008. During 2023-24, it is stuck with 3 per cent. It shows how much the Centre has lagged behind in managing its fiscal situation. True, but for Modi's efforts in boosting tax revenue, the situation would have been much worse. Nonetheless, a lot more needs to be done especially by slashing RE.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

NEP: Multidisciplinary approach in higher education

NEP is fostering inclusivity and merit-based research to address security challenges and encouraging multidisciplinary practices

Nelson Mandela once commented, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Over the past few years, there has been a notable shift in the landscape of education, emphasizing its pivotal role in shaping individuals physically, intellectually, and morally. Education is seen as a liberating force, breaking the chains of darkness and bigotry. Recently, there has been a concerted effort to integrate real-life experiments of democracy, environmental awareness, globalization, and governance into the framework of the new education system. The intellectual establishment plays a crucial role in providing theoretical rationale and



strategies for educational advancements. It is imperative to explore how innovations in higher education can drive positive changes, instil confidence among the masses, and disseminate the latest global research and developments in education. This discourse aims to delve into the multifaceted aspects of the evolving higher education system, emphasizing the need for inclusivity and growth.

The strength of any higher education system lies in creating internal dynamism to ensure inclusive growth. Even a well-designed system is influenced by the individuals who make a difference. Human and financial relations are intricate matters that require constant monitoring by competent authorities. In India, universities are encouraged to improve their performance by transitioning towards a more merit-based, peer-reviewed research approach, aligning with the goal of establishing a highly efficient and inclusive educational apparatus. The New Education Policy (NEP) has provided a framework to analyze and address multidimensional issues in the education sector, offering

opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds. These guidelines aim to meet the key demands of higher education while maintaining a synergy between various stakeholders. The constant monitoring of the education sector by authorities is crucial for growth, especially in changing circumstances. Acknowledging the gravity of challenges faced by higher education, it is essential to address concerns related to competition, comparison, and personal greed, which may lead to manipulation and shortcuts. The right to freedom of expression in democratic societies has been debated extensively, and recent developments in the academic world present new challenges and competition.

The efforts by the University Grants Commission (UGC) have introduced fair practices and policies consistent with present circumstances. Reforms in the examination system are aimed at ensuring that only talent prevails, fostering an environment that supports academic excellence. The NEP's emphasis on exploring domestic underpinnings, gender sensitization, and addressing the concerns of marginalized communities through Special Education Zones is commendable. Provisions such as Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), the National Research Foundation, the National Educational Technology Forum, and the Indian Institutes of

Translation and Interpretation create an environment for students to excel globally. These initiatives also highlight the importance of social responsibility. The NEP encourages a new approach that provides a clear path for students interested in Security Studies, offering opportunities to learn new techniques. The provisions under NEP ensure the collaborative creation of ideas, providing insights into even the most complex issues.

At various educational levels, the NEP's approach involves mentors fully engaging in new techniques and developing challenging strategies to meet the needs of all students. To enhance students' standards, there is an imperative need for self-academic orientation and excellence, fostering problem-solving and inquiry-based learning activities. Introducing a new syllabus can provide a deeper insight into strategic and security-related affairs, offering a roadmap for foolproof encountering strategies. This approach addresses issues such as the rise of terrorism, its causes, and the funding nexus between organised crime and terrorism.

The NEP's vision is to make India competitive in the field of Strategic education, attracting aspiring academicians and students. By providing multidisciplinary fervour, students will have wider exposure and opportunities for comparative studies, enriching analytical and theoretical rationale for crisis management in India.

As India faces myriad security challenges, there is an urgent need to address these issues on the international stage. The NEP's input will undoubtedly make each discipline richer in content and varied in ideas, providing a holistic educational experience. Even science students will be exposed to the nuances of international, national, socio-political, and economic issues through multidisciplinary practices. The ingenious display of this government's approach demonstrates a pure genius that promises to reshape the educational landscape.

(The writer is a recipient of the Bharat Gaurav award and is a professor and expert on strategic affairs)

Washington and Baghdad plan to hold talks soon

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The United States and Iraq expect to begin formal talks soon to wind down the mission of a US-led military coalition formed to fight the Islamic State group in Iraq, both governments said on Thursday.

The US has had a continuous presence in Iraq since its 2003 invasion. Although all US combat forces left in 2011, thousands of troops returned in 2014 to help the government of Iraq defeat IS. In the years since, the presence of US forces, who have remained there to conduct counter-IS missions and training, has been a lightning rod for an increasingly influential faction of Iran-aligned militias and politicians in the country.

In a statement, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said the discussions will take place as part of a higher military commission that was agreed upon last summer — before the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7 rocked the region — and will discuss the “transition to an enduring bilateral security partnership between Iraq and the United States.”

Iraq’s foreign ministry in a statement said Baghdad aims to “formulate a specific and clear timetable that specifies the duration of the presence of international coalition advisors in Iraq” and to “initiate the gradual and deliberate reduction of its advisors on Iraqi soil,” eventually leading to the end of the coalition mission and a “move to comprehensive bilateral political and economic relations with the coalition countries.”

It added that Iraq is committed to ensuring the “safety of the international coalition’s advisors during the negotiation period in all parts of the country” and to “maintaining stability and preventing escalation.”

Iraqi officials have periodically called for a withdrawal of coalition forces for years, particularly in the wake of a US airstrike in January 2020 that killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi militia

leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis outside the Baghdad airport.

The issue has surfaced again since Israel launched its major counteroffensive in Gaza following the October 7 Hamas-led attack in southern Israel.

Since mid-October, a group of Iran-backed militias calling itself the Islamic Resistance in Iraq have launched regular attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria, which the group said are in retaliation for Washington’s support for Israel in the war in Gaza.

Those estimated 2,500 US troops and the bases they serve on have drawn more than 150 missile and drone attacks fired by the militias. Scores of US personnel have received minor injuries including traumatic brain injuries during the attacks.

The US has struck militia targets in return, including some linked to the Popular Mobilization Forces, a coalition of mainly Shiite, Iran-backed paramilitary groups that is officially under the control of the Iraqi military although in practice it largely operates on its own. Iraqi officials have complained that the US strikes are a violation of Iraqi sovereignty.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos earlier this month, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said that there is no longer justification for the coalition’s presence in Iraq and that the Iraqi army is capable of tracking and fighting the remaining IS cells in the country. “We are a sovereign country, and therefore it is only natural that we moved towards this position,” he said. “This is a request from the people, and this is a democratic country.”

An Iraqi government official who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to journalists about the matter said that Iraq had sent a written request for the withdrawal of the coalition forces to the White House in November 2023.

Czech lawmakers reject int’l women’s rights treaty

Prague(AP): Czech lawmakers have voted against ratifying an international treaty on women’s rights. Only 34 of the 71 Senators present in the upper house of the Czech Parliament late Wednesday voted in favour of the treaty known as the Istanbul Convention. The result was two votes short of the majority needed to pass. After the vote, the lower house of Parliament will likely not deal with the treaty and the Czech Republic will be among those countries that have signed the document but not ratified it.

The Council of Europe adopted the document in 2011 in a bid to deter violence against women throughout Europe. The Czech Republic, also known as Czechia, signed it in 2016. The vote reflected a split between conservative and liberal lawmakers. Conservatives have argued the document challenges traditional roles for men and women in society and that its ratification in other countries didn’t help reduce violence against women there.

Despite 2 losses, Haley tries to claim victory in Republican presidential race

AP ■ NORTH CHARLESTON

Despite losing both Iowa and New Hampshire to Donald Trump,Nikki Haley is nevertheless trying to frame those losses as a victory and vowing to head off a “coronation” of Trump as the 2024 Republican nominee. The path through the next states to vote, however, may not be any easier.

“We were thrilled,” Haley said during a rally before hundreds of sign-waving fans on Wednesday night in North Charleston, South Carolina, casting her second-place New Hampshire finish as a win given how little support her campaign had in its early days.

“We got out there, and we did our thing and we said what we had to say, and then Donald Trump got out there and just threw a temper tantrum,” Haley added, referencing Trump’s primary night remarks in which the former president repeatedly insulted her in a speech far angrier than his remarks after his Iowa victory. Haley did

perform better in Tuesday’s New Hampshire primary than she had in the Iowa caucuses a week earlier, where she finished third, well behind Trump and only slightly down from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has since shuttered his campaign.

But Haley had been banking on a stalwart showing in New Hampshire, a state where her attempt to appeal to independents and more moderate-leaning Republicans appeared to take root. Trump still won by double-digits on Tuesday night, leaving some to wonder whether she would keep going.

Haley has affirmed that she will do just that, speaking virtually to Republican voters in the U.S. Virgin Islands — which hold their caucuses Feb. 8 — before flying from New Hampshire to South Carolina.

The Wednesday night event served two purposes for Haley. It was a welcome-home gathering for the South Carolina resident and an opener for her campaign in the first-in-the-South GOP voting state, which has historically been influential

in determining the party’s nominee. Since 1980, only one winner of South Carolina’s Republican balloting has lost the nomination.

Since his 2016 primary win there helped cement Trump’s dominance in that year’s race, South Carolina has stayed loyal to him. For the 2024 campaign, he boasts endorsements from all but one of the state’s U.S. House Republicans, as well as the governor, lieutenant governor and both US senators.

“Trump is in a commanding position in South Carolina,” one of those senators, Lindsey Graham, said Wednesday at the U.S. Capitol, commending Haley’s effort but forecasting her loss in their home state. “I think for all practical purposes, the primary is over.”

Outside Haley’s rally, several dozen Trump supporters waved flags and made their presence known, albeit from a marked-off zone away from the ballroom entrance.Ahead of New Hampshire’s vote, the super PAC supporting Haley’s candidacy was quick to point

out that President Joe Biden, the Democrat she hopes to face in the general election, hadn’t been successful in the first several contests of his 2020 bid, but ultimately won the nomination. That comparison, however, doesn’t take into account the fact that Black voters propelled Biden’s ultimate victory once he reached the South, a factor not expected to weigh heavily in the GOP primary.

Nonetheless, during a call with reporters on Wednesday, Mark Harris, chief strategist for that super PAC, SFA Inc., insisted that Haley “has a path” to the GOP nomination, regardless of Trump’s two early wins. Casting South Carolina as the campaign’s next “battleground” of the Trump-Haley direct matchup — Nevada’s GOP caucuses are Feb. 8, but Trump has already claimed victory there since Haley isn’t participating — Harris noted that its open primary means that any Democrats who opt not to participate in their party’s Feb. 3 contest can choose to support Haley in the Feb. 24 vote.

‘Shooting of US-Palestinian teenager was unprovoked’

Ash-Sharqia (West Bank) (AP): The fatal shooting of an American-Palestinian teen driving a pickup truck in the West Bank was unprovoked, the sole passenger told The Associated Press, describing apparent Israeli fire hitting the back of the vehicle before it overturned several times on a dirt road.

At least 10 bullets struck the truck, which was seen by The Associated Press after Israeli investigators examined it. Most hit the back windshield and truck bed, supporting 16-year-old Mohammed Salameh’s account of the incident that killed his friend, Tawfic Abdel Jabbar, 17, a Louisiana native. In an initial statement, Israeli police said Friday’s shooting targeted people “purportedly engaged in rock-throwing activities along Highway 60,” a main West Bank thoroughfare. Police didn’t identify who fired the shots.

4 Indians die in mass drowning

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Four Indians, including three women, on a family day out were killed when they drowned at an unpatrolled beach in Australia in the worst tragedy in the state of Victoria in almost 20 years, officials said on Thursday.

The incident took place on Wednesday at Phillip Island, Victoria and a close relative, who was devastated on Thursday, confirmed the names of the victims to the Australian media.

The four were identified as Jagjeet Singh Anand, a 23-year-old man; students Suhani Anand and Kirti Bedi, both 20-year-old women; and Reema Sondhi, a 43-year-old Indian national who was visiting her family in Australia.

The three younger victims lived in Clyde.

Anand, a Melbourne-based nurse, was a permanent resident in Australia. Bedi and Suhani were on student visas.



Sondhi, who was from Punjab, arrived in Australia two weeks ago for a holiday. All four are believed to be related, news.com.au website reported.

The victims were part of a group of about 10 people who had been enjoying a day out at the beach, the report added.

Victoria Police Eastern Region Assistant Commissioner Karen Nyholm said the victims entered the water near Forrest Caves — close to Cape Woolamai on the Bass Strait side of the Phillip Island’s south-eastern peninsula — on Wednesday afternoon.

Off-duty lifeguards surfing nearby rushed to their aid after the group got into difficulty, pulling three people from the water unresponsive.

Life Saving Victoria commander Kane Treloar said lifeguards from Cape Woolamai were called at about 3.40 pm on Wednesday and a rescue boat retrieved the fourth person. All required CPR. Three of the victims were pronounced dead at the scene while one of the 20-year-old women was resuscitated and flown to The Alfred. She died in hospital, police said on Thursday morning.

The Indian High Commission in Canberra on Thursday posted on X, the tragic drowning.

“Heartbreaking tragedy in Australia: 4 Indians lost their lives in a drowning incident at Phillip Island, Victoria. Deepest condolences to the families of the victims.

@cgimelbourne team is in touch with friends of the

deceased for all necessary assistance @MEAIndia @DrSjaishankar,” the High Commission posted.

On Thursday, Treloar said it was the worst drowning incident the state had seen in decades.

“We all worked tirelessly to help those people,” Ambulance Victoria manager Paul James said. “It’s tragic... only a week ago we had three other separate drownings here in Gippsland.”

Life-Saving Victoria operations general manager Liam Krige said 19 people had drowned in Victoria since December 1 — two more than during the same period last summer.

“Behind each one of these drownings there is a family; there’s a brother, there’s a sister, there’s a mother, there’s a daughter,” he said at a press conference at Forrest Caves car park on Thursday.

“It is extremely tragic and our heartfelt condolences do go out to those victims.”

China accuses US of ‘abusing’ int’l law by sailing in SCS

AP ■ BEIJING

China accused the US of abusing international law with its military maneuvers in the western Pacific, one day after an American naval destroyer sailed through the politically sensitive Taiwan Strait. While China welcomes military-to-military communication with the United States, Defence Ministry spokesperson Wu Qian said Thursday that US warplane and warship activity “on China’s doorstep” is the root cause of the problems between the two military powers.

“The United States side should stop abusing international law, cease all dangerous and provocative behaviour, and strictly restrain the activities of front-line troops, which is the fundamental way to avoid accidents at sea and in the air,” he said at a monthly briefing. The

USS John Finn sailed Wednesday though the 160-km (100-mile)-wide waterway that separates China from Taiwan, a self-governing island that China claims as its own territory. China agreed to resume military contacts with the US at a meeting last November between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping in California. In part, the argument for doing so was to be able to manage an unintentional collision or other incident that could happen as both sides hold drills and patrol the waters in regional hotspots including the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea.

The US defends its actions as in line with international laws that guarantee freedom of navigation. “No member of the international community should be intimidated or coerced into giving up their rights and freedoms,” the US Navy’s 7th Fleet said in a news

release on the John Finn’s transit of the Strait. “The United States military flies, sails and operates anywhere international law allows.”

China’s rise has given it the ability to project military power into the western Pacific, which brings it into conflict with the United States, long the dominant military power in the region. The American military activity is aimed in part at deterring China from launching any attack on Taiwan or using its strength to enforce its territorial claims in disputes with smaller neighbours such as the Philippines.

Chinese and Philippine ships clashed last year as disputes over shoals and other outcroppings in the South China Sea flared. China has blamed US support, such as recent joint patrols with the Philippines, for emboldening the latter.

Poland’s pro-EU govt, oppn disagree on whether pardoned lawmakers can stay on

AP ■ WARSAW

The fate of two Polish opposition politicians became the focus on Thursday of a running feud between the country’s new pro-European Union government and conservative opposition as the sides disagreed whether they can remain lawmakers. The weeks-old government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk has moved to reverse policies of his predecessors that were deemed harmful and led to clashes with the EU, especially in the judiciary.

However, the previously ruling right-wing Law and Justice party, frustrated over its loss in the October parliamentary elections, has been protesting the moves.

As the lower house of parliament, or Sejm, convened on Thursday, officials and experts were divided on whether two



Poland’s President Andrzej Duda, center, poses with former deputy interior minister Maciej Wasik, left, and former interior minister Mariusz Kaminski, right, in Warsaw, Poland on Tuesday. AP

senior Law and Justice lawmakers, who served in the previous government, can attend the proceedings. Parliament Speaker Szymon Holownia had stripped them of their mandates after they were convicted in December of abuse of power.

They were released from prison on Tuesday, after President Andrzej Duda pardoned them and after spending two weeks behind bars.

Law and Justice and their ally Duda insist the two — former Interior Minister Mariusz

Kaminski and his former deputy, Maciej Wasik — may continue to sit in the Sejm. The two were not present at the session start on Thursday.

Experts say the dispute exposes the extent to which Law and Justice had bent Poland’s legal system to serve its own political interests during its eight years in power that ended in December.

Tusk recently criticized Law and Justice, saying it puts its political goals above the law.

“We are facing the need to reconstruct the legal order in a way that will put an end to the constant and glaring conflicts of interpretation,” Tusk told a new conference this week. Kaminski and Wasik were convicted of abuse of power and forging documents for actions taken in 2007, when they served in an earlier Law and Justice-led government.

S Korean lawmaker attacked

Seoul (AP): South Korean police say a governing party lawmaker is being treated at a Seoul hospital after being attacked by an unidentified man who struck her head with a rock-like object. A police official in Seoul’s Appujeong district said a suspect was arrested at the scene after the attack on Thursday on lawmaker Bae Hyunjin in southern Seoul.

The severity of Bae’s injury wasn’t immediately clear. The police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn’t authorised to talk to the media, said Bae was conscious as she was being taken to the hospital.South Korean media reported that her condition wasn’t life threatening, citing her aides. Calls to Bae’s office weren’t immediately answered. The attack comes weeks after a man stabbed South Korean opposition lawmaker Lee Jae-myung.

Greece students protest plans to introduce private universities

AP ■ ATHENS

Several thousand university students and supporters took part in a protest in central Athens Thursday to oppose plans by Greece’s conservative government to allow privately run universities. The protesters, chanting “Students, United, Will Win,” filed past the main Athens University building and statues of the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Socrates as they marched through central Athens and riot police took up positions in nearby side streets. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis’ centre-right government is pushing through several key pieces of legislation early in the new year, taking advantage of a landslide reelection in 2023, and a huge lead in



opinion polls. It argues the measure would stop thousands of Greeks going abroad each year to study, and would keep vital skills in the country.

But opponents say it would undermine public universities, which are already facing funding difficulties.

The government has faced a series of protests by various professional groups in recent weeks, triggered by the legislative reforms and the cost of living crisis.In central Greece Thursday, farmers used tractors to block sections of a highway, demanding additional financial support from the government to reduce production costs. Farmers’ groups told The Associated Press that they were holding meetings Thursday to consider further action

Alabama set to execute inmate with nitrogen gas

Montgomery (US) (AP): Alabama, unless blocked by the US Supreme Court, will attempt to put an inmate to death with nitrogen gas on Thursday night, a never before used execution method that the state claims will be humane but critics call cruel and experimental. Kenneth Eugene Smith, a 58-year-old convicted killer whose 2022 lethal injection was called off at the last minute because authorities couldn’t connect an IV line, is scheduled to be executed at a south Alabama prison.

Alabama plans to put an industrial-type respirator mask over Smith’s face and replace his breathing air with pure nitrogen gas, causing him to die from lack of oxygen. The execution will be the first attempt to use a new execution method since the 1982 introduction of lethal injection, now the most common execution method in the

United States. “It’s an experiment,” said the Rev Jeff Hood, Smith’s spiritual advisor and a death penalty opponent. Smith’s attorneys on Thursday asked the US Supreme Court to halt the execution to review claims that the new method violates the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment and deserves more legal scrutiny before it is used on a person.

“There is little research regarding death by nitrogen hypoxia. When the State is considering using a novel form of execution that has never been attempted anywhere, the public has an interest in ensuring the State has researched the method adequately and established procedures to minimize the pain and suffering of the condemned person,” Smith’s attorneys wrote.

Justices on Wednesday rejected Smith’s argument that it would be unconstitutional to

make another attempt to execute him after the failed lethal injection.Smith is one of two men convicted in the 1988 murder-for-hire slaying of Elizabeth Sennett. Prosecutors said he and the other man were each paid \$1,000 to kill Sennett on behalf of her pastor husband, who was deeply in debt and wanted to collect on insurance.

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall said Wednesday night that he believes the courts will allow the execution to proceed.My office stands ready to carry on the fight for Liz Sennett. Two courts have now rejected Smith’s claims. I remain confident that the Supreme Court will come down on the side of justice, and that Smith’s execution will be carried out,” Marshall said. Alabama plans to strap Smith to a gurney in the execution chamber — the same chamber where he was strapped down for several hours during

the lethal injection attempt — and place a “full facepiece supplied air respirator” over his face.

After he is given a chance to make a final statement, the warden, from another room, will activate the nitrogen gas. The nitrogen will be administered through the mask for at least 15 minutes or “five minutes following a flatline indication on the EKG, whichever is longer,” according to the state protocol.

The execution is scheduled to begin at 6 pm local time but could be delayed until because of legal action or preparation. The state has until 6 am Friday to carry out the execution. Some states are looking for new ways to execute inmates because the drugs used in lethal injections, the most common execution method in the United States, are increasingly difficult to find.

Pakistan Army chief takes a dig at Iran

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Taking a dig at Iran, Pakistan Army chief Gen Asim Munir has said that those who “backstab” the country will get a “befitting reply”, days after the two neighbours conducted tit-for-tat military strikes at alleged terrorist bases in both countries. During an interaction with students from public and private sector universities nationwide here on Wednesday, Munir mentioned about the recent missile attacks by Tehran within Balochistan and said that no one would be allowed to breach Pakistan’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Express Tribune newspaper reported on Thursday.

“You cannot backstab us, and if you do, you will get a befitting reply,” he said. Earlier this month, Pakistan conducted “precision military strikes” against what it called “terrorist hideouts” in Iran’s Sistan-Baluchistan province that killed 9 people. The attack was seen as retaliation to Iranian missile and drone attacks which targeted two bases of the Sunni Baloch militant group Jaish al-Adl in Pakistan’s unruly Balochistan province.

Munir claimed that the insurgency in Balochistan has long been supported by Afghanistan, and the western neighbour has never shown friendship towards Pakistan. Afghanistan was the only country that opposed Pakistan’s admission to the United



Nations after independence, he said. Referring to the Taliban-led administration of Afghanistan, the army chief warned, “Do not look towards Pakistan. We are ready to sacrifice anything and everything.” “When it comes to the safety and security of every single Pakistani, the whole of Afghanistan can be damned,” he said. The army chief said Pakistan provided food for five million Afghan nationals for 50 years, but “when it comes to our children, we will pursue those who attack them”.

Pakistan has refused to negotiate with the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), whose terrorist activities in Pakistan have increased manifold since the return of the Afghan Taliban to power in August 2021. Islamabad has also applied its economic leverage to force Kabul to take action against terrorists attack-

ing on its soil from Afghanistan. There has been an increase in militant attacks in Pakistan since November 2022, when the TTP, a close ally of the Afghan Taliban which seized power in Afghanistan, ended a months-long cease-fire with the government. During the interaction, Munir also ruled out reconciliation with India. “India has not reconciled with the concept of Pakistan, then how can we reconcile with it?,” he was quoted as saying by The Express Tribune.

The army chief briefly mentioned his recent visit to the US and stated that during the visit, he conveyed to Americans that Pakistan is a country with consequences. “There are 80 million middle-income people in Pakistan; with 65 per cent of its population being young, the country is ready to reap benefits from these resources,” he said.

Had told Imran to remain engaged with US: Pak ex-foreign secretary

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan’s former foreign secretary Sohail Mahmood has said that he had told the Cabinet of former prime minister Imran Khan how declassification of a diplomatic communication from the country’s embassy in Washington can affect relations with the US.

Recording his statement in the cipher case involving Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who also is a senior leader from his party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Mahmood said he also advised Khan’s government “to remain engaged with the US.” 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, and naming the US, 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. This is the first time that the details of the case are being brought out in the public domain even as Khan and Qureshi continue to face the case along with others bringing no relief to them ahead of the February 8 general elections.

“Purpose of this advice was to protect the relations of Pakistan with an important

country and to avoid public and politicised discussion on a secret and privileged communication,” Mahmood told the trial court on Monday, according to The News International, which said it had accessed a copy of his testimony. The former foreign secretary also shared the details of a cabinet meeting, which was called to discuss “Declassification of cipher telegram” and another meeting held in Banigala residence of the then prime minister. In the cabinet meeting, held on April 8, Mahmood said he had underlined that “declassification of cipher telegram was neither possible nor advisable in view of the cipher security guidelines, the legal position and the foreign policy implications.”

He also told the cabinet that neither there was any past precedent of declassification of cipher nor there was any legal provision in this regard for the primary reason that disclosure of text could compromise the cipher communication system, The News said. “I also added that it could affect the working of the missions and the ministry as the trust underlying confidential exchanges with foreign interlocutors could be undermined. It could also affect relations with the US and some other countries and strained relations with the US could also complicate matters with multilateral financial institutions.”



Giant Kavadi offering cages are carried by Hindu devotees in a procession during the Thaipusam festival at Batu Caves, outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Thursday. Thaipusam, which is celebrated in honour of Hindu god Lord Murugan, is an annual procession by Hindu devotees seeking blessings, fulfilling vows and offering thanks

AP/PTI

China expands loan access for property developers

AP ■ BANGKOK

China has rolled out new access to commercial bank loans for property developers as Beijing doubles down on its effort to end a prolonged crisis in the real estate industry. The policies will allow real estate companies to use bank loans pledged against commercial properties such as offices and shopping malls to repay their other loans and bonds and to cover operating expenses.

They were announced late Wednesday by the People’s Bank of China, the National Financial Regulatory Administration and the Finance Ministry. Beijing has moved this week to stabilise ailing financial markets and boost the economy by freeing up more money for lending in various ways. That includes cutting required bank reserves.

The flurry of new measures and pronouncements from senior Communist Party officials about the need to stabilise financial markets and build confidence in the economy, the world’s second largest, appears

to reflect a renewed determination to get growth back on track. Dozens of developers have defaulted on their debts after the government cracked down on excessive borrowing in the industry several years ago. The largest, China Evergrande, is still trying to resolve more than USD 300 billion in debts and a Hong Kong court is due to hold a hearing on its restructuring plans next week. The latest policies are not a full reversal of the effort to rein in debt and control risks in the property industry.

The new rules say the bank loans cannot be used to buy commercial housing or rental housing or to start new construction or buy land. Loans cannot exceed 70 per cent of the appraised value of the property being used as collateral and should generally last a maximum of 10 years, with an absolute limit of 15 years. They also order banks to fully conduct due diligence before and after loans are issued to mitigate and minimise risks.

It’s unclear what impact the new rules might have on the overall crisis gripping the

property market. Land sales have long been a major revenue source for local governments that now are grappling with mounting debts. At the same time, stalled construction of new homes has hit contractors and suppliers of construction materials and home furnishings. In a research note, UBS economists said “the pace and potential size of such loans remain uncertain as banks will likely watch the commerciality and risks of such loans”. But they added that the move was a “significant step” to increase support for developers.

Sales of new homes and home prices have been falling, discouraging consumers from spending since Chinese families tend to have much of their wealth tied up in property. The industry as a whole accounts for about a quarter of business activity in China. “For developer financing to fundamentally and sustainably improve, property sales need to stop falling and start to recover, which could require more policy efforts to stabilize the property market,” the UBS report said.

‘China ready to work with Pak to upgrade CPEC project’

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD/BEIJING

China has said that it stands ready to work with Pakistan to upgrade the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project to deepen the political mutual trust between the two “all-weather” allies, a media report said on Thursday.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar said after having achieved the first phase of the CPEC, Pakistan is benefiting from its early harvest projects while remaining engaged with China to execute the next phase. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin while answering a ques-

tion during a briefing on Wednesday said, “China stands ready to work with Pakistan to deliver on the important common understandings between the leaders of the two countries, deepen political mutual trust, and expand practical cooperation.” China has said it is ready to work with Pakistan to upgrade the CPEC and accelerate the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan’s Balochistan with China’s Xinjiang province, is opposed by India as it is being laid through

Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). About the recent visit of Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong to Pakistan, Wang said, he called on President Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Kakar, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani to have an in-depth exchange of views on bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest.

The spokesperson added that the Chinese minister also co-chaired the fourth meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Co-ordination with

Foreign Secretary Syrus Sajjad Qazi. “China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners,” he said. China appreciates Pakistan’s firm commitment to the One-China principle and supports Pakistan in defending its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, stability, development and prosperity.

In Islamabad, Prime Minister Kakar said that after having achieved the first phase of CPEC, Pakistan is benefiting from its early harvest projects while remaining engaged with China to execute the next phase. “We have already achieved the CPEC’s first phase and we are benefiting from its early harvest

projects. We are entering the second phase. We do need more deliberations when it comes to the second phase,” he said in an interview recorded by CGTN during his recent visit to Davos to attend the World Economic Forum.

The Chinese state-run news outlet ran the interview on Wednesday. Prime Minister Kakar said the CPEC’s second phase required road and air connectivity around industrialisation projects. “Both sides are engaged and we have developed a lot of connectivity — road, air and the rest of the connectivity corridor. We are benefiting from the ecosystem of doing trade with one another,” he said.

Flight recorders found from plane that crashed with Ukrainian POWs aboard

AP ■ MOSCOW

Investigators have found the flight recorders of a Russian military transport plane that crashed in a border region near Ukraine, Russian media reported Thursday, a day after Moscow accused Kyiv of shooting down the aircraft, which it said was carrying 65 Ukrainian prisoners of war.

The Il-76 crashed in a huge ball of fire in a rural area of Russia on Wednesday, and authorities said all 74 people on board, including the POWs, six crew and three Russian servicemen, were killed. Ukraine’s president has demanded an international investigation into the episode, which has triggered a spate of claims and counterclaims. Russian officials accused Kyiv of shooting down the plane with two missiles and said the prisoners of war were headed for an exchange. They offered no evidence for their allegation.

The Associated Press could not independently confirm who was aboard or how the plane was downed. The commander of Ukraine’s air force accused Russia of “rampant...propaganda” — though he did not specifically address the allegations. Ukrainian authorities confirmed a prisoner exchange was due to happen Wednesday, and that it was called off, but said they had no information about who was on the plane.

“We haven’t seen any indication that such a large number of people was on that plane, Ukrainian citizens or not,” Dmytro Lubinets, Ukraine’s human rights ombudsman, said on national television Thursday. Ukrainian officials noted that Moscow didn’t ask for any spe-



Women lay flowers in memory of those who were killed in the plane on Wednesday, at the memorial to soldiers who died in the Great Patriotic War “Eternal Flame” in Belgorod, Russia.

AP

cific airspace to be kept safe for a certain length of time, as it has in past exchanges. Without mentioning the crash, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said that the country would target any Russian military transport plane believed to be delivering missiles, especially near the border. As the conflict approaches the two-year mark, the 1,500-km (930-mile) front line has been largely static amid a second winter of fighting. With both sides seeking to replenish their weapons stockpiles, the war recently has focused on long-range strikes.

Earlier this month, in a significant blow to the Kremlin’s forces, the Ukrainian air force claimed to have shot down a Russian early warning and control plane that can spot targets up to 650 km (400 miles) away and a key command centre aircraft that relays

information to troops on the ground.

The discovery of the transport plane’s flight recorders was reported Thursday by the state-owned RIA Novosti news agency, citing emergency services. However, there is slim hope that the circumstances of the crash and the Russian allegations will be clarified. The war has often featured conflicting accusations, used as ammunition in the bid to sway opinion at home and abroad.

On Thursday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov repeated the allegation that Ukraine had downed the plane, describing it as “a totally monstrous act”.

Mykola Oleshchuk, Ukraine’s Air Force Commander, alleged that “rampant Russian propaganda is directing a fake stream of information to the interna-

tional audience, attempting to discredit Ukraine in the eyes of the global community”. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who turned 46 on Thursday, didn’t directly address Moscow’s allegation but said Ukraine would push for an international investigation. “It is necessary to establish all the facts, as much as possible, considering that the plane crash occurred on Russian territory — beyond our control,” he said in his nightly video address late Wednesday. “It’s obvious Russians are playing with lives of Ukrainian POWs, with the feelings of their relatives and the emotions of our society.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council, which was expected to take place on Thursday afternoon in New York. Andrei Kartapolov, head of the defense affairs committee in the lower house of the Russian parliament, said Russia would continue exchanging prisoners despite the crash. “We can’t abandon our boys and so we will speak to the devil himself to get them out,” he told reporters. Meanwhile, Ukraine’s largest oil and gas company, Naftogaz, said Thursday that one of its data centres had come under a large-scale cyberattack that shut down the company’s web sites and call centres.

Ukraine’s national postal service, Ukrposhta, also reported a major technical failure of its IT systems. It didn’t specify whether the issue was caused by a cyberattack. Ukraine’s State Service for Transport Safety also reported a technical failure of its data center that shut down its web-site and other services.

Nepal asks Russia to send back its citizens recruited to fight against Ukraine

AP ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal has asked Russia to send back hundreds of Nepali nationals who were recruited to fight against Ukraine and repatriate the bodies of those who died in the conflict, Nepal’s top diplomat said on Thursday.

The Russian army is estimated to have recruited more than 200 Nepali nationals to fight in Ukraine and at least 14 of them have died there, Nepal’s Foreign Minister Narayan Prakash Saud said in an interview with The Associated Press. “We have asked Russia to immediately stop the recruitment of Nepali nationals in their army, immediately return those who are already serving in the army, repatriate the bodies of those killed, and treat and return those who were wounded in the fighting,” Saud said.

Nepal is also seeking monetary compensation from Russia for the families of those Nepali nationals who were killed in the fight-

ing, Saud said. Among the 14 confirmed killed Nepali nationals, Russia has said it is in possession of 12 bodies. Most Nepali people want the bodies of their deceased relatives to be cremated following religious rituals. “We have information that five of our citizens who fought on behalf of the Russians are being held captive by the Ukraine side. We are asking the Russian side to take initiatives to get them freed,” Saud said. Russian officials have not commented on the recruitment of foreign nationals for military service in Ukraine, but media reports have said that along with Nepal the Russian military has recruited some people from Cuba. Russian law allows foreign nationals to enlist in its army after they sign a contract with the Defence Ministry. In September, Cuban authorities arrested 17 people in connection with what they said was a network to recruit Cuban nationals to fight for Russia in Ukraine.

Separatist leader who called Putin cowardly sentenced to prison

Tallinn (Estonia): The Moscow City Court on Thursday convicted a former Ukraine rebel leader who called President Vladimir Putin cowardly of extremism and sentenced him to four years in prison. Igor Girkin, who used the surname alias of Strelkov (shooter), was the most prominent leader of Russian-backed separatist fighters in Ukraine’s Donetsk region in 2014, when rebellion arose after the ouster of Ukraine’s Russia-allied president.

He briefly became the self-declared separatist government’s defence minister, but left the post in August 2014 after rebel forces shot down a Malaysian passenger airliner over Donetsk, killing all 298 people aboard. He was convicted in absentia of murder in the Netherlands, where the flight had originated, for his role. He returned to Russia and became a nationalist commentator and activist. He supported launching Russia’s war in Ukraine, but sharply criticised authorities for being inept and indecisive in carrying out the fight. Girkin called Putin a “nonentity” and a person of “cowardly mediocrity”. He was arrested in July on extremism charges and remained in custody since then.

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
Tender Notice Reference No. GNDU/Gen/01/2024
The Department of G.N.D.U. Amritsar invites online bids for the following:
Sr.No.1
Item: Allotment of Canteens/shops
Quantity: 23
Closing date & time : 15/02/2024 at 5:00 p.m.
For details log onto **www.eproc.Punjab.gov.in**
Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above website only.
Superintendent (General) Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar
NA/12/21562/2023/31762
Dated CHD :- 1/25/2024

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
No.CE/PRO/ACCTS-44/73/26 dtd.19.01.2024
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
Name of the work: **Construction of Compound Wall, Drain adjacent to PMR and along RRS-I & II tracks at MCHP area.**
Estimated Cost: **Rs.3,05,60,262.83.** Last Date & time of submission : **08/02/2024 up to 17.00 Hrs.**
Refer our website for details: **eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.**
SD/- Executive Engineer, PRD, PPA
PPA/PR/80/2023-24 dtd.24.01.2024

United Textiles Limited
Regd. Office 7th K.M. Stone, Barwala Road, Hisar - 125001 (Haryana)
CIN: L17115HR1993PLC032092
Notice
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations & Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that the Meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 13th February, 2024 at 11.00 AM at the Regd. Office of the Company to consider the Unaudited Quarterly Results for the Period Ended 31st December, 2023.
Further as per the Company’s Code of Conduct for Prevention of Insider Trading, the trading window for dealing with securities of the Company will remain close from 31.12.2023 to 48 hours after the declaration of the Financial Results. The said information is also available on Company’s Website **www.unitedtextileslimited.com** and also on the website of stock exchanges at **www.bseindia.com**.
For United Textiles Limited (Vivek Aggarwal)
Whole Time Director
Dated 24.01.2024 (DIN 07079208)

NAGAR NIGAM DEHRADUN
Telephone: 0135-2714074, Fax : 0135-2651060
Website: **www.nagarnigamdehradun.com** Email : **nagarnigam.ddn@gmail.com**

Nagar Nigam Dehradun invites Request for Proposal (RFP) Supply, Delivery and Commissioning of two (02) Nos. of New Mechanical Road Sweeper Machines with 5 years comprehensive Operation and Maintenance (further extendable for 2 year) under SBM-U/NCAP in Dehradun form eligible bidders having experience as indicated in the RFP document. Interested bidders are requested to procure the RFP document up to 25.01.2024 from e-tenders portal of government of Uttarakhand. Pre-bid meeting is scheduled at 12:00 noon on 01.02.2024. 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 14.02.2024 at 3:00PM.

No 28/SBM-U/NCAP-MRS/2023&24 Date: 25.01.2024

Municipal Commissioner
Nagar Nigam Dehradun

We have emerged stronger, says Adani on anniversary of Hindenburg report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A year after a damning report by a US short seller ripped through his apples-to-airport conglomerate, billionaire Gautam Adani on Thursday said the “trials and tribulations” of the past year have made the Adani group stronger as it continued on growth path, improving asset base and launching key projects, including the Dharavi redevelopment.

In a column in a leading newspaper, he said the Adani group raised Rs 40,000 crore of equity — equal to debt repayment for the next two years — through stake sales in some firms, repaid Rs 17,500 crore of margin-linked financing, and trimmed debt.

Sustained focus on operations yielded the highest-ever quarterly profit in the second quarter of current fiscal, he said. Most of the listed group com-

panies have recouped losses induced by the Hindenburg report.

“We remained committed to maintaining our growth momentum. The Group continued its investments, evidenced by our asset base growth to Rs 4.5 lakh crore,” he said.

“This period (of last one year) marked the launch of several key projects, including the world’s largest renewable energy generation site in Khavda (in Gujarat), a new copper smelter, a green hydrogen ecosystem, and the long-awaited redevelopment of Dharavi (slums in Mumbai).”

Adani termed Hindenburg Research’s charge of fraud and stock market manipulation as “lies” and a “compilation” of “old and dead allegations” that his “detractors had been trying to resurrect”.

“Fatuously self-styled as a research report”, Hindenburg

report “was a cunningly crafted set of selective half-truths sourced from disclosed and publicly available information,” he said.

He expected the point-by-point rebuttal of the allegations put by his group to quickly put an end to it but the skinned as much as USD 150 billion in market value of his conglomerates listed companies at the lowest point.

Adani was ranked world’s second richest at the start of 2023 but slipped out of top 20.

“The lies against us were corrosive enough to substantially erode the market cap of our portfolio as, typically, capital markets are more emotional than rational,” he said.

“What pained me even more is that thousands of small investors lost their savings,” he said.

Had detractors’ plan fully succeeded, the domino effect could have crippled many crit-



ical infrastructure assets, ranging from seaports and airports to the power supply chain — a catastrophic situation for any country, he said.

“However, thanks to our solid assets, the robustness of our operations and the high quality of our disclosures, the more informed financial communi-

ty, including lenders and rating agencies, refused to be swayed by the swirling lies and stood solidly with us,” he said.

Though Adani had to scrap a Rs 20,000 crore public issue at his flagship firm, Adani Enterprises.

“We had no precedent path to handle this situation,” he said,

adding that the group focused on transparently outlining the facts and narrating its side of the story to expose the motives of those who attacked it.

This led to a declining influence of negative campaigns against the Group, he said.

“A testament to the change in public perception is the significant growth in our shareholder base, a primary target of the follow-on public offering (in Adani Enterprises Ltd). Over this challenging year, our shareholder base expanded by 43 per cent, reaching nearly 70 lakh.”

On the lessons learnt, Adani, who is now ranked No 14 on the world billionaire list, said in hindsight, the crisis uncovered a fundamental weakness — the group did not pay enough attention to its outreach mechanisms.

“Few outside the infrastructure finance community knew of the size, scale and quality of what the Adani Group had

done or was doing. We had all along naively believed that all our non-financial stakeholders too knew us and the truth about us — that our financials were robust, that our governance was impeccable, that our roadmap to growth was measured, and that we play an important role in building India’s critical infrastructure,” he said.

This experience underscored the necessity of engaging effectively with non-financial stakeholders.

“We had failed to proactively counter the twisted narratives of our debt levels and unfounded accusations of political partisanship, resulting in the spread of distorted perceptions.

“The fact is that, for our class of transport and utility companies, we have one of the lowest debt-EBITDA ratios. (For the half year ending September 2023, this was 2.5x). Further,

with an infrastructure business footprint in 23 Indian states governed by political parties across the spectrum, we are truly politically agnostic,” he said.

He concluded the piece by saying “the trials and tribulations of the past year have taught us valuable lessons, made us stronger and reaffirmed our faith in Indian institutions.”

This “devious attack” on the group and its strong countermeasures will no doubt become a case study, he said, adding that he was sharing his thoughts as similar attacks could happen on other Indian groups as well in future.

“I am under no illusions that this is the end of such attacks. I believe we have emerged even stronger from this experience and even more unwavering in our resolve to continue our humble contribution to the India growth story,” he said.



Industry seeks tax incentives in Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian industry, including exporters on Thursday, asked the government to provide tax incentives for research and more funds for marketing activities in the Budget to boost manufacturing and the country’s outbound shipments.

They also urged the government to consider developing a global shipping line in partnership with the private sector.

India’s outward remittance on transport services is increasing with rising exports.

“We remitted over USD 80 billion as transport service charge in 2021. As the country moves towards the goal of USD 1 trillion, this will touch USD 200 billion by 2030,” Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said, adding that the private sector may be engaged to develop the shipping lines.

This will also reduce arm-twisting by foreign shipping lines, particularly of our MSMEs, the organisation said.

For promoting Research and Development (R&D) in the country, weighted tax deduction can be increased to 200 per cent, it said.

“Unfortunately, India’s spending on R&D (less than 1 per cent of GDP) is well below that in major nations such as China (2.43 per cent of GDP), US (3.46 per cent), Korea (4.93 per cent) and Israel (5.56 per cent),” Israr Ahmed President (Officiate) and Vice President FIEO said.

He said aggressive export marketing is required to showcase Indian products and services to

the global customers, and for that more funds are required under the Market Access Initiative (MAI) scheme.

“For aggressive marketing, there is a need for the creation of a corpus... For the scheme,” Ahmed said, adding that the government can consider announcing a scheme on a pilot basis in 50 districts with a corpus of Rs 5,000 crore.

Further, startup firm World of Circular Economy (WOCE) said the sustainability and climate solutions industry is urging the government for crucial support.

There is a need of funds and incentives for the industry.

“Companies in the sustainability sector, especially SMEs, are facing multiple challenges, including immediate financial burdens and securing necessary resources. Urgent government intervention is needed to overcome these challenges and facilitate the seamless integration of sustainable practices,” WOCE Founder and Director Anup Garg said.

Garg also urged the government to consider providing input tax credit for using green fuel in manufacturing processes; and subsidised loans for investment in green technologies.

Besides, he asked to incentivise carbon-intensive factories for traceability initiatives in the raw material supply chain; allocation of funds for R&D in greener technologies; and direct tax incentives for companies promoting the use of decarbonisation tools and digital technologies for reliable carbon data.

Markets fall dragged by IT stocks, foreign fund outflows

PTI ■ MUMBAI

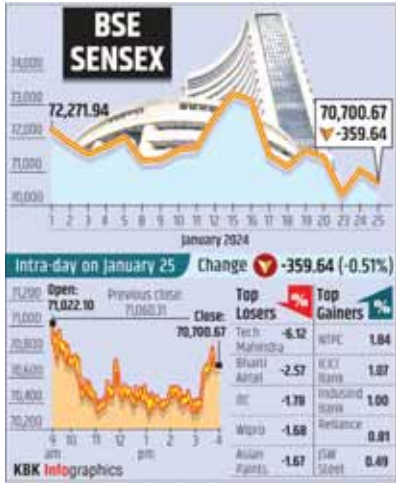
Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty declined on Thursday due to selling in IT stocks and continuous foreign fund outflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 359.64 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 70,700.67. During the day, it plunged 741.27 points or 1.04 per cent to 70,319.04.

The Nifty fell by 101.35 points or 0.47 per cent to 21,352.60.

Among Sensex shares, Tech Mahindra fell by over 6 per cent after the company reported a 60 per cent decline in net profit to Rs 510.4 crore in the December quarter.

Bharti Airtel, ITC, HCL Technologies, Asian Paints, Wipro, HDFC Bank, Nestle, Tata Steel, Tata Consultancy Services and Maruti were among the other major lag-



gards.

NTPC, ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the gainers.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory.

European markets were trading mostly lower. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Wednesday.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 6,934.93 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.02 per cent to USD 80.96 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark jumped 689.76 points, or 0.98 per cent, to settle at 71,060.31 on Wednesday. The NSE Nifty ended 215.15 points, or 1.01 per cent, higher at 21,453.95.

Thermal plants utilisation to rise to 69 pc in FY 25: ICRA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The capacity utilisation of thermal power plants will increase by a percentage point to 69 per cent in 2024-25, led by the growth in electricity demand and limited thermal capacity addition, says rating agency ICRA.

ICRA’s outlook for the thermal power segment is ‘Stable’, supported by the healthy improvement in the thermal plant load factor (PLF), coupled with the reduction in dues from state distribution utilities (discoms) following the implementation of the Late Payment Surcharge (LPS) scheme since August 2022, a statement said.

“The current under-construction thermal capacity is about 30 GW, which is predominantly in the Central and the state-owned generation segment and is expected to be commissioned over the next two to four-year period,” Girishkumar Kadam, Senior Vice President & Group Head - Corporate Ratings, ICRA, said in the statement.

In our view, there is a clear need for incremental capacity beyond this pipeline if the



annual electricity demand growth continues to exceed 6.0 per cent till 2030, after factoring in the renewable capacity addition, he added.

He stated that if annual demand growth is stronger at 7.5 per cent till 2030, to meet the same, the incremental thermal capacity requirement will need to be as large as 70 GW.

Coal has remained a dominant fuel source to meet the base load power demand in the country, and its share in the overall energy generation mix is estimated to decline from 73 per cent in FY2023 to about 58-60 per cent in FY2030, assuming the renewable capacity addition scenario of 200 GW

between FY2024 and FY2030, as per ICRA estimates.

Nonetheless, the share of coal in the generation mix is expected to remain significant till 2030, it stated.

The average spot power tariffs in the day-ahead market (DAM) of the Indian Energy Exchange remained high at Rs 5.4 per unit in YTD FY2024, owing to the sharp demand growth.

The spot tariffs are likely to remain elevated at around Rs 4.5-5.0/unit in the near-term against a long-term average of Rs 3.0-3.5/unit. Further, the coal stock level for the domestic power plants remained modest at around 12 days as of

December 2023, lower than the normative requirement.

Nonetheless, this remains similar to the corresponding period of the previous year, it stated.

For the renewable energy segment, ICRA’s outlook remains ‘Stable’, led by strong policy support, healthy demand prospects, and superior tariff competitiveness.

Further, the realisation of past dues and regular payment of ongoing bills by discoms following the LPS scheme remain positives for the sector.

Kadam said in the statement, “the sharp decline in solar PV cell and module prices, abeyance of the order on Approved List of Models and Module Manufacturers (ALMM) till March 2024, and the timeline extension approved for solar and hybrid projects, are expected to lead to an improvement in RE capacity addition to 18-20 GW in FY2024 from 15 GW in FY2023.”

This, he said, along with the growing project pipeline, is likely to support the scale-up in capacity addition to about 25 GW in FY2025, mainly driven by the solar power segment.



CBIC notifications need simplification: GTRI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The complex language used in the notifications of the CBIC regarding customs duties needs simplification to help industry in understanding those orders as they carry crucial details, economic think tank GTRI said on Thursday.

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said for this the CBIC (Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs) must use services of communication experts for help in drafting easy to understand notifications containing necessary details.

This will help over a lakh firms importing merchandise exceeding USD 660 billion in 2023 and it will also add to the ease of doing business with zero cost to the government and immense benefit of clarity to the Indian industry, it said.

“Notifying import duties is a critical mandate of CBIC. Firms pay import duties as notified by CBIC, but firms cannot do it on their own as the CBIC notifications use complex language and mostly refer to back notifications unintentionally hiding complete details needed to know the duty or import conditions on a product,” GTRI Co-Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Using simple language would also enhance transparency in its tariff and other notifications, he added.

Import duties in India vary significantly, ranging from 0-150 per cent.

These duties include compo-

nents like basic customs duty, social welfare cess, Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC), and IGST (Integrated Goods and Services Tax).

Citing an example, the GTRI said a company importing tennis shoes would pay 35 per cent basic customs duty, 3.5 per cent social welfare cess, nil AIDC, and 18 per cent IGST.

However, the total duty is not a simple sum of these percentages but is calculated using a specific formula, resulting in a total duty of 63.43 per cent.

“It is impossible for a layman to find out individual duty components for a product and calculate the total duty payable,” Srivastava said.

This complexity poses a challenge, especially for small firms, in determining the correct customs duty for their products, the GTRI said, adding that they have to seek expert help to understand and comply with the various duties, as the information is spread across numerous notifications each year.

Talking about a recent notification regarding some gold items, it said a person needed to look at, at least 11 notifications that amended the oldest notification.

“This roundabout reference makes understanding the update challenging. The notification could have simply stated that the government has imposed an AIDC of 5 per cent on gold or silver findings, avoiding the need for cross-referencing multiple documents,” it added.

Rupee settles 1 paisa higher at 83.11 a dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee rose 1 paisa in a range-bound trade to close at 83.11 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, as the support from weak American currency overseas was negated by rising crude oil prices.

Forex traders said the rupee is trading in a narrow range as muted domestic equities and sustained foreign fund outflows dented investor sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.13 against the greenback. The unit oscillated between an intraday low of 83.14 and a high of 83.08 and finally settled at 83.11 (provisional) against the dollar, 1 paisa higher from its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee had settled at 83.12 against the US dollar.

The rupee traded on a flat note amid weak domestic markets and rising crude oil prices.

Foreign fund outflows also weighed on the domestic currency, said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Public sector Indian Bank is engaged in floating a wholly-owned subsidiary with a capital infusion of Rs 10 crore and it is expected to commence operations in the next financial year, a top official said here on Thursday.

The subsidiary would largely focus on back-office processing, collection, sales and marketing, Indian Bank Managing Director and CEO Shanti Lal Jain said.

“Around a week back, we got the financial approval. It will be a wholly-owned subsidiary. We will be putting Rs 10 crore as capital and we are in the process of recruiting people at

Indian Bank wholly-owned subsidiary to start next fiscal: MD

the top level like CEO, CTO...,” he told reporters.

The plan to launch a subsidiary is to focus on sales and marketing, collection and recovery process, he said.

“There are many works that we are doing. Call centre work, already we are in the process of recruiting people. Maybe in the next financial year, it will be in operation. This subsidiary will not be as big as Indian Bank, they will do our work, feet on the street for collection, recovery like that,” he said responding to a query.

The bank on Wednesday reported a 52 per cent jump in its net profits at Rs 2,119 crore in the October-December 2023 quarter, on the back of improvements in core income and a reduction in bad loans.

The bank earned a net profit of Rs 1,396 crore in the corresponding quarter of last year. Observing that the digital transactions in the bank have increased to 87 per cent during

the quarter under review, he said, the bank has set a target of witnessing digital transactions to the tune of Rs 75,000 crore digital transactions and as of December 2023, it stood at Rs 52,000 crore.

“We are moving towards the target (of Rs 75,000 crore) digital transactions in the current financial year...,” he said. Jain said the lender has also earmarked Rs 200 crore towards upgrading cyber security over the next three years.

the quarter under review, he said, the bank has set a target of witnessing digital transactions to the tune of Rs 75,000 crore digital transactions and as of December 2023, it stood at Rs 52,000 crore.

“We are moving towards the target (of Rs 75,000 crore) digital transactions in the current financial year...,” he said. Jain said the lender has also earmarked Rs 200 crore towards upgrading cyber security over the next three years.

Bajaj Auto shares climb over 5 pc; mcap jumps ₹10,915 cr post Q3 earnings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Bajaj Auto Ltd on Thursday climbed over 5 per cent after the company reported a 38 per cent jump in consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) to Rs 2,032.62 crore in the December quarter.

The stock jumped 5.35 per cent to settle at Rs 7,596.85 on the BSE. During the day, it rallied 5.73 per cent to Rs 7,625 — its 52-week high.

Shares of the company on the NSE climbed 5.22 per cent to Rs 7,590. During the day, it

advanced 5.71 per cent to reach a 52-week high of Rs 7,625.15.

The company’s market valuation jumped by Rs 10,915.17 crore to Rs 2,15,127.41 crore. The company had posted a consolidated PAT of Rs 1,472.7 crore in the year-ago period, Bajaj Auto said in a regulatory filing.

Consolidated total revenue from operations in the third quarter of the ongoing fiscal stood at Rs 12,165.33 crore, up from Rs 9,318.54 crore in the year-ago period, it added.



JSW Steel Q3 profit jumps five-fold

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

JSW Steel Ltd on Thursday reported five-fold rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 2,450 crore for December quarter 2023-24, on the back of strong domestic demand.

The company had logged a net profit of Rs 474 crore in the year-ago period, JSW Steel said in a filing to BSE.

Income during the third quarter increased to Rs 42,134 crore from Rs 39,322 crore in the year-ago period.

“The strong performance was driven by capacity utilisation rising to 94 per cent during the quarter vs 89 per cent in Q2 FY24 at the Indian operations,” the company said in a statement.

JSW Steel is the flagship business of the diversified, USD 23 billion JSW Group. The group is also into energy, infrastructure, cement, paints, sports, and venture capital.

Gold declines ₹150; silver jumps ₹200

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices declined Rs 150 to Rs 63,050 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a fall in precious metal prices internationally, according to HDFC Securities.

The yellow metal had ended at Rs 63,200 per 10 grams in the previous trade. However, silver jumped Rs 200 to Rs 76,200 per kilogram.

“Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 63,050 per 10 grams, down by Rs 150, taking bearish cues from the overseas market,” Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the global markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,016 per ounce, down by USD 10 from the previous close.

However, silver was trading marginally higher at USD 22.78 per ounce.

Recycling reduces burden on natural resources: Joshi

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Thursday emphasised on the importance of recycling metals for circular economy, saying the process reduces the burden on natural resources, which are “finite”.

The minister for coal and mines made the remarks at the 11th International Material Recycling Conference (IMRC) in Kolkata.

As far as minerals are concerned, their resources (reserves) are finite and recycling metals such as steel and aluminium, reduces the burden on natu-



ral resources for these materials, the minister said in a video address.

Recycling is important because it is sus-

tainable. It plays an important role in consuming the available resources minimising the energy consumption in metal processing. The government wants to make India a hub of circular economy, Joshi said. However, mining is also important, he said, as the sector provides livelihood to crores of people in the country.

The recycling process helps divert the metal scrap from landfills, helps offset carbon emissions and saves energy consumption, Joshi added.

In his address, former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant termed recycling as “a socio economic opportunity”.

Tourism department to renovate six dilapidated houses into homestays in Jadung

Village in U'kashi district uninhabited since Indo-China conflict in 1962

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Tourism department will renovate six dilapidated homes in the Jadung village of Uttarkashi and promote them as homestays. This village has been uninhabited since the 1962 Indo-China conflict when the villagers were moved out. This is part of the first phase of measures planned in an initiative planned by the government to rehabilitate such border villages under the Vibrant Village scheme. Officials informed that while the Tourism department will be redeveloping the houses as homestays, these shall be operated/run by the villagers. The houses shall be refurbished in vernacular architecture using locally

available material. Tourism secretary Sachin Kurve informed that this will enable generation of self-employment opportunities for the villagers of Jadung and provide a unique tourism destination. He also informed that the villagers shall have to operate the homestays at least for a period of 10 years.

The homestay operators will be chosen by the Uttarkashi district administration by seeking applications from the original inhabitants of the village through a committee. The operational guidelines for the homestays have also been finalized, Kurve said. The Tourism department is

also planning to provide adequate skill and soft skills training to the homestay operators, which would be organised from time to time by the department which will also provide necessary support for marketing and promotion of these homestays.

This unique initiative of the Tourism department was recently approved by the cabinet and will now be rolled out. It is expected that the scheme shall become a milestone towards reverse migration through government intervention and create new opportunities in tourism.

Anand seeks reformation of AAP organisation

Senior leaders accusing central leadership of apathy recently joined BJP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Senior leader of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its former media in-charge of Garhwal, Ravindra Singh Anand has asked the State in-charge of AAP, Barinder Kumar Goyal to reform the party organisation in Uttarakhand. He said this while meeting Goyal in Chandigarh on Thursday.



Anand discussed the current social and political conditions in the State, including the laws related to land and residence. Taking this into consideration, Goyal stated that AAP will soon establish a new executive in the State and rebuild the party organisation. He said that he had already sent the report and related matters to the party's national general secretary Sandeep Pathak. Consequently, the formation of the executive is expected to happen soon with guidance from the national level, he said.

Goyal further emphasised that all the workers and leaders of AAP should exercise patience as a new

executive in the State is forthcoming and everyone within the organisation will have their roles reinvigorated. He further stated that it is necessary to assign new responsibilities based on the examination of the workers' and leaders' past report cards. It is crucial for every worker to be aware that the party is actively monitoring their actions.

The party is closely

observing both its leaders and workers, as well as their respective past accomplishments. The State in-charge emphasised that following the establishment of the new executive, he will undertake his State-wide tour, adding that AAP workers have been vocal about pressing matters in Uttarakhand such as land law and the Ankita Bhandari murder case.

Daylight leopard movement in Dandalakhaud, camera traps and cage placed

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Taking action on information provided by local residents about leopard movement in the Dandalakhaud area of Dehradun, the Forest department has set up camera traps and a cage in the area. The resident welfare committee of Shivganga Enclave informed the department officials that a leopard is being sighted in the colony even during the daytime. A departmental team headed by sub divisional officer Uday Gaur reached the site and installed camera traps to check the movement of the leopard in addition to placing a cage to catch the big cat. It is pertinent to mention here that leopard sightings have increased in various localities in the Rajpur, Sahasradhara and other suburban areas of Dehradun in recent months. In December

last year a child was killed by a leopard in the Singli village in Rajpur area while on January



14 a boy was injured in a leopard attack in the Chidonwali Khala. The department has placed cages and camera traps in areas where the attacks took place and where the sightings have increased. Patrolling has also been stepped up by the department to prevent such cases of human-wildlife conflict.

Anganwadi menu to be changed with plummeting mercury

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In light of the prevailing cold temperatures the Women Empowerment and Child Development (WECD) department has instructed Anganwadi centres to modify their food menu. Director of the WECD Prashant Arya informed that during the summer season, those in the

cater to an average of two lakh children. Considering the cold conditions, the WECD department has directed the Anganwadi workers to make slight changes to the menu which should be calorie-based. During the winter season, items like roasted gram, jaggery, peanuts and flattened rice (Poha) along with coarse grain items like Jhangora, Khair and Manda should be included in the centres' menu as has been done every year during this season. The



mountainous regions face difficulties in accessing food grains, which hampers the provision of meals to children at the Anganwadi centres. Typically, during the summer season, workers at these centres procure wheat and rice for the menu as these items are readily available and cost-effective, he said.

He further informed that there are about 20,062 Anganwadi centres established in the State, employing around 35,000 workers who

addition of coarse grains is mainly due to their availability in the mountainous regions, he added.

Arya further emphasised that the WECD ensures proper monitoring of the food cooked for children in Anganwadi centres. Every month, the district programme officers of each district are asked to submit a report to the WECD department on the meals provided at the Anganwadi centres in their respective districts.

Consumption of energy drinks not healthful: Experts

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Young adults who consume energy drinks may suffer from lack of sleep, nausea and diabetes, experts said. The consumption of energy drinks by young adults, particularly college students, has been on the rise. This increase can be attributed to various factors such as curiosity and the desire for perceived status symbols. Further, parents play a significant role in introducing energy drinks to children at a very young age, the experts said.

Dietician Richa Kukreti said that the habit of consuming energy drinks has become more prevalent among children and young adults due to fewer parental restrictions. However, this habit can lead to various health issues including lack of sleep, diabetes, overweight, hypertension, migraines and digestive problems in adults.

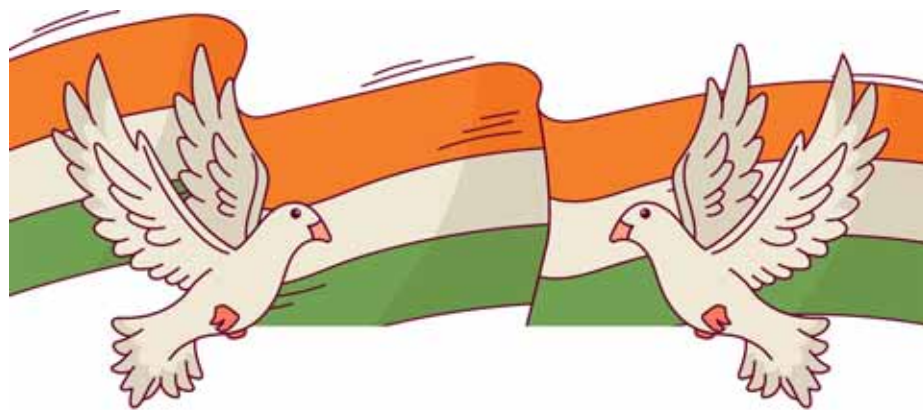
"It is advisable for teenage girls to avoid consuming energy drinks due to their adverse effects on the body like hormonal imbalance and conditions like PCOD. Instead, young adults should consider opting for home-made beverages like lemon water, fruit shakes, milk-

shakes and coconut water," Kukreti said.

She further emphasised that parents have a responsibility to monitor their children and prevent them from consuming energy drinks, as they can negatively impact their immune systems. "Energy drinks typically contain high levels of caffeine and sugar, which can have detrimental effects on health. Young adults are particularly susceptible to these drinks and may experience symptoms like nervousness, sleeplessness, diabetes, difficulty focusing on studies and hypertension. Another issue associated with energy drinks is hormonal imbalance," said senior physician Dr Praveen Panwar.

He further added that simply limiting the consumption of energy drinks is not the best solution - it's better to avoid them altogether. Lemon water, buttermilk and milkshakes are much healthier alternatives to energy drinks. He also emphasised that parents should avoid consuming energy drinks themselves as this can directly influence their children to consume them.

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Name of Work	Trial of Continuous Broken Rail Detection System on track 9.55 km section on 60 km track in MB Division.	Zone No. 2 from km 1323 to 1381 (BTO- MPH Stations) for General work in Service & Residential Buildings for year 2023-24 under ADEN/BE (Revenue)	Upgradation of L-Xings having TVU 50,000 & above and other misc. Works at L-Xing No. 287/C, 288/C, 289/C, 292/C, 294/C, 297/C, 299/C, 302/C, 309/C, 311/C, 312/C, 313/C, 321/SPL, 325/C, 332/C, 334/A, 339/C, 342/C SPL, 344/A and 347/A under ADEN/SPN in the section of Sr.DEN-III/MB
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I have severed the relationship with my son Ankur Sharma and daughter-in-law Mrs. Shivangi by evicting them from all my movable and immovable properties. I and my family will not be responsible for their work or deal in future. Pawan Kumar resident of 5 Ambedkar Basti, D.L.Road, Dehradun.

I Army No.16017444H HAV DEEPAK SINGH, Vill- Moondi, Post Moondi, Teh- Rewari, Dist- Rewari, Haryana- 123411, declare that in my army record, my daughter's incorrect name TANU and Date of Birth 26.01.2012 have been mentioned whereas as per her Aadhar No.321308595289 correct name and date of birth are TARNANNA, 26.01.2011.

I, AMISHA (Existing Name) W/O Army No.16017444H HAV DEEPAK SINGH, Vill- Moondi, Post Moondi, Teh- Rewari, Dist- Rewari, Haryana- 123411, declare that in my husband's army record, my incorrect name AMISHA and Date of Birth 14.02.1989 have been mentioned whereas as per Aadhar No. 442099766916 my correct name and date of birth are AMISHA DEVI, 11.12.1988.

I, BRIJESH DEVI (Existing Name) M/o Army No. 16029418N RFN VIKRANT KUMAR, Vill- Sakoti Tanda, Post-Sakoti , Teh- Sardhana, Dist- Meerut, U.P - 250223, in my son's army record, my incorrect name BRIJESH DEVI has been mentioned whereas as per my Aadhar No.297109838520 my correct name is BRAJESH.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Bishandei Devi (old name) to Mrs Vishan Dei (new name), in future I will be known as Mrs. Vishan Dei (new name), W/o Shri Chandra Singh, R/o P.O. Bhaneldi, Para Maneldi, District Tehri Garhwal, Pilkhi, U.K.

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