

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI THURSDAY 25 JULY 2024



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DRDO successfully flight-tests indigenously developed Phase-II ballistic missile defence system



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Should I be living on streets? Dhanush slams trolls over his 150Cr Poes Garden house

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WINDOWS



Tamannaah Bhatia during a launch event in Mumbai on Wednesday. — PTI

'Case of trust deficit': SC orders status quo at Shambhu border

New Delhi: Observing that there is a trust deficit between farmers and the government, the Supreme Court on Wednesday proposed the constitution of an independent committee comprising eminent persons to reach out to the protesters and address their demands, even as the apex court directed Haryana and Punjab to maintain status quo at Shambhu border. While ordering a status quo on the border for a week, the top court directed the Punjab and Haryana governments to suggest the names of suitable individuals for the committee and submit a proposal for removal of barricades on the national highway. **Full report on Page 2**

MP minister meets CM, drops his plan to resign

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh minister Nagar Singh Chouhan, who created a flutter in the ruling BJP by threatening to resign from the state ministry for being stripped of two portfolios, was pacified by chief minister Mohan Yadav. **Full report on Page 3**

Biden to address US on his exit from Prez race

Washington: US President Joe Biden plans to address the nation Wednesday from the Oval Office on his decision to exit the presidential race and endorse V-P Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee. During the speech, he is also expected to detail his priorities for the remaining months of his presidency. — AP

COUNTERPOINT



A country's Budget is easier than a common man's household budget!

WEATHER

Max: 33°C
Min: 28°C
RH: 74%
Rain: 70%
Forecast: Rain

ASTROGUIDE

Krodhi: Uttarayana
Tithi: Ashada Bahula Panchami till 1.59 am
Star: Purvabhadra till 4.17 pm
Varjyam: 1.11 am to 2.40 am
Durmuhurtam: 10.14 am to 11.05 am; 3.22 pm to 4.14 pm
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm
SUNSET TODAY 7.16 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.39 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 10.44 AM
MOONSET TODAY 9.36 AM

INDIA parties accuse 'neglect' of states, but for 2 in Budget Cong, allies protest in Parl complex ■ 'Outrageous': FinMin Opp. MPs walk out of LS, RS; claim Budget 'discriminatory'

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

The INDIA bloc MPs on Wednesday staged a walk-out in both Houses of Parliament protesting the alleged discrimination against the Opposition-ruled states in the Union Budget. The Opposition MPs also staged a protest in the Parliament premises over the issue. Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi called the Budget an "assault" on India's Federal structure. Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman termed the allegation "outrageous", while the BJP said the criticism exposes the Congress' negative attitude towards "some backward states".

Before the start of session, the Opposition MPs staged a protest in Parliament premises over the alleged discrimination in the Union Budget. Mr Gandhi called the Budget an "assault on the sanctity of India's federal structure".

Sharing a picture of the

INDIA bloc to pressure govt for 'guarantee' on MSP: Rahul

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said that the INDIA bloc will put pressure on the government to ensure that farmers get a legal guarantee for MSP after he met a delegation of farmers' leaders in the Parliament House complex. The delegation of farmers' leaders from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka apprised Mr Gandhi of the issues being faced by the tillers.

"In our manifesto, we have mentioned MSP with a legal guarantee. We have done the assessment and it can be implemented," Rahul Gandhi said after the meeting. "We had a meeting right now where it was decided that we will talk to the other leaders of the INDIA alliance to put pressure on the government that the MSP legal guarantee should be given to the country's farmers," he added.

Mr Gandhi had invited the farmers' leaders for a meeting at his office in Parliament. Initially, **Turn to Page 4**



Congress MP Sonia Gandhi, Rajeev Shukla, Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Bachchan and TMC MP Derek O'Brien during a protest by the INDIA bloc inside the Parliament premises in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

BEFORE THE start of session, the Opp. MPs staged a protest over the alleged discrimination in the Union Budget. Mr Gandhi called the Budget an 'assault on the sanctity of India's federal structure'

protest on his WhatsApp channel, Mr Gandhi posted in Hindi, "This Budget is an assault on the sancti-

ty of India's Federal structure. In the greed for power, other states of the country have been neglected and discriminated against. The INDIA bloc will continue to raise its voice to provide equal justice to every state of India."

Besides Mr Gandhi, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress parliamentary **Turn to Page 4**

Govt lifted ideas from manifesto of Congress: PC

New Delhi, July 24: Senior Congress leader and former finance minister P. Chidambaram on Wednesday expressed mixed reactions to the newly-proposed Employment-Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme. He also took a swipe at the government for copying his party's poll manifesto.

Initiating a discussion on the Union Budget 2024-25 in the Rajya Sabha, he said, "I am particularly happy that she (finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman) had an opportunity to read the Congress manifesto. I would urge friends on treasury benches to read the Congress manifesto so that in your party meetings, you can persuade the Prime Minister and the finance minister to take some more ideas from our manifesto," he said in the Upper House. **More on Page 3**

Bihar Assembly passes bill to curb paper leaks in govt tests

Legislation stipulates up to 5 years of jail, ₹1cr fine

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI/PATNA, JULY 24

The Bihar Assembly on Wednesday passed a bill aimed at curbing the scourge of question paper leaks and other malpractices in recruitment tests conducted by the state.

The Bihar Public Examinations (PE) (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill 2024 was moved by state parliamentary affairs minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and passed through voice vote amidst a walkout staged by the Opposition

THE BILL was moved by state parliamentary affairs minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and passed through voice vote amidst a walkout staged by the Opposition

The new legislation targets curbing malpractices in competitive examinations, including the leak of question papers, in the state, which, incidentally, has also been at the centre of the Neet-UG 2024 paper leak controversy.

The bill stipulates severe punishment for those involved in such

malpractices, including a prison term of three to five years and a fine of ₹10 lakhs.

Service providers, a term used to describe agencies entrusted with conducting such tests, could be slapped with a fine of ₹1 crore besides debarment of services for up to four years and even attachment of properties, Mr Chaudhary told the House.

A portion of the total cost of conducting such an examination will also be recovered from the offending service provider, the minister **Turn to Page 4**

Modi, Starmer to launch Tech Security Initiative

UK foreign secy meets PM, holds talks with Jaishankar on reset of ties, FTA

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

British foreign secretary David Lammy held wide-ranging talks with external affairs minister S. Jaishankar in the national capital on Wednesday. Later in the evening, it was made public that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UK PM Keir

NARENDRA MODI said he 'remained committed' to elevating bilateral ties and 'welcomed the bilateral technology security initiative and the desire to conclude a mutually beneficial FTA'

Starmer are launching a new "Technology Security Initiative (TSI) to elevate the strategic part-



David Lammy

nership between the two countries to the next level".
New Delhi, in a state-

ment, said the TSI "will bring into sharper focus collaboration in critical and emerging technologies across priority sectors such as "telecoms, critical minerals, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, quantum, biotechnology and advanced materials". The initiative assumes significance, given the increased role played by China glob-

ally in this sphere. New Delhi said the TSI will be "coordinated by the national security advisors (NSAs) of both countries through existing and new dialogues" and that the "NSAs will set the priority areas and identify interdependencies for cooperation on critical and emerging tech that will, in turn, help build **Turn to Page 4**



Sea waves crash against the promenade during high tides at Marine Drive in Mumbai on Wednesday. Several districts in Maharashtra reel under floods due to incessant rain. The IMD warned of heavy to very heavy rainfall in Mumbai and Thane on Thursday with extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places in Palghar. **Report on Page 4** — PTI

Army NCO and terrorist killed in encounter in J&K's Kupwara

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, JULY 24

A non-commissioned officer of the Indian Army and an Islamic militant have been killed in a gunbattle raging in a remote area of the Lolab valley in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district since Wednesday morning.

The Army said that Naik Dilawar Khan was critically injured in the gunfight and later succumbed at a medical facility.

The Army and police had launched an anti-terrorist operation in the Lolab area of Kupwara a few days ago following information about possible terrorist movements.

The security forces established contact with the hiding terrorists on Wednesday, leading to an encounter.

"Contact with the terrorists was established shortly after midnight and a gunfight between the two sides ensued in which one terrorist was killed and an Army NCO was critically injured," the sources said.

Paying tribute to the fallen soldier, the Army's Srinagar-based 15 Corps said, "The brave die never, though they sleep in dust: Their courage nerves a thousand living men." **More on Page 4**

Modi meets Shah, Rajnath, Nadda on major rejig in BJP

Discuss new party prez, CMs' meet

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

The BJP top brass, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, national president J.P. Nadda, Union ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh and national general secretary (organisation) B.L. Santhosh, held a meeting on Wednesday. The meeting, which lasted for almost two hours, was ahead of the BJP's top brass meeting with the chief ministers of the party-ruled states and the deputy chief ministers of the NDA-ruled states.

The meetings with the CMs and deputy CMs will likely take place on July 27 and 28. Ahead of the CMs meeting, the BJP leadership is likely to hold a meeting of its organisational secretaries from its respective state units.

According to the sources, while Mr Modi is likely to address the CMs meeting, the BJP's central leadership, including Mr Nadda and Mr Santhosh, are expected to address the



Narendra Modi

THE MEETINGS with the CMs, deputy CMs will likely take place on July 27-28. The BJP leadership is also likely to hold a meeting of its organisational secretaries from its respective state units.

meeting with the organisational secretaries. With the "samanvaya baithak" (coordination meeting) of the RSS-BJP also scheduled later this month, it is learnt that the BJP top brass discussed the issue of the next party president. The term of incumbent Mr Nadda, who is also a Cabinet minister in the Modi government now, was extended earlier this year as Lok Sabha elections were due. The BJP top brass, sources said, also discussed other organisational issues, including organisational polls in several state units, most of which could see new chiefs.

18 die as plane crashes after takeoff in Nepal, pilot survives

Kathmandu, July 24: A Nepalese private plane crashed and caught fire shortly after taking off from the Tribhuvan International Airport here on Wednesday, killing 18 people aboard, including a child, and seriously injuring the pilot—the only survivor. The Bombardier CRJ-200 aircraft of Saurya Airlines, carrying 19 people, including two crew members and technical staff of the airline, was bound for Pokhara International Airport for regular maintenance service when the accident occurred at 11.11 am (local time).

"Shortly after takeoff from runway, the aircraft veered off to the right and crashed on the east side of the runway," said civil aviation authority of Nepal said. It said rescue operations were initiated immediately and fire was brought under control. "One injured person (Capt. Manish Ratna Shakya) was rescued and taken to the hospital, and 18 people were found dead," it added. — PTI

More on Page 6



Rescue operations underway at the site of a plane crash at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, Nepal, on Wednesday. — PTI

Bibi to make history in US Congress address, but faces protests, boycotts

Washington, July 24: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks before the US Congress on Wednesday in hopes of bolstering US support for continuing Israel's offensives against Hamas and other adversaries.

But boycotts of his appearance by some Democratic lawmakers and expected protests outside are highlighting how his hard-line government's conduct of the devastating war in Gaza is opening fissures in long-standing American support for his country.

THIS APPEARANCE will make the Israeli PM 1st foreign leader to address a joint meeting of Congress four times, surpassing Britain's wartime leader Winston Churchill

Mr Netanyahu is assured a warm welcome from Republican lawmakers who arranged his speech in the House chamber, an appearance making him the first foreign leader to address a joint meeting of Congress four times, surpassing Britain's wartime leader

Winston Churchill. Many Democrats and political independent Bernie Sanders plan to boycott Mr Netanyahu's appearance. But the most notable absence will be behind him: vice-president Kamala Harris, who serves as president of the Senate and traditionally would sit behind whatever dignitary is speaking, says a long-scheduled trip will keep her away Wednesday.

And the next Democrat in line, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, is declining to attend. — AP **More on Page 6**

IN BRIEF

HC seeks police's stand on Khalid bail

New Delhi: The Delhi high court sought the city police's stand on Wednesday on the bail plea of former JNU student Umar Khalid in a UAPA case related to the alleged larger conspiracy behind the February 2020 riots in the national capital. A bench of Justices Suresh Kumar Kait and Girish Kathpalia issued a notice to the Delhi police on the bail plea and asked the agency to file its reply. The court listed Mr Khalid's bail plea for hearing on August 29, along with the bail pleas of the other co-accused in the case, including student activist Sharjeel Imam. The court observed that the bail pleas of Imam and the other co-accused in the case were "set for hearing." Mr Khalid, who was arrested by the Delhi police in September 2020, has assailed a recent trial court order refusing to grant him bail in the case. Mr Khalid, Mr Imam and several others have been booked under the anti-terror law, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and provisions of the IPC in the February 2020 riots that had left 53 people dead and more than 700 injured.



Umar Khalid

Keep border status quo, SC tells Haryana, Punjab

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Observing that there is a trust deficit between farmers and the government, the Supreme Court on Wednesday proposed the constitution of an independent committee comprising eminent persons to reach out to the protesters and address their demands, even as the apex court directed Haryana and Punjab to maintain status quo at Shambhu border. While ordering a status quo on the border for a week, the top court directed the Punjab and Haryana governments to suggest the names of suitable individuals for the committee and submit a proposal for removal of barricades on the national highway. A three-judge bench, headed by Justice Surya Kant, said there is a need

for a "neutral umpire" who can inspire confidence between farmers and the government. The bench, also comprising Justices Dipankar Datta and Ujjal Bhuyan, said, "You have to take some steps to reach out to farmers. Why would they otherwise want to come to Delhi? You are sending ministers from here and despite their best intentions there is trust deficit." "Let appropriate instructions be taken within a week. Till then let parties maintain status quo at the site to prevent flaring up of the situation at the Shambhu border," the bench said and posted the matter for further hearing after a week. The bench was hearing the Haryana government's plea challenging the high court order asking it to remove within a

week the barricades at the Shambhu border near Ambala, where protesting farmers have been camping since February 13. During the hearing, solicitor-general Tushar Mehta submitted that earlier the roads were blocked against the three agricultural laws and now they have new demands. "To this, the top court said the Centre has to examine the demands of the farmers as a welfare state. "Some demands may be genuine, others may not be acceptable," the bench said. The apex court remarked that the state cannot keep the highway blocked all round the year. On July 12, while hearing a related matter, the top court had asked the Haryana government to remove the barricades and questioned its authority to block the highway.

Student should obtain at least 28 credits, earlier it was 22 DU raises passing criteria to 63% from 50 for UG students

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 24

The Delhi University (DU) has raised its passing criteria for promotion to the next year from 50 per cent to 63 per cent in all its undergraduate courses. With this, undergraduate students studying in all DU colleges will now have to obtain a total of 63 per cent in the first and second semesters combined to be eligible for promotion. However, students representing Delhi University in sports, extracurricular activities, the National Cadet Corps (NCC), and the National Service Scheme (NSS), among others, may be exempted from the criteria, subject to approval from their col-

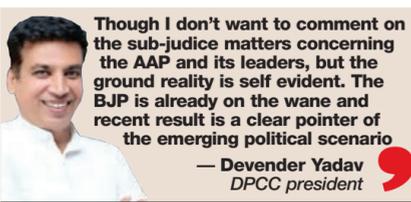
lege's competent authority. The step has been taken to overcome the shortcomings in the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) Undergraduate Curriculum Framework (UGCF) 2022 at Delhi University, a varsity official said. "Under the previous passing and promotion rules, a student was eligible for promotion from the first year to the second year of the course provided he/she cleared 50 per cent of the exams of the first and second semesters taken together. The students had to clear seven papers and obtain a total of 22 credits to get promoted," the official said. "However, because all papers do not have the

same credits under the NEP-UGCF 2022, it is possible that a student can get promoted to a subsequent year on passing just three papers of both the semesters and one general elective with only a 36 per cent score," said a member of the committee which formulated the guidelines for the promotion criteria. To review this shortcoming, a 12-member committee comprising principals of several DU colleges,

including Miranda House, Kirori Mal College, and Lady Shri Ram, among others along with the dean, academics and controller of examination (COE) held a meeting on May 7 and gave its recommendations. These recommendations were subsequently approved by DU vice-chancellor Yogesh Singh. The anomaly in implementing the NEP-UGCF 2022 "is causing loss to the students' academic growth and defeating the goals set in NEP 2020," the committee observed, reaching a consensus that the passing and promotion rules need to be reviewed. It also suggested that a student should obtain at least 28 credits to move to the next year.

BJP, AAP hand in glove, people see us as best alternative: Cong's Yadav

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, JULY 24



Though I don't want to comment on the sub-judice matters concerning the AAP and its leaders, but the ground reality is self evident. The BJP is already on the wane and recent result is a clear pointer of the emerging political scenario — Devender Yadav, DPCC president

Buoyed by its performance in the recent Lok Sabha polls, the Congress is toying with the idea of contesting the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls solo, riding on the reinvigorated party cadre and workers, and exposing the chinks in the governance model of the AAP government. The party also plans to contrast the governance deficit in the AAP regime with its achievements in the 1998-2013 period when the grand old party helmed the city government. In a freewheeling interview to The Asian Age, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) president Devender Yadav revealed the contours of the party's poll strategy for the 70-member Delhi Assembly polls. Mr Yadav was given the onerous task of leading the party right in the middle of the parliamentary polls after the then DPCC chief, Arvinder Singh Lovely, switched his loyalty to the BJP. Mr Yadav said, "Today we stand at a juncture where the people are now

looking up to us (Congress) as the best alternative. The parties, which are ruling the state (AAP) as well as the Center (BJP), are hand in glove over numerous issues including corruption because of which the people suffer." AAP, which was a product of the anti-corruption plank, is itself embroiled in corruption and money laundering cases and the who is who of the party from top to bottom, including the chief minister and a host of his ministerial colleagues, are either in jail or out on bail. "Though I don't want to comment on the sub-judice matters concerning the AAP and its leaders, the ground reality is self-evident. The BJP is already on the wane and the recent result is a clear

pointer of the emerging political scenario," the former MLA said. Commenting on the party's past alliance with the AAP, Mr Yadav said, "While the alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was borne out of 'compulsion' in the national capital, the grand old party will fight the Delhi Assembly elections individually next year and we will be able to reclaim the space that we had lost earlier," he asserted. "Yes, it is absolutely certain. Our cadre is enthused and they have been instilled with hope. Under the leadership of our leader Rahul Gandhi, I am also ready to take everyone together by reaching out to the last man in the line," he said. "We have been able to work to re-establish our

connection with the common people. We made a genuine effort. I am happy that there is an atmosphere where we have emerged as a strong Opposition and the cadre is feeling enthused and re-energised," he added. The DPCC chief, who is currently on a task to mobilise the rank and file of the party, said, "We got shot in the arms as the vote share in the just-concluded LS polls has instilled a sense of jubilation. Now we are banking on the upbeat sentiments." Mr Yadav said, "Apart from the existing cadre, we are now ramping up our membership drives to rejig the organisation by creating a matrix of both the Young Turks and the Old Guard. Further, we are also reaching out to the grassroots level of society to get feedback so that we can plan our strategy accordingly." "The AAP's poor performance in the election will also be a dividend for the Congress in the coming days. We are hopeful this time that the yearning in the people for change will propel us to electoral victory," he added.

SC to hear today right to be forgotten after acquittal plea

RAKESH K. SINGH NEW DELHI, JULY 24

The Supreme Court agreed on Wednesday to examine a plea related to the vexed issue of right to be forgotten of an accused after acquittal in criminal cases by removal of judgments containing names from the public domain, saying this will have "serious ramifications". The apex court will delve into the legal tangle as to whether an accused, after being absolved in a criminal case, can seek removal of the judgment from the public domain, including digital platforms, in exercise of their right to be forgotten. After taking note of the submissions of Bengaluru-

based legal website Ikanoon Software Development Pvt Ltd, a bench comprising Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said: "How can a court order say this? To say that the judgment, a public document, be pulled down will have very serious ramifications." The firm argued that the Madras high court directed it to take down a judgment which revealed the identity of a person who was acquitted in a rape and cheating case. To this, the bench said, "Issue notice, and in the meantime, the directions of Madras high court shall remain stayed." The court noted that it will

settle the law on the issue. In its plea, the website said "adversely impacts the freedom of speech and expression of the petitioner and public at large, guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution as well as petitioner's freedom of trade, occupation and profession protected by Article 19(1)(g)." The counsel for the website said the high courts of Kerala and Gujarat have held that there was no right to be forgotten in such cases, while the Madras high court took a contrary view. "There is a genuine question of law emerging from contradictory judgements from different high courts," the petitioner's counsel said.

13 Delhi railway stns to be re-developed

New Delhi: Highlighting the budgetary allocations and its utilisation plan, the Northern Railway on Wednesday said 13 railway stations of the Delhi division will be re-developed under the 'Amrit Bharat' scheme. The stations under the re-development plan are Adarsh Nagar, Anand Vihar, Bijwasan, Old Delhi, Delhi Cantt., Sarai Rohilla, Shahdara, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Narela, New Delhi, Sabzi Mandi, Safdarjung and Tilak Bridge, it said in a statement. According to the Northern Railway, the division's annual average budget outlay is ₹2,582 crore and in 10 years between 2014 and 2024, the division has constructed 2.4 km of new tracks and electrified 4 km of tracks to achieve 100 per cent track electrification. On the ongoing projects, it said that four projects involving 302 km of new tracks have been planned with a budget of ₹4,778 crore. Thirteen rail flyovers and under-bridges have been constructed since 2014, it added.

'Spiderman' spotted on car bonnet, fined ₹26K

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 24



The Delhi police with 'Spiderman' and the driver of the vehicle in New Delhi on Wednesday.

A 20-year-old man, sitting on a Scorpio car's bonnet and dressed as Spiderman landed in the police net and a fine of ₹26,000 was imposed for dangerous driving and other violations, officials said on Wednesday. According to the police, they received a complaint on X about a Scorpio car seen on Dwarka roads with a person dressed as Spiderman on its bonnet and took action. The person in the Spiderman costume was identified as Aditya (20), a resident of Najafgarh and driver as Gaurav Singh (19), a resident of Mahavir Enclave. The owner and driver of the vehicle have been prosecuted for dangerous driving, driving without a pollution certificate, and not wearing a seat belt, with a possible maximum fine of ₹26,000 and/or imprisonment or both, the officer said. The Delhi Traffic Police reiterates its commitment to ensuring road safety for all citizens. Such reckless behaviour on the roads will not be tolerated, and strict action will be taken against offenders to uphold the law and protect the lives of road

users, they said. The Delhi traffic police urges citizens to report any instances of dangerous driving or traffic violations promptly. Public cooperation is vital in maintaining road safety and ensuring the smooth flow of traffic in the city, the officer added. This is not the first time such an arrest has been made. In April this year, a duo of 'Spiderman' and 'Spiderwoman' was arrested for performing stunts on a bike.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
(Through e-tendering)

Name of Work with its location: Provision of LHS in lieu of L-Xing No. 1C (Km 10.704) on APNL-BPLN section under Sr. DEN-III

Approx. Cost of the work (Rs.): Rs. 21,95,545.79 /- only

Bid Security (Rs.): Rs. 43,900 /- only

Address of the office: Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055

Date & Time for upload the tender / closing date & time: 22.07.2024 / closing date & time: 14.08.2024 up to 15.00 hrs.

Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.: See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.

Tender No. 558-Sig-16-M-TENDER-1427 Dated: 22.07.2024

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MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI
DR. SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHERJEE CIVIC CENTRE
MINTO ROAD, NEW DELHI-110002

PUBLIC NOTICE

Ensure Swachh Bharat with responsible C&D Waste Management

Municipal Corporation of Delhi has designated 106 locations / sites where Malba/ Debris in small quantity only can be dumped by general public. Bulk Generators who generate more than 20 tonnes or more in one day or 300 tonnes for each project in a month can dump Malba or Debris at Construction and Demolition Waste processing plants which are located at Rani Khera, Jhangirpuri near Burari, Shastrri Park & Bakkarwala.

The list of 106 designated sites for dumping of small quantity Malba/ Debris is given below and is also available at MCD website.

List of 106 designated Construction & Demolition Waste Collection sites

S. No.	Zone	Ward No.	Location /Address	S. No.	Zone	Ward No.	Location /Address
1	West	92	Punjabi Bagh, Road No. 41 in front of Church, JE Store	27	South	161	Devli Near FCTS bandh road
2	West	106	SS Mota Singh Marg Janakpuri West, JE Store	28	South	162	MB Road near Tigiri Guridwara
3	West	104	Professor Joginder Singh Marg Janakpuri South, JE Store	29	South	164	MCD JE store near MLA office, Naharishi Valmiki Marg Dakshinpur
4	West	112	Main Flood Road Hastal Sainik Enclave, JE Store	30	South	166	Push Vihar near RPS nallah
5	West	102	Khyala, JE Store	31	South	167	Khanpur MB Road near Tigiri Guridwara
6	West	101	Najafgarh road Tilak Nagar, JE Store	32	South	154	Lado Sarai vacant land adjacent lado sari crossing bus stand
7	West	116	Bindapur, JE Store	33	South	156	Vasant Kunj Opp. Bhatnagar School Vasant Kunj
8	West	96	Behind Kukreja Hospital, Tagore Garden, JE Store	34	South	157	Aya Nagar, Fatehpur Beri dispensary (JE store)
9	West	100	Opp. DA Block Hari Nagar, near ITI, Jail Road / Fateh Nagar	35	South	158	Bhatti, Fatehpur Beri dispensary (JE store)
10	Najafgarh	119	Manlagpuri, JE Store	36	South	159	Chattarpur, Fatehpur Beri dispensary (JE store)
11	Najafgarh	121	Dwarka Sector 17, JE Store	37	Central	142	Behind Sale Tax Office / Kabristan, ITO, Daryaganj Ward no 142
12	Najafgarh	135	Ram Phal Chowk, Palam, JE Store	38	Central	143	Sidarth Extn. Pocket-B & C (service road) along Barapulla Nallah, Sidharth Nagar Ward no 143
13	Najafgarh	130	Dhulisiri, JE Store	39	Central	143	Dharamveer Maan Marg, Sidharth Nagar Ward no 143
14	Najafgarh	127	Gopal Nagar, JE Store	40	Central	144	JE store Nehru Nagar near VIMHANS Hospital Ward no 144
15	Najafgarh	125	Revia Khanpur, JE Store	41	Central	145	JE store C-Block near Gurudwara Defence Colony Ward no 145
16	South	148	Hauz Khas near main market near 24 *7 store Malviya Nagar, JE store	42	Central	146	Srinwaspuri Nallah adjacent to PWD Office near Kodiya Basti Ward no 146
17	South	150	Green Park JE store Green Park Extn. Opp. K-15	43	Central	174	JE store G-Block Govt. Flats S.N. Puri near Railway Line Ward no 174
18	South	151	Munirka JE store Near Ayyappa Temple Sec.-1 R.K. Puram	44	Central	176	Road along DDA park near Govindpur Metro Station Ward no 176
19	South	152	Sector-7 R.K. Puram near SDMC Pky. School (JE Store)	45	Central	178	Near Pocket-10 Kalkaji Extension (Satya Sai Back Gate no. 2)
20	South	153	JE store Poorvi Marg near Guru Harkishan Public School opp. Church A block Vasant Vihar	46	Central	178	Near Pocket-12 Kalkaji Extension (Opposite Barat Ghar)
21	South	149	Malviya Nagar Opp. Malviya Nagar Market, New Delhi (JE Store)	47	Central	178	Opposite Shamshan Ghat Tughlakabud Village near Pundh.
22	South	165	Madangarh Near Virat Cinema, Dakshinpur, New Delhi (JE Store)				
23	South	171	C.R. Park Opp. S-175, G.K.-II, New Delhi (JE Store)				
24	South	172	Chirag Delhi Near E-1 Soami Nagar, New Delhi (JE Store)				
25	South	173	G.K.-I B-Block Nallah, Behind Archana Complex, New Delhi (JE Store)				
26	South	155	Adjacent to PHC Mehrauli (JE Store)				

RO No. 20/DPI/MCD/2024-25

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
Re-Invitation of Tenders through E- Tendering (E-Procurement System)

S. No.	Tender Notice No. & Date	Name of work with its location	Approx. Cost of work	Amount of Earnest Money	Completion Period of the work	Date & time for submission of tender & opening tender
1.	32-W-BR-1259-1252-MB Date 23.07.2024	Provision of side path way over Br. No. - 1252 UP (10X22.40m), 1252 DN (10X23.20m), 1259 UP (8X45.75), 1259 DN (16X21.65m) under MB-SRE Section under AXEN/BL/MB over MB-Division.	Rs. 33911072.05/-	Rs. 319600/-	(08) Eight Months	Upto 15:00 hrs on 18.08.2024 Opening of tender after 15:00 hrs on same day

Note: Above tender is available on website, IREPS site i.e www.ireps.gov.in, where complete details of Tender can be seen & downloaded.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2241/24

S. No.	Zone	Ward No.	Location /Address	S. No.	Zone	Ward No.	Location /Address
48	Central	180, 181, 182, 183, 184	Tajpur Pahari	77	Civil Line	8	JE Store MCD open land janta Vihar Mukundpur
49	Central	185, 186, 187	Near J.E. Store Sarita Vihar	78	Civil Line	13	JE store Bhai Parmanand colony Mukharjee Nagar
50	Narela	4	MPL Store, Nehru Enclave, Alipur	79	Civil Line	14	Municipal Flats Behind Model Town III Ward no 14 Dhirpur
51	Narela	30	MPL Store, Bawana Village, Bawana	80	Civil Line	16	JE Store Opposite Jahangirpur Metro Station ward no 16 Azadpur
52	Narela	26	J.E STORE OF WARD NO 26 (POOTH KALAN VILLAGE ON ROAD NO 3)	81	Civil Line	17	JE Store J Block Jahangirpuri Ward no 17 Bhaliswa
53	Narela	27	JE STORE OF ROAD NO. 27 POCKET 5 SEC-24, ROHINI NEAR POWER HOUSE	82	Civil Line	20	JE Store Mandir Mohalla Samaypur Ward no 20 Badli
54	Narela	29	J.E STORE OF WARD NO. 29, NEAR MAHARISHI VALMIKI HOSPITAL	83	Karolbagh	90	JE Store, F-Block Moti Nagar
55	Narela	32	J.E STORE OF WARD NO 32, KHANJAWLA IN FRONT OF I & FC OFFICE ON ROAD NO 3	84	Karolbagh	91	JE Store, Ramesh Nagar, Near Chacha Nehru Park.
56	Narela	35	J.E STORE OF WARD NO 35, NEAR BUS STAND GHEVRA VILLAGE	85	Karolbagh	139	JE store H-Block, Naraina Vihar.
57	Rohini	21	JE Store, Near Petrol Pump Sector-16, Rohini	86	Karolbagh	83	MCD JE store Mahrana Pratap Market, D B Gupta Road
58	Rohini	22	JE Store, Pkt. B-6, near M.C. Pky. School Sector-5 B, Rohini	87	Karolbagh	86	MCD J.E. Store, East Patel Nagar, Near cool Store
59	Rohini	49	JE Store, H-Block, Infront of Police Station Mangolpuri	88	Karolbagh	88	J.E. Store Baljeet Nagar, near shadpur Red Light
60	Rohini	51	JE Store, Near Pkt. E-18, Women Cell Office, Sector-3, Rohini	89	City SP	70	M-Block, Shastrri Nagar, near Bus Stand, Road no. 40, Metro pillar No. 192
61	Rohini	52	JE Store, Near M.C. Pky. School, Sector-9, Rohini, Back Side of Rajapur Village	90	City SP	71	Padam Nagar, Opp. Vivekanand Puri, Sarai Rohilla, Azad Road.
62	Rohini	41	JE Works Store near Bus Terminal, Sultanpuri	91	City SP	72	Azad market, opp. Punjab National Bank
63	Rohini	43	JE Works Store near Jalebi Chowk, Sultanpuri	92	City SP	79	Balimaran, katcha bagh-2 near town hall
64	Rohini	48	JE Works Store near Fire Station GH-8, Guru Harkishan Nagar	93	City SP	80	Ram nagar Qutab Road opp. Nabl Karim
65	Keshav Puram	55	JE store at Ayurvedic Hospital, Haiderpur	94	City SP	81	JE store Qutab Road opp. Khwaja Baghi billah kabristan
66	Keshav Puram	56	JE store at Singhalpur Village, Shalimar Bagh	95	City SP	76	Malba dumping site opposite Delite Cinema Asaf Ali Road
67	Keshav Puram	57	JE store at UU-Block, Pitampura	96	City SP	74	JE Store, Cachha Bagh, Chandni Chowk
68	Keshav Puram	58	JE store opp. A-5 Block, Paschim Vihar	97	Shah.South	204	Karkari Mod, Adjoining Karkardooma Flyover Road No. 57 (PWD Road).
69	Keshav Puram	60	JE store adjacent MC Pky. School Boys, Rani Bagh	98	Shah.South	205	Open huadi, Near Foot Over Bridge, Road no.56 (PWD Road), Charan Singh Marg.
70	Keshav Puram	62	M-Block Shakurpur Village, J.E. Store	99	Shah.South	210	Geeta Colony - Near Taj Enclave Geeta Colony
71	Keshav Puram	63	Near Bhagwan Parshuram Chowk, Tri Nagar, J.E. Store	100	Shah.South	213	'Y' Point, Opposite C&D Waste treatment plant, Seelampur.
72	Keshav Puram	64	Near C 2 Block, Keshav Puram, J.E. Store	101	Shah.South	193	Open site near Canal road near Govind Apartment Vashundara Enclave
73	Keshav Puram	66	Shakti Nagar Extn. Ashok Vihar Ph-III, J.E. Store	102	Shah.South	194	Open site Near Badi Masjid Mulla Colony & Culvert near Rajner colony
74	Keshav Puram	68	Near M.C. Pky. School, Model Town-II, J.E. Store	103	Shah.North	219	Near EE(M)/I /SNZ Division office
75	Keshav Puram	69	Opp. H.No. 16/07, Shakti Nagar, J.E. Store	104	Shah.North	242	Near Veer Savarkar Hospital, karawal Nagar (JE Store)
76	Civil Line	6	JE Store near Bhaliswa Lake Ward no 06 Burari	105	Shah.North	236	Behind Ambedkar College, Kardampuri
				106	Shah.North	226	Shastrri Park DDA Land, Near D-Aqua Hotel

Executive Engineer (C & D Plant)

SHORT TAKES

Tgana to boycott Niti Aayog meeting

Hyderabad: Telangana chief minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday said his government has decided to boycott the Niti Aayog meeting to be held on July 27 to protest against the Centre, allegedly "hurting" the state's rights and not releasing funds due to it. Mr Reddy announced the government's decision in the Legislative Assembly. "Prime Minister is the chairman of Niti Aayog. Niti Aayog meeting would be held on 27th (July) under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji. As chief minister of Telangana, (I am) boycotting the Niti Aayog meeting for hurting Telangana's interests, not releasing the funds due to Telangana and for not giving the permissions due to be given to Telangana," he said. The Assembly passed a resolution against the Centre's alleged discrimination towards the state in the Union Budget after a day-long debate. — PTI

INDIA members back Jagan's Delhi protest

New Delhi: YSRCP chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's protest in Delhi against alleged political violence in Andhra Pradesh drew support from unlikely quarters Wednesday, with several INDIA bloc members and AIADMK leaders expressing solidarity. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which is in power in the state and a constituent of the NDA government at the Centre, dismissed the YSR Congress Party's allegations as "fake drama". Mr Reddy's protest at the Jantar Mantar area here is against what he dubbed as a "worsening law-and-order situation" in Andhra Pradesh following the recent elections. — PTI

Microlight team flagged off to UK

New Delhi: Minister of state for forest and environment, and external affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh Wednesday flagged off the Indian microlight team for the "18th FAI World Microlight Flying Championship" to be held in Deenethorpe, UK. The championship will be held from July 27 to August 3. This will be the first participation by an Indian team in a World Microlight Flying Championship, a significant milestone in India's aero sports history. As an ace sports pilot himself, Mr Singh extended his wishes and support to the team. The championship will bring together the world's best sports pilots to compete in various challenging tasks and events. The Indian team's participation is expected to inspire aspiring pilots and boost the development of aero sports in India. The microlight flying championship brings together the best microlight pilots from around the world to compete in various tasks, promoting excellence.

BJP HITS OUT AT RAHUL AFTER SC ORDER ON LEAK

Accusing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of "fueling lack of trust" in country's examination system, following the Neet-UG paper leak at a few places, the BJP on Wednesday asked the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha whether he will apologise after the Supreme Court's verdict on the issue. The court on Tuesday dismissed the pleas seeking cancellation and re-test of the exam, holding that there was no evidence on record to conclude it was "vitiated" on account of "systemic breach" of its sanctity. The court said the leak occurred in a couple of cities. Hitting out at Mr Gandhi, senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad slammed the Opposition, especially the LoP, following the court verdict, accusing him of defaming India's examination globally with his strong words. "His choice of words were violative of Parliament's dignity and the dignity of the office of the Leader of the Opposition — the position Mr Gandhi holds," Mr Prasad said.

Why RBI has not reduced bank rate if inflation low, says ex-FM

Do not take inflation lightly, Chidambaram cautions govt

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA with agency inputs NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Senior Congress leader and former finance minister P. Chidambaram on Wednesday expressed mixed reactions to the newly proposed "employment-linked incentive" (ELI) scheme even as he took a swipe at the government for copying his party's poll manifesto.



Congress MP P. Chidambaram speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

Initiating a discussion on the Union Budget 2024-25 in the Rajya Sabha, Mr Chidambaram said, "I am particularly happy that she (finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman) had an opportunity to read the Congress manifesto. I would urge friends on treasury benches to read the Congress manifesto, so that in your party meetings, you can persuade the Prime Minister and the finance minister to take some more ideas from our manifesto," he said in the Upper House.

The senior Congress leader also asked if the proposed employment-

linked incentive (ELI) has been mooted, as the existing production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes have failed to generate employment while mocking finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman for lifting ideas from the Congress manifesto for the ELI scheme.

"Is inflation such a trivial subject (that) you can deal with it casually and dismiss it in ten words?" he asked, arguing that in

the interiors and hinterland of India, "inflation is much higher" than data collected mostly from towns and villages that are along national and state highways and district roads.

He also took exception to the statement by the chief economic advisor in the economic survey that India's inflation continues to be low, stable and moving towards the four per cent target.

"It has been moving for the last four years. When will it arrive at the four per cent target?" the Congress leader asked.

He further said, "I think what the chief economic advisor said in the economic survey is the injury, and the honourable finance minister dismissing the subject in ten words is adding insult to injury."

He argued that if inflation is low, stable and moving towards the 4 per cent target, why has the RBI not revised downward the bank rate fixed in June 2023?

"Bank rate is a good measure of where inflation is moving. If inflation is moving towards the 4 per cent target, why is the RBI keeping the bank rate at 6.5 per cent for the last 13 months? Why is the MPC, the Monetary Policy Committee, not willing to revise it downwards?" Mr Chidambaram said.

He asserted that inflation is a humiliating situation because every family is hit by inflation.



Police personnel wield batons against Youth Congress activists during their Vidhan Sabha march in Patna on Wednesday. — PTI

Singapore passport tops global ranking

India ranks 82 in visa-free access

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Tiny Southeast Asian nation Singapore's passport has topped the rankings of passports globally, based on the number of destinations it can access visa-free, according to the Henley Passport Index latest report released, while India's passport has got the 82nd ranking with visa-free access to 58 destinations. In the south Asian neighbourhood, the passport of Maldives has got the 52nd rank and can access 94 destinations visa-free.

The Henley Passport Index is billed as the "original, authoritative ranking of all the world's passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa". The "index is based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) — the largest, most accurate travel information database — and enhanced by Henley & Partners' research team".

UK IS in fourth place along with Belgium, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway & Switzerland, with access to 190 visa-free destinations. The US has dropped down to eighth spot.

According to the report, Singapore's passport at the top global rank enjoys visa-free access to 195 travel destinations out of 227 around the world. France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Spain are in joint second place, each with visa-free access to 192 destinations, while Austria, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, South Korea, and Sweden — are now in joint third place with visa-free access to 191 destinations.

The UK is in fourth place along with Belgium, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway, and Switzerland, with access to 190 visa-free destinations. The US has dropped down to eighth spot, with access to just 186 destinations visa-free.

TMC MLA tried to heckle me, says Savendu

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JULY 24

West Bengal Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari accused Purbasthali Trinamul Congress MLA Tapan Chatterjee of trying to heckle him at the Assembly on Wednesday. He also made clear that the Speaker Biman Banerjee would be responsible if anything happens with the BJP members in the House.

Trouble broke out when Mr Chatterjee had confronted Mr Adhikari, while staging a walkout from the House with other BJP MLAs after their demand for a discussion on the violence against women was rejected, for questioning his daughter's educational qualification during a visit earlier to his constituency.

Mr Chatterjee was heard asking Mr Adhikari aloud why he had spread lies about his daughter's educational qualification that she was merely a madhyamik pass-out contrary to her master's degree.

Sulking MP mantri meets CM, drops plan to resign

'BJP united, Cong's plan to sow rift won't succeed'

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, JULY 24

Madhya Pradesh minister Nagar Singh Chouhan, who created a flutter in the ruling BJP by threatening to resign from the state ministry for being stripped of two portfolios, was pacified by chief minister Mohan Yadav.

Mr Chouhan, who held talks with state BJP president Vishnu Dutt Sharma in Delhi on Tuesday to address his grievances, returned to Bhopal late in the night the same day to discuss the matter with Mr Yadav at the latter's official residence.

Mr Sharma and state organising secretary Hitanand Sharma were also present during the meeting. "Mr Chouhan was assured by the chief minister at the meeting that his grievances would be looked into favourably in the coming days. Mr Chouhan was also satisfied with Mr Yadav's assurance," a senior BJP

Test-flight of Ph-II ballistic missile defence successful

Rajnath compliments DRDO for achievement

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, JULY 24

In a demonstration of India's indigenous capability to defend against ballistic missiles of the 5,000 km class, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Wednesday successfully flight-tested the second phase of its ballistic missile defence system.

The target missile was launched from LC-IV Dhamra at 4.20 pm mimicking the enemy's ballistic missile, which was detected by weapon system radars deployed on land and sea and activated the AD Interceptor system.

The Phase-II AD endo-atmospheric missile was launched from LC-III at ITR, Chandipur, at 4.24 pm. "The flight test fully met all the trial objectives validating a complete network centric warfare weapon system consisting of Long Range Sensors, low latency communication system and MCC and Advance Interceptor missiles," the defence ministry said.



The test has demonstrated the nation's indigenous capability to defend against the ballistic missiles of the 5,000 km class, it said.

"The performance of the missile was monitored from the flight data captured by range tracking instruments like electro-optical systems, radar and telemetry stations deployed by ITR, Chandipur, at various locations, including onboard ship," it said.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh complimented the DRDO for the successful flight test and stated that it

has again demonstrated the ballistic missiles' defence capability. The Phase-II AD endo-atmospheric missile is an indigenously developed two-stage solid-propelled ground-launched missile system meant for neutralising many types of enemy ballistic missile threats in the altitude bracket of endo to low exo-atmospheric regions. Several state-of-the-art indigenous technologies developed by various DRDO laboratories have been incorporated into the missile system.

The exo-atmospheric missiles are capable of completing missions in the uppermost region of the earth's atmosphere. The endo-atmospheric missiles are the ones that operate within the earth's atmosphere which covers an altitude below 100 km, according to experts.

Police assent must in MP for political rallies

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, JULY 24

Bhopal police commissioner Harinarayan Chari Mishra on Wednesday invoked relevant provisions of the National Security Act, making it mandatory for the organisers to seek police permission to hold rallies, public meetings and demonstrations.

Mr Mishra said that permission from the police was required to hold events such as demonstrations, agitation, religious processions, rallies, public meetings, effigy burning, foot march and vehicle rally in Bhopal city.

He said that the events would be declared illegal if they were held without police permission. The police officer said that all conditions of permission granted to hold such events would have to be honoured by the organisers.

He said the damages to the properties caused while holding such events would be recovered from the organisers.



Madhya Pradesh chief minister Mohan Yadav holding discussion with his ministerial colleague Nagar Singh Chouhan (extreme right), along with state BJP president V.D. Sharma and secretary Hitanand Sharma.

leader told this newspaper on Wednesday. The four-time MLA from tribal domain of Alirajpur in Madhya Pradesh dropped his plan to resign from the state ministry after meeting Mr Yadav, the BJP leader said and added that the issue has been resolved.

The BJP, meanwhile, blamed the Congress for spreading rumours of Mr Chouhan's resignation

from the state ministry, saying that any attempt by the Congress to create differences among leaders in the BJP would not succeed since the saffron party is completely united.

Mr Chouhan lost his forest and environment portfolios to newly-inducted minister Rami Rawat, who had joined the BJP after quitting the Congress just a few days before the LS polls.

'Make INS Brahmaputra battle-ready' Missing sailor's body found, Navy Chief offers condolences

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Indian Navy Chief Adm. Dinesh K. Tripathi has directed Western Naval Command and naval headquarters to take all actions to make the frontline warship INS Brahmaputra, which was severely damaged in a fire incident, seaworthy and combat-ready.

Adm. Tripathi rushed to Mumbai on Tuesday to review the sequence of events leading to the accident and efforts undertaken

to locate the missing sailor.

The body of Sitendra Singh, Leading Seaman, who was missing since the fire incident was found on Wednesday after intensive diving operations.

Adm. Tripathi and all personnel of the Navy extend their deepest condolences to the family of Sitendra Singh.

"The Indian Navy stands resolutely with the bereaved family in this hour of grief," the Navy said.

The 3,850-tonne Brah-



Sitendra Singh

aputra, a multi-role frigate was undergoing a refit at Naval Dockyard in Mumbai when the incident took place on Sunday evening.

While the fire was brought under control on Monday morning, the ship tilted heavily to one side.

The warship is now resting on her left side. After this, concerns were raised

about whether the warship could be saved, which will be a huge loss for the Indian Navy.

Adm. Tripathi was briefed on the mitigating actions taken to limit the extent of the damage, plan to recover and undertake repairs to restore the ship's functionality at the earliest. Interacting with the crew of INS Brahmaputra, the Navy Chief exhorted the crew to work towards early operationalisation of the ship in the true spirit of the Indian Navy.

52.36-km line to facilitate transport of people, agri produce 'Rail line in Maoist corridor on fast track'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 24

Railway minister Ashwani Vaishnav on Wednesday said that work on the Wadsa-Gadchiroli railway line, which passes through Left-wing extremism affected areas, has picked up speed after getting land and environmental clearances. The minister also criticized the Kerala government for its lack of cooperation on railway projects, particularly the proposed Angamali-Sabarimala railway line.

Replying to a supplementary in the Lok Sabha, Mr Vaishnav said, "Wadsa-Gadchiroli is an important project. It also provides a mitiga-

tion to Left-wing extremism affected areas. It is an important project for the poor people of the area."

The then Uddhav Thackeray government in Maharashtra had, however, not provided the necessary clearances to it. "Unfortunately, land acquisition support was not provided under the Uddhav Thackeray government, but when the Devendra Fadnis and Eknath Shinde government came to power, it has done good work on land acquisition," Mr Vaishnav said. "All the land that was required — around 220 hectares — has been acquired. Work is progressing," he added.

Centre allocates ₹1,050 crore for border villages under VVP

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 24

As the government continues its thrust on the comprehensive development of the villages located in remote areas along the border with China, the Union Budget has allocated ₹1,050 crore for the "vibrant villages programme" (VVP) that will benefit selected villages in 19 districts in Arunachal Pradesh,

Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh.

The government approved the VVP as a Centrally sponsored scheme on February 15, 2023, with an outlay of ₹4,800 crore for 2022-23 to 2025-26 for development of these villages in 46 blocks abutting the northern border.

The Budget has earmarked ₹1,050 crore for the VVP for 2024-25.

The Wadsa Gadchiroli project was declared as a special railway project in December 2015. The 52.36

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH

E-Tender Notice No. P/IEP/24-25/G81 Phone No. 0172-2756469

Tender applications are invited for purchase of various items against tender No. 1-5 from the Manufacturers or their sole authorized distributors/agents. The bidders can place their bids as per terms & conditions contained on <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocureapp>.

S. No.	Equipment/Item Name	Qty.	EMD	Bid submission Date	Bid Opening Date	Dept Name
Pre Bid case						
1.	Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Chamber	01No.	Rs.1,04,000/-	13-08-2024	14-08-2024	CCRYN
Non-Pre Bid case						
2.	Replacement of Cooling System of the existing Cold Room	01No.	Rs.20,000/-	-do-	-do-	Biochemistry
3.	Ionic, Non Ionic CT Contrast Media and MRI Contrast Media	As per technical Specification	Rs.1,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	Radiology
4.	Online Examination (Computer Based Test)	As per Tender Document	Rs.12,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	Academic Section
5.	Table Top Casting Machine (Buy Back)	01No.	Rs.24,000/-	-do-	-do-	OHSIC

Tender document can also be downloaded from website www.pgimer.edu.in and can be applied on website [www.eprocure.gov.in](https://eprocure.gov.in). Bid Security (EMD) should be for the amount as per the instruments defined in tender documents having its validity at least for one year & duly pledged in favour of Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh. The tenders will be opened on the dates given above at 12:00 PM in the presence of the authorized intending tenderers. Tenders not submitted on the prescribed form, not accompanied with Bid Security shall be summarily rejected.

The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders received without assigning any reason thereof.

PRE-BID CONFERENCE WITH INTENDING BIDDERS FOR ITEM Sr. No. 01 shall be held on 29.07.2024 at 03:00 P.M. ONWARDS IN THE P/IEP/ OFFICE, PGIMER, CHANDIGARH. The intending bidders are free to join Pre Bid Conference through video conference. For more details contact 0172-2756469 at Procurement Branch (Import).

NOTE 1. The terms and Conditions of the original Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) available on PGIMER Website will remain same. However on switching over to e-tendering on e-Procurement, the bids will be received in electronic form on e-Procurement website and no bid will be received in Physical form. The EMD will be received in Physical form in Procurement Branch (Import) and scan copy is to be uploaded in electronic form on e-procurement website, CPPT Portal (Central Public Procurement Portal).

NOTE 2. If any of the tender opening dates happens to be a holiday in PGIMER, Chandigarh, then the same shall be opened on next full working day.

Additional Terms and Conditions.

1. The Institute has adopted amended Notice Inviting Tenders (NTI) which is available on e-Procurement website (<https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocureapp>) and Website: www.pgimer.edu.in. Therefore the bidders are requested to go through the Instructions Carefully before submitting bids.

The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders received without assigning any reason thereof.

Professor In-Charge (EP)

SHORT TAKES

MP refuses RTI info on Project Cheetah

New Delhi: The MP forest department has refused to provide information under the Right to Information Act on management of cheetahs brought from Africa and their cubs born in India. In response to a request filed by wildlife activist Ajay Dubey, the department cited Section 8(1)(a) of the RTI Act, which allows a public authority to withhold information if its disclosure would prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security, strategic, scientific, or economic interests of the State, relations with a foreign State, or lead to the incitement of an offence. Mr Dubey had requested the state forest department to provide "management correspondence records of the Cheetah Project and Mandsaur". Public Information Officer MP, said: "The information is related to management branch, which has decided not to provide information under Section 8(1)(a) of the Right to Information Act, 2005."

Puja Khedkar may get notice for probe

New Delhi: The Delhi Police is likely to send a notice to IAS probationer Puja Khedkar for joining the probe early in a case of cheating and forgery filed against her last week, official sources said on Wednesday. The Delhi police has started gathering documents and other evidences for the case. Khedkar was allegedly booked by the Delhi Police Crime Branch on July 19 for misusing the disability and Other Backward Class (non-creamy layer) quotas to secure her candidature in the civil services exam. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has filed a police case against Khedkar for allegedly fraudulently availing the civil services examination by faking her identity to take the exam beyond the permissible number of attempts.

Bihar Assembly passes bill to curb paper leaks

Continued from Page 1 said, Mr Chaudhary also said the legislation is "brought with the future of lakhs of young men and women in mind". It provides that investigating officers in such cases shall "not be below the rank of a deputy superintendent of police". It may be recalled that the state has, of late, been in the news for the Bihar Public Service Commission's Teachers Recruitment Exam 3.0 paper leak case. The new legislation also comes in the backdrop of stringent anti-paper leak laws enacted by the Centre and states like Uttar Pradesh.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely in Mumbai, Thane: IMD

District facing shortage of essential commodities as supply been cut off

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, JULY 24

Several districts in Maharashtra are reeling under floods due to incessant rains. The Indian meteorological department has also issued an orange alert for Mumbai and Thane districts and a red alert for the Palghar district.

The IMD stated that heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places were very likely in Mumbai and Thane on Thursday. "Heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places with extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places were very likely in Palghar," said the IMD's latest weather bulletin. Life in the eastern Vidarbha region has been heavily affected as districts like Bhandara, Gondia, Gadchiroli, Chandrapur, Yawatmal,



People walk along a road amid heavy rains at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in Mumbai on Wednesday.

Vardha, Nagpur received heavy rainfall. In Bhandara district, Wainganga River is flowing above the danger mark and the district administration has issued an alert to the people living along the riverside. The Kardha bridge and several other

small bridges went under water and closed for vehicular traffic. All 33 gates of the Gosekhurd dam project in Bhandara have been opened, which threatened the villages on the river banks of flooding. Several villages in the district have

been cut off by the floods. Life in Gadchiroli has come to a standstill as many villages have been isolated. Major four national highways on Gadchiroli-Chamorshi, Gadchiroli-Nagpur, Ashti-Alapalli, and Alapalli-Bhamragad have been closed. Besides 12 roads in the district have also been closed for vehicular traffic. The district is facing a shortage of essential commodities like milk, vegetables, bread etc as the supply has been cut off. In Chandrapur, all seven gates of the Irai dam have been opened, whereas all 13 gates of Pujaritola dam and seven gates of Sirpur dam have been opened in Gondia district. Gates of Kalisarar dam are also expected to be opened soon, raising the possibility of Bagh river getting flooded.

Army NCO, militant killed in gunbattle in J&K's Kupwara

AGE CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, JULY 24



An army personnel pays tribute to the mortal remains of Lance Naik Subash Kumar after he was injured and later succumbed during a thwarted infiltration bid by terrorists along Line of Control in J&K's Poonch district in Jammu on Wednesday.

A non-commissioned officer of the Army and a militant have been killed in a gunbattle raging in a remote area of the Lolab valley in J&K's northwestern Kupwara district since Wednesday morning. The Army said that Naik Dilawar Khan was critically injured in the gunfight and later succumbed at a medical facility.

Paying tribute to the fallen soldier, the Army's Srinagar-based 15 Corps, also called the Chinar Corps, in a post on X, said, "The brave die never, though they sleep in dust: Their courage nerves a thousand living men." "All ranks of the Chinar Corps salute the supreme sacrifice of our Braveheart Naik (Gnr) Dilawar Khan who laid down his life in the line of duty. Chinar Warriors salute his immense valour and sacrifice, express

deepest condolence and stand in solidarity with the bereaved family," it added. On Tuesday, the Army alongside the J&K police's counter-insurgency special operations group (SOG) launched a cordon-and-search operation at Trimukha Top in Lolab's Kowut area follow-

ing receiving information about the presence of militants there. "Contact with the terrorists was established shortly after midnight and a gunfight between the two sides ensued in which one terrorist was killed and an Army NCO was hurt," sources said.

Rape survivor in Odisha takes loans to pay perpetrators

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, JULY 24

In a shocking incident, a gangraped woman was continuously blackmailed by the accused to cough up money or face consequences.

The accused allegedly extracted money from the victim by threatening that they would post her "objectionable" photographs and videos on social media if she did not meet their demands.

According to reports, the 36-year-old victim, a resident of the Bidanasi area in Odisha's Cuttack city, availed multiple loans to give money to the accused.

The victim lodged a complaint with the Bidanasi police, based on which an investigation has been launched.

Reports said the victim, who runs a stationery shop, met the two accused a few months ago through a woman in the locality. While one of them is the husband of the woman, the other is a resident of Puri.

In her complaint, the victim said the duo allegedly kidnapped and raped her by confining her at various places in Puri and the Nandankanan area in Bhubaneswar. While

According to reports, the 36-year-old victim, a resident of the Bidanasi area in Odisha's Cuttack city, availed multiple loans to give money to the accused

raping her, the accused took objectionable photos and videos of the victim and later started demanding money from her by blackmailing her.

To fulfil their demands, the victim took loans from various organisations and individuals and paid them ₹1.5 lakhs.

However, the accused continued to demand money from her and also forced her to make video calls to them in a naked state.

As the woman ran out of options to give them more money, the two accused made the photos and videos viral. They also sent those photographs and videos to the husband of the victim.

The victim's husband, a car driver, encouraged her to file the case to bring the culprits to book.

The police said it has lodged a first information report (FIR) and a probe is underway. Efforts are on to apprehend the absconding accused, the cops added.

'Rehabilitate families on Haldwani Rly Land'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 24

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Uttarakhand chief secretary to hold a meeting with the Centre and railways to rehabilitate over 50,000 people who have encroached on railway land in Haldwani.

The direction came while hearing a plea filed by the railways seeking vacation of the apex court's January 5 last year's order which stayed the Uttarakhand high court order for removal of encroachments from 29 acres of railways land in Haldwani.

The plea stressed that a strip of the land be made available on urgent basis to facilitate the railway operations as a retaining wall protecting the tracks was demolished during monsoon last year.

Stressing that the state government will have to provide the rehabilitation scheme, a three-judge bench headed by Justice Surya Kant said: "Assuming that they are encroachers but they are human beings and have been living there for decades."

"They have constructed 'pucca' houses. So, how to deal with this situation? The courts can't be ruthless and at the same time it can't encourage people to encroach. This is a very peculiar situation."

State economy to grow at 8.5% in 2023-24 fiscal, reveals survey

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, JULY 24

Odisha chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Tuesday evening presented the Odisha Economic Survey for 2023-24 in the state Assembly ahead of the presentation of the annual Budget on Wednesday, even as the scheduled businesses of the House in the morning and afternoon hours were washed out due to huddle created by the Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD).

The survey said the state economy is estimated to

grow at 8.5 per cent in 2023-24 as per advance estimate in comparison to 7.9 per cent growth in 2022-23. The growth, however, was concentrated in the industry sector and services sector. The survey said the per capita income of Odisha stood at ₹1,61,437 in 2023-24 (advanced estimate), which is 12.4 per cent less than India's per capita income of ₹1,84,205. "While Odisha's per-capita income since 2015-16 has grown at 12.1 per cent, the state ranks 11th among 17 major states. The state is committed to expediting its growth and

developmental effort to increase the per capita income and contribute to the "Viksit Bharat" goal of the country. Quoting the Niti Aayog report, the Economic Survey said the multidimensional poverty headcount ratio in the state has declined from 29.3 per cent in 2015-16 to 15.7 per cent in 2019-21. More than 62 lakh people escaped multidimensional poverty in the state between 2015-16 and 2019-21.

"However, Odisha ranks 6th among the major 17 states with a high inci-

dence of poverty headcount," it said. The report said agriculture and allied sectors are estimated to grow by 3.5 per cent in 2023-24, which contributed 20.4 per cent to the gross state value added (GSVA). "The state needs to take measures towards crop diversification to enhance productivity and farmer's income," the report said. On the industry sector, the report said it is expected to grow at 8.7 per cent in 2023-24 as per advance estimate contributing 43.2 per cent to the GSVA.

World's hottest day record broken in last 24 hours

New Delhi, July 24: The Earth experienced its hottest day in at least 84 years on July 22, with the global average temperature reaching a record high of 17.15 degrees Celsius, as per European Union's copernicus climate change service (C3S).

This exceeded the previous record of 17.09 degrees Celsius, set just a day before on July 21.

These unprecedented temperatures follow a series of monthly heat records - June marked the 12th consecutive month of global temperatures reaching or exceeding the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold. Every month since June last year has been the warmest on record.

Preliminary data from C3S showed that July 22 was the hottest day since at least 1940.

C3S said global temperatures are now the highest they have been for around 1,25,000 years, as a result of climate change caused by burning coal, oil and gas, and deforestation.

"While scientists cannot be certain that Monday was the very hottest day throughout that period, average temperatures have not been this high since long before humans developed agriculture," it said.

C3S data showed that before July 2023, the Earth's daily average temperature record, set in August 2016, was 16.8 degrees Celsius.

However, since July 3, 2023, there have been 57 days with temperatures exceeding that previous record.

Carlo Buontempo, director of C3S, said the difference between the temperatures over the past 13 months and previous records is staggering. "We are now in truly uncharted territory and as the climate continues to warm, we are bound to see new records in the coming months and years," he said.

Christiana Figueres, the head of UN climate negotiations from 2010 to 2016, said: "The much-used term 'unprecedented' no longer describes the horrific temperatures we are experiencing."

Navy rescues critically hurt China mariner

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 24

The Navy successfully evacuated a critically injured Chinese mariner from a bulk carrier ship off the coast of Mumbai, an official said on Wednesday.

The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, Mumbai, received a distress call on Tuesday from bulk carrier Zhong Shan Men, around 370 km from Mumbai, reporting heavy blood loss due to critical injury to a 51-year-old Chinese mariner requesting immediate evacuation.

Responding to the medical emergency, a seaking helicopter was launched from INS Shikra at 5.50 am.

Opp. MPs walk out of LS and RS

Continued from Page 1 party chief Sonia Gandhi, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, along with several MPs of the Congress, TMC, Samajwadi Party, DMK and the Left, joined the protest held on the steps leading up to the Makar Dwar of Parliament.

Protesting against the Budget, Mr Kharge said, "This Budget is anti-people, no one has got justice. They have talked about special package, but special status has not been given. This is a deceptive budget and an injustice to the people."

In the Lok Sabha, the INDIA bloc MPs staged a walkout protesting the alleged discrimination against Opposition-ruled states in the Union Budget. As soon as the House met for the day, the Opposition members tried to raise the issue of budgetary allocations.

As Opposition members raised slogans, Speaker Om Birla cautioned them against disrupting the Question Hour and said members from both sides should follow parliamentary traditions. The Speaker questioned the Opposition for disrupting House proceedings in a "planned manner".

Both Mr Birla and parliamentary affairs minister Kiren Rijju flagged the issue of MPs facing difficulty entering Parliament House due to the Opposition protests on the steps of the building. The Speaker said that several members have written to him over the difficulty faced by them. As they were disallowed to raise their issue, the Opposition members staged a walkout.

In Rajya Sabha, after Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar rejected notices under Rule 267 that called for the suspension of the listed agenda to take up the issue, Mr Kharge, Leader of

the Opposition in the Upper House, said that the Union Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year provided funds and schemes for only two states - Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.

"All other states did not find any mention," Mr Kharge said, terming the Budget a "kursi-bachao" document. He said the Congress and the other INDIA bloc parties "condemn" this discrimination.

As Mr Dhankhar gave Ms Sitharaman the floor to respond, Mr Kharge led the Opposition bloc out of the House, saying they were walking out in protest.

The Union finance minister termed the Congress allegation outrageous. She said all the states never found a mention in any of the previous Budgets, including those presented by the Congress.

Ms Sitharaman said that she did not name many states either in the interim Budget presented in February ahead of the general election or in the full budget tabled in Parliament on Tuesday, but that does not mean that government schemes are not working for the states.

The Union minister cited the example of Maharashtra, which was not named in either of the Budgets and said that did not prevent the Union Cabinet from approving the ₹76,000 crores Vadnavan port project in Dahanu in the state last month.

"Did Maharashtra get ignored because I did not mention the name of Maharashtra? (An amount of) ₹76,000 crores has been announced for that project," Ms Sitharaman said, adding that she can go on to cite several other states that have got major projects.

"If the speech does not mention the name of a particular state, does it

mean that the schemes of the government of India, the programmes of the government of India and the externally-aided assistance that we obtain from the World Bank, ADB, AIIB and institutions like that do not go to these states? They go as per a routine," she said.

The Union finance minister pointed out that the expenditure statement of the government gives out the item-wise allocation.

"This is a deliberate attempt by the Opposition parties, led by the Congress, to give an impression to people that, oh, nothing has been given to our states. It has only been given to two states," she said, throwing a challenge to the Congress to show if they named every state of the country in each of their Budget speeches.

"This is an outrageous allegation, which is 'not acceptable,'" Ms Sitharaman said.

As the MPs belonging to Opposition parties returned to the House, the finance minister said that the Trinamul Congress had raised questions on Tuesday about nothing being given to West Bengal in the Budget, but the fact is that several schemes launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last 10 years have not been implemented in the state.

Her statement was met with vociferous opposition from the TMC members, who claimed the BJP-led Centre owes ₹1-lakh crore to West Bengal.

Reacting to the Opposition calling the Budget "discriminatory", the BJP lashed out at the Congress and other parties and said it reveals their political frustration and negative attitude towards "some backward states" that need special focus and assistance for development.

INDIA bloc to pressure govt for 'guarantee' on MSP: Rahul

Continued from Page 1 the farmers were denied entry into the Parliament complex. After the matter was highlighted, the farmers' leaders were allowed inside where they held a detailed meeting with Mr Gandhi.

Besides AICC general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal, general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh, party MPs from Punjab and Haryana, including former Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi, Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Gurbjeet Singh Aujla, Dr Dharamvir Gandhi, Dr Amar Singh, Deepender Singh Hooda and Jai Prakash were present at the meeting.

Mr Venugopal later wrote on X: "Snubbed by the government, beaten with sticks and welcomed with bullets, these farmers have lost all expectations from the government."

About the meeting, he said it discussed the urgent need for a legal MSP guarantee, justice for the protesting farmers who had suffered at the hands of the Haryana government and various other issues concerning the farmers today. One of the farmers, Jagjit Singh Dallewal, said the government had failed, so far, to fulfill assurances. "The Swaminathan Report implementation is a must. We will continue our march towards Delhi."

Modi, Starmer to launch Tech Security Initiative

Continued from Page 1 meaningful technology value chain partnerships between our two countries."

The progress made on the initiative will be reviewed on a half-yearly basis at the deputy NSA level, New Delhi said, adding that the two nations will "also set up a bilateral mechanism led by India's ministry of external affairs and the UK government for promotion of trade in critical and emerging technologies, including resolution of relevant licensing or regulatory issues". "Both countries view this TSI as a platform and a strong signal of intent to build and grow sustainable and tangible partnerships across priority tech sectors," New Delhi said.

On Wednesday, Mr Lamy also called on Mr Modi, who said he "appreciated the priority accorded" by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer to "broaden and deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership". Mr Modi said he "remained committed" to elevating bilateral ties and "welcomed the bilateral Technology Security Initiative and the desire to conclude a mutually

beneficial FTA". During his meeting with Mr Jaishankar, Mr Lamy hailed India as the "emerging superpower of the 21st century" and "one of the fastest-growing economies in the world". He also "pushed for a reset of the partnership between the two countries and reiterated the UK's commitment to securing a free trade agreement (FTA) that will benefit both economies."

Earlier in the day, Britain said that "economic, domestic and global security" is "at the heart of the foreign secretary's first visit to India as he travels to New Delhi to unlock the full potential of the UK-India partnership". The British foreign secretary's visit, which will conclude on Thursday morning, is the first major in-person bilateral engagement between the two nations under the new Labour government led by Mr Starmer, who has expressed his desire to further strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership between both nations.

On the proposed FTA pact that is yet to be inked, Mr Lamy said, "Our free trade agree-

ment negotiations are the floor, not the ceiling, of our ambitions to unlock our shared potential and deliver growth, from Bengaluru to Birmingham. We have shared interests in green transition, new technologies, economic security and global security."

Ahead of the visit, he had said, "I am travelling to India in my first month as foreign secretary because resetting our relationship with the Global South is a key part of how this government will reconnect Britain for our security and prosperity at home."

The British high commission, in a statement, said Mr Lamy's visit is to "cement a stronger partnership on technology, climate and growth" and that he will "highlight the importance of a new partnership with India that focuses on economic, domestic and global security".

The statement said Mr Lamy will "galvanise support for accelerated action on the climate crisis with India as an indispensable partner - driving forward the clean energy transition and creating opportunities for British and Indian businesses".

THE ASIAN AGE

25 JULY 2024

Unequal Budget allocations due to politics nothing new

The criticism of the various sections of the Opposition, including Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, besides Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Trinamul Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee and others, that politics laid the broad contours of the Union Budget presented by the finance minister in Parliament on Tuesday, is unfair.

While the subject of national finances, taxation, resource allocations and policies around these together comprise the branch of political economy, there has never been a single apolitical Budget in the history of Independent India, so such an allegation is peculiarly selective.

Taxation, the fundamental and permanent feature of any Budget, is driven by ideology. There is almost no justification to it, save the political view that the rich must pay for the upkeep of the poor, and that, within a nation, state, region, or geography, a government is obliged to enforce such redistribution of wealth.

Each Budget is an exercise in defining the priorities of a government, and people. This might include sectoral allocations — agriculture, education, industry, energy and electricity, healthcare, defence and infrastructure — breaking these down further into roads, railways, airports, ports, and so on or be classified based on beneficiary — farmers, women, youth, senior citizens, physically challenged and minorities. The distribution can be based on states even, and legitimately.

As long as the Centre has fairly allocated for and complied with certain statutory distributions, like GST share for states, it is the fair prerogative of the Central government and the finance minister to make provisions, allocations, sub-policies, schemes and special schemes for different states as and how they deem fit.

Therefore, while Andhra Pradesh and Bihar have been called out for being granted a disproportionately large share of resources this year, given the power balance in the NDA government and the existential dependence of the BJP on the two allies, the Telugu Desam Party and the Janata Dal (United), neither its motivation, nor the actual allocation, can be considered wrong.

Even parents don't always distribute resources and assets with precision or go by the equal distribution principle every time. Bihar has been one of the most backward states in the country and it is of paramount importance to address it for larger national success. Similarly, the state of Andhra Pradesh has been without a capital city for a decade since its bifurcation.

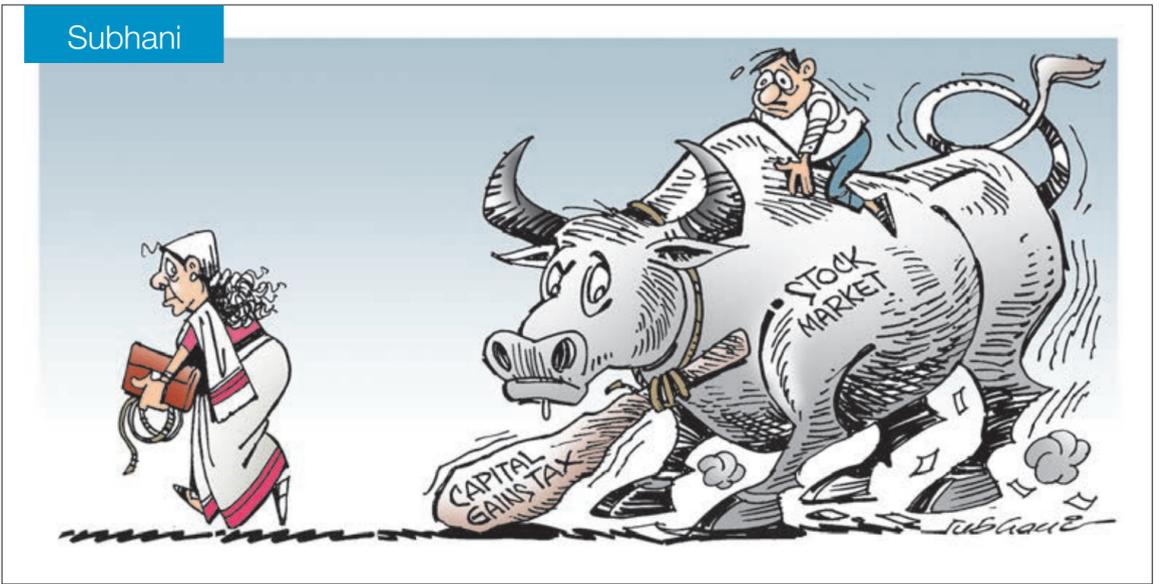
The allocation for Bihar and Andhra, therefore, must be seen as rightful national investments in the future turnaround of these states which would then give fair returns to the nation as a whole.

It is also rather churlish conduct, and unwise, of the Opposition to believe that the Narendra Modi government must not take decisions based on pragmatic realities based on the peculiar characteristics of the electorate's verdict. If anything, the Budget of Ms Nirmala Sitharaman must be celebrated as a victory of democracy — and if the lottery was won by Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, why not?

Different states, at different times, and for different reasons, have been given allocations that might have been dubbed unfair or discretionary. Take the examples of Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Let us not be guided by convenient logic.

Criticise the budget by all means, but not on the basis of regional bias or compulsions of power politics. So what if this is a 'kursi bachao' Budget?

Subhani



An undiplomatic storm over India's 'strategic autonomy'



Abhijit Bhattacharya

Soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Moscow, when Washington's man in Delhi, Eric M. Garcetti, made a highly uncharacteristic and undiplomatic outburst targeting his host country, questioning whether India was taking its now-close partner, the United States, for granted while it pursued "strategic autonomy" in its relations with Russia, what kind of message was the Biden administration actually sending?

Eric Garcetti is not just any diplomat, he is, to use the formal phrase, the "Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of India". So, his comments can't be treated as a tantrum thrown by a junior diplomat or a minor official. When he speaks, it is the United States of America that speaks, and not just a mere "angry young man".

His remarks on India's policy thus needs careful scrutiny. "Don't take the (India-US) relationship for granted... pay something into it. It's like a marriage. Let's listen to each other in this relationship". But who exactly is taking this relationship "for granted"? And if it's like a marriage, then who is the husband and who is the wife? And hasn't it happened, even in a "successful marriage", that the couple haven't always "listened to each other"?

Mr Garcetti says: "I know that India likes its strategic autonomy... but in times of conflict there is no such thing as strategic autonomy". That is totally unacceptable and amounts to a direct threat to India's 1.4 billion people. That effectively means that "you have to follow my dik-

If India gets oil, gas, fertiliser, etc., at competitive price from anywhere in the world, why shouldn't New Delhi go for it? Can India fulfil all its energy needs at a concessional price from the West?

by China and Pakistan? Didn't the US often look the other way in case of Pakistan?

Isn't it a fact that the policy of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, founder and mentor of non-alignment as a philosophy, who coined the term "Panchsheel", or the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, has been followed by every succeeding Indian government, irrespective of ideological differences?

The United States is well aware that India has crucial development and other economic priorities, which require it to act in its own interests, and due to its immense size and population it cannot be equated with smaller countries in Europe or Asia. Any thought of war will only retard India's development, and therefore it can't be a party to either of the belligerent camps of the twin ongoing wars of the West.

India's "strategic autonomy" today is driven by compulsion, not choice. If India gets oil, gas, fertiliser, etc., at competitive price from anywhere in the world, why shouldn't New Delhi go for it? Despite lofty thoughts that the US and India "are two countries with one heart", can India fulfil all its energy needs at a concessional price from the West? Just see what happened to Europe after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and the subsequent cutoff of Russian oil and gas to the West.

See what happened to globalisation. It was the brainchild of the West, supposed to be the perfect solution to avoid all future wars as the Soviet Union

crumbled and the Cold War became history. Now it is falling apart and one of its biggest detractors is poised to return to the White House as America's next President. The US and Western sanctions on Russia over Ukraine may have been the final nail in the coffin.

Contextually, why did not tiny Switzerland, located in the heart of Europe and with a very small population, ever join any alliances for hundreds of years? Why did the bigger powers never coerce it to join one camp or the other? Was it because it was the world's bank, and the belligerents needed to have their money in a safe, neutral place? No one, therefore, should castigate India for not choosing sides, or to see it as an act of hostility.

Unfortunately, the US ambassador had gone on, hitting below the belt, with further remark that "over past years countries had witnessed ignoring borders... and I don't have to remind India how important borders are".

There was a clear reference to the Ladakh incursion four years ago, the Galwan attack of June 15, 2020, a humiliation inflicted by China. India is fully aware of the sanctity of borders and forced occupation of its territory by China and Pakistan. But India, unlike the West, has no love for war and is doing its best to resolve issues without violence.

The United States and its chief diplomat in New Delhi must avoid being judgmental about India's policy of "strategic autonomy", and particularly in relation to its ties with Russia. The US needs to accept that New Delhi has friendly relations with both Washington and Moscow and does not want to be forced to choose between the two. Now, as earlier, India has to follow a policy of non-alignment out of compulsion, not choice.

The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College, New Delhi. The views expressed here are personal.

LETTERS

BRIGHT IDEA!

The Union Budget does not address a prime economic issue: How to tackle the huge loss that occurred during the Covid-19 shutdowns. Because all services and industries were closed for an year, the nation's economy incurred a daily loss of atleast ₹25,000 lakh crores. Also could we have a web timetable with columns, i) expenditure cum source in rupees, ii) revenue cum source in rupees, iii) final figure on the given day? This should be updated on an everyday basis so that the people can have an idea as to what budget promises are being fulfilled (with regard to implementation).

P.V. Srinivas Sreelekha Secunderabad

AN EPIDEMIC

ELON MUSK'S remarks about his child, Vivian Jenna Wilson, who "transitioned" from male to female, have ignited a firestorm of controversy. Musk attributed Vivian's transition to the so-called "woke mind virus", a pejorative term for cultural influences related to gender identity, and expressed regret over his initial support for her use of puberty blockers. His comments, which contradict prevailing consensus on transgender care, have been criticised, but is he right? In that case, transgenderism, as different from autogynaephilia, among the youth of the United States has assumed epidemic proportions.

Amarjeet Kumar Hazaribagh

RAILWAYS OMITTED

THE OMISSION of the term "railway" in the Union Budget 2024 comes as a huge disappointment in terms of lack of focus on critical areas in the public domain. Going by the Interim Budget, the capital outlay of ₹2.65 lakh crores is far below expectation, particularly in view of utilisation of ₹2.62 lakh crores in 2023-24. The expectation of measures to augment rail safety, which has been under considerable stress lately, was dashed. Hopes were shattered regarding updates on the three economic corridors announced in the Interim Budget. No talk about completion of the J&K freight corridor either.

Abhijit Roy Jamshedpur

Babus & RSS: Why lift ban?

The Union government's decision to lift the ban on government servants from attending the activities of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), the ideological mentor of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), reflects the desperation of the Narendra Modi government to propitiate the driving force of the Hindutva movement for its survival. It is perhaps an announcement which makes an open secret one no more but the government has not yet given a credible explanation for a step which even Atal Behari Vajpayee, an RSS member himself, did not deem fit to take as Prime Minister.

The RSS would claim that it is a cultural organisation and its volunteers are into nation-building. It's true that they appear at spots that have witnessed natural disasters or major accidents; its many offshoots are working among the tribal people and in rural areas. But those who have complained about the exclusivist agenda of this "volunteer force" have always viewed it with fear and trepidation.

The fact that the RSS was banned in Independent India in the aftermath of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi at the instance of Sardar Vallabhai Patel, then deputy prime minister and home minister. The iron man of India took the decision "to root out the forces of hate and violence that are at work in our country to imperil the freedom of the nation and darken her fair name". It was banned in 1975 during Emergency and then in 1992 after the razing of Babri Masjid, which the Supreme Court called "an egregious criminal act". The ban on government servants from participating in RSS activities was first imposed in 1966 after a violent march of sadhus on the capital by sadhus demanding a ban on cow slaughter.

The RSS idea of Hindutva and its push for "one nation one culture" are at variance with the syncretic culture of India. Public servants openly endorsing the first cannot strengthen the second, and hence are unacceptable.

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Pradeep S. Mehta



Consensus vital to ensure India's growth, progress with 'Ram Rajya'

Celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Consumer Unity and Trust Society with lectures around the world by eminent persons on a variety of contemporary topics, one was delivered by Nripendra Misra, chairman of the Ram Janmabhoomi Trust in New Delhi on the "Lessons from the Ram Lalla Temple" on April 30. A few friends found it a bit odd that we were organising a talk on a religious matter because we are an apolitical organisation.

For me and my colleagues, it was a civilisational issue that we have been able to build a temple in the birthplace of Lord Ram after such a long struggle. After all, Ram belongs to the whole society and not just Hindus. Many in the audience enjoyed the excellent talk given by Mr Misra. The talk was chaired by Tejendra Khanna, a former lieutenant-governor of Delhi. My own plea at the end of the talk was that we look forward to the holistic Ram Rajya, whatever be the outcome of the then ongoing general election, rather than any divisive fundamentalist agenda.

According to his book, *Hind Swaraj*, published in 1929, Mahatma Gandhi had defined "Ram Rajya" as the kingdom of justice, equality and truth. Somewhat reflecting from the metaphor of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", Gandhi also preached Ram Rajya as the binding principle of good global governance.

On the other hand, vice-president Jagdeep

Dhanekar reminded us of the spirit of "Ram Rajya" which is enshrined in the Constitution and that its makers had thoughtfully placed the picture of Lord Ram, Lakshman and Goddess Sita on the top of the chapter related to the fundamental rights. He said this at a public event in Jaipur in June.

It is therefore my plea to the new National Democratic Alliance government to imbibe the principles of Ram Rajya in their governance agenda. This follows from what Bhisma tells Yudhishtira in the *Shanti Parv* of the *Mahabharata*, which was repeated by Chanakya in *Arth Shastra*: "The happiness of the ruler lies in the happiness of his subjects. It is not what the ruler likes that matters, but only what people like."

Having spoken about the spiritual principles which should usher in Ram Rajya, let me come to one of the most fundamental problems of unhappiness which we have in poor employment and low wages. There are few others but let me start with this as our under-employed and unemployed youth numbers are huge. The new government is looking at this as an imperative goal to be targeted and that all forces of society, the government and the market should work together to create jobs and job creators. This too has to be done in a granular fashion and states must be an inseparable part of this shared responsibility.

Considering political differences, how can

this be achieved? The Niti Aayog has been designed to play this role, but it needs to be steered by an experienced politician with a proven track record who can be accepted by all parties. As it stands, the Niti Aayog has excellent economists and scientists in leadership positions, but that is a necessary condition and not sufficient. We will need all of them for their grey cells. A senior politician can play this leadership role, if he or she agrees. They would need suitable incentives to play such a role without being viewed with suspicion as another centre of power.

Second, this is where the states have a bigger role to play, subject to their getting adequate funding from the Central pool: healthcare, education and skilling. These basic values are necessary to increase productivity and improve our competitiveness, which would lead to the desirable higher growth. For all the three areas, let there be well designed doable agendas to be overseen by Central missionary councils. These councils should be headed by state ministers from Opposition-ruled states and not Union ministers, for better ownership. This would be one way to bring the whole nation together.

Third, a critical area which also needs cooperative management is finance. This huge topic needs so many issues to be sorted out. One among them is the rationalisation of rates under the Goods and Service Tax (GST). This

should also be under a missionary council to be headed by a state minister.

Fourth, the Centre should urgently enter into a national compact with the Opposition parties and state governments to promote the national agenda for growth, jobs and happiness. This would be true cooperative federalism. After all, we did succeed in bringing in the GST as an internal market integration instrument which required consensus across the states and also amendments in the Constitution.

In conclusion: Let me say that there are umpteen areas which require reforms, on which much has been written here and elsewhere. Some of which are in the exclusive domain of the Union government and many are in the domain of state governments. Both have to work together through consultation and consensus. Let me therefore invoke *Ram Rajya* as the guiding principle for good governance and people's happiness.

The writer is the secretary-general of CUTS International, a 40-year-old leading global public policy research and advocacy group

SHORT TAKES

CROWDSTRIKE: OUTAGE DUE TO SOFTWARE FLAW

Washington, July 24: CrowdStrike, the cybersecurity company that caused a global computer outage last week, on Wednesday said that the breakdown stemmed from a flaw in its test software. In an incident report, the company said the glitch was pushed out to millions of Windows computers and that the company will change the way it handles such updates in the future. "Due to a bug in the content validator, one of two (updates) passed validation despite containing problematic content data."

UK POLICE NAB MAN AFTER SOLDIER STABBED

London, July 24: Police have arrested a 24-year-old man on suspicion of attempted murder after a British Army soldier was seriously wounded in a stabbing incident in Kent, southeast England.

Police said officers received reports on Tuesday evening of a soldier in uniform, a man in his 40s, suffering stab injuries in Sally Port Gardens, Gillingham. The area is located close to the Army's Royal School of Military Engineering.

"The motivation for the attack is currently unknown and forms part of our ongoing enquiries."

IMRAN REFUSES TO UNDERGO POLYGRAPH TEST

Lahore, July 24: Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has refused to undergo polygraph and voice matching tests as part of an investigation by Lahore police in connection with a dozen cases related to the unprecedented May 9 riots last year.

A 12-member forensic team reached Adiala Jail on Tuesday to conduct the polygraph test on Imran.

The May 9 riots in 2023 were triggered across the country after the PTI founder was arrested by the National Accountability Bureau in a £190-million corruption case.

BOAT SINKS IN FALKLANDS, 9 PEOPLE DEAD

Copenhagen, July 24: Nine people were confirmed dead and four were still missing after a British-Norwegian fishing vessel sank off the coast of the Falkland Islands on Monday, the boat's owner said on Wednesday.

A total of 27 crew members had been aboard the *Argos Georgia*, a Saint Helena-flagged vessel, of whom 14 have so far been found alive. Stig Ervik, CEO at Norway's Ervik Havfiske Holding, told Reuters. Ervik said the fishing vessel had taken in water but that the company did not yet have full details of the course of events.

WATER TRACES IN SOIL BROUGHT BY CHINA MISSION

Beijing, July 24: Chinese scientists studying the soil samples of the moon brought by Chang'e-5 mission found water molecules in lunar soil, according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

The research — carried out jointly by researchers from the Beijing National Laboratory for Condensed Matter Physics and the Institute of Physics of CAS and other domestic research institutions — was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Nature Astronomy* on July 16, the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* reported.

JOHN MAYALL, BRITISH BLUES PIONEER, DIES

London, July 24: John Mayall, the British blues musician whose influential band the Bluesbreakers was a training ground for Eric Clapton, Mick Fleetwood and many other superstars, has died.

He was 90. A statement on Mayall's Instagram page announced his death on Tuesday, saying the musician died on Monday at his home in California. "Health issues that forced John to end his epic touring career have finally led to peace for one of this world's greatest road warriors," the post said.

Plane crash in Nepal kills 18, pilot survives

Kathmandu, July 24: Eighteen people were killed when a small passenger plane belonging to Nepal's Saurya Airlines crashed and caught fire while taking off from the capital Kathmandu on Wednesday, officials said.

The plane, carrying two crew members and 17 technicians, was going for regular maintenance to Nepal's new Pokhara airport, which opened in January last year and is equipped with aircraft maintenance hangars.

"Shortly after takeoff ... the aircraft veered off to the right and crashed on the east side of the runway," the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal said in a statement.

The crash once again focused attention on the poor air safety record of the impoverished, landlocked Himalayan nation that is wedged between India and China and is heavily dependent upon air connectivity due to its limited road network.

Nearly 350 people have died in plane or helicopter crashes in the country since 2000.

Nepal's prime minister, K.P. Sharma Oli, visited the crash site and asked people to "be patient" in a social media post, without elaborating.

An emergency Cabinet meeting was called to

form a panel to probe the crash, a government spokesman said.

Eighteen of those on board the crashed 50-seater CRJ-200 aircraft, with registration 9N-AME, were Nepali citizens while one engineer was from Yemen, Saurya said.

"Only the captain was rescued alive and is receiving treatment at a hospital," said Tej Bahadur Poudyal, the spokesman for Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport.

Television visuals showed fire fighters trying to put out the blaze and thick black smoke rising into the sky. Images also showed the plane flying a little above the runway and then tilting to its right before it crashed.

Other visuals showing rescue workers examining the charred remains of the plane, strewn in lush green fields, and bodies being carried to ambulances on stretchers as residents looked on.

"The plane was scheduled to undergo maintenance for a month beginning on Thursday ... It is unclear why it crashed," said Mukesh Khanal, marketing head of Saurya Airlines.

Kathmandu airport was closed temporarily following the crash but reopened within hours, officials said. — Reuters



Army personnel clear the debris of a plane after it crashed during takeoff at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, on Wednesday. — AFP

NK trash balloons land close to prez complex in Seoul

Seoul, July 24: North Korean balloons carrying trash have landed near South Korea's presidential office, the Presidential Security Service said on Wednesday.

Trash carried by the balloons was identified in the area around the government complex in the Yongsan area, the security service said in a statement. The objects in the balloons contained no contaminants or other risks, it added.

It was not clear if President Yoon Suk Yeol was in the complex on Wednesday.

Since May, North Korea has periodically sent hundreds of balloons carrying an assortment of trash across the heavily fortified border with the South, prompting South Korea's military to restart loudspeaker broadcasts targeting the North.

Ko Seok-noh, a resident of Paju, was concerned about balloons flying over the border town which is about an hour north of Seoul. "It's uncomfortable

for us when the balloons come over. It's trash coming over." Ko said.

The balloons have also caused wider disruption and last month briefly halted operations at Incheon, the world's fifth-busiest international airport besides an important cargo hub.

"The North has said it is retaliating to an ongoing propaganda campaign by North Korean defectors and activists in the South, who regularly send inflatable containing anti-Pyongyang leaflets, alongside food, medicine, money and USB sticks loaded with K-pop videos and dramas.

North Korea had sent another batch of trash-laden balloons earlier on Wednesday, South Korea's military confirmed.

"With the current wind direction being westerly, the suspected trash balloons aimed at the South are moving towards the northern part of Gyeonggi (province)," the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. — Reuters

Trump campaign memo says Harris energised Democrats

Files complaint to block Biden's campaign funds from being given to Harris

FBI CHIEF TO TESTIFY

● **FBI DIRECTOR** Christopher Wray is set to testify about the bureau's probe into the attempted assassination of former president Donald Trump, with lawmakers at a congressional hearing likely to press him for fresh details about the gunman's motive and background.

● **ELON MUSK** has denied reports that he was donating \$45 million a month to a fund backing US ex-president Donald Trump's White House bid. In a post on X, Musk called the report he was funding a so-called political Super-PAC "ridiculous."

Super PACs are specially designed groups that can spend unlimited amounts on political candidates and causes. "I am making some donations to America PAC, but at a much lower level and the key values of the PAC are supporting a meritocracy & individual freedom. Republicans are mostly, but not entirely, on the side of merit & freedom," he added. *The WSJ* had reported that Musk plans to donate \$45 million monthly to America PAC, even though Musk stated that he would not donate to either Trump or President Joe Biden.



US Vice-President and Democratic Presidential candidate Kamala Harris is greeted by Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson, his wife Dominique Johnson and their two daughters, as she arrives in Wisconsin. — AFP

● **GERMAN CHANCELLOR** Olaf Scholz praised US Vice-President Kamala Harris as a "competent and experienced" politician who could well win the US election, but he stopped short of endorsing her over Republican Donald Trump. Scholz told reporters at his annual summer press conference in Berlin that "I think it's entirely possible that Kamala Harris wins the election but it will be American voters who decide".

tion to withdraw from the race and endorsed her to be the party's presidential candidate against Trump. In less than 50 hours of Harris announcing her candidacy, she has amassed a whopping \$100 million from the supporters, reflecting the ground swell in her support, a development that has unnerved the Trump campaign. "Many of you have heard me refer to the upcoming 'Harris Honeymoon'". — PTI

Harris bashes Trump in debut rally

Milwaukee, July 24: US Vice-President Kamala Harris assailed Donald Trump on Tuesday at her first campaign rally since replacing President Joe Biden as the Democratic presidential candidate, while a *Reuters/Ipsos* opinion poll showed her taking a marginal lead over her Republican rival. In a 17-minute speech,

Harris aggressively went after Trump's vulnerabilities, comparing her background as a former prosecutor to his record as a convicted felon.

Harris ticked through a list of liberal priorities, saying that if elected she would act to expand abortion access, make it easier for workers to join unions and address gun violence,

drawing a sharp contrast with Trump, the Republican nominee for president in the Nov. 5 election.

"Donald Trump wants to take our country backward," she told a cheering crowd at West Allis Central High School in a Milwaukee suburb in Wisconsin, a battleground state with a pivotal role in deciding the poll outcome. — Reuters

BROADBAND NET PARTIALLY BACK IN B'DESH

Dhaka, July 24: Broadband internet services were partially restored in Bangladesh after five days of countrywide blackout amid clashes between security personnel and protesters demanding reforms to government job quotas that reportedly killed more than 100 people, media reports said on Wednesday.

The broadband connections were being restored on a limited scale late on Tuesday, the reports said.

The state minister for post, telecommunication and information technology, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, described the phased internet restoration as a "trial run". *The Dhaka Tribune* newspaper reported.

It would prioritise banking, commercial sectors, technology firms, exporters, outsourcing providers and media outlets, he said, adding that full internet service would be reinstated across the country. — PTI

Bibi faces protests, boycott in US

Washington, July 24: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks before the US Congress on Wednesday in hopes of bolstering US support for continuing Israel's offensives against Hamas and other adversaries.

But boycotts of his appearance by some Democratic lawmakers and expected protests outside are highlighting how his hardline government's conduct of the devastating war in Gaza is opening fissures in long-standing American support for his country.

Netanyahu is assured a warm welcome from Republican lawmakers who arranged his speech in the House chamber, an appearance making him the first foreign leader to address a joint meeting of Congress four times, surpassing Britain's wartime leader Winston Churchill.

Many Democrats and political independent Bernie Sanders plan to boycott Netanyahu's appearance. But the most notable absence will be behind him: Vice-President Kamala Harris, who serves as pre-

HEZBOLLAH BROADCASTS DRONE VIDEO OF AIRBASE DEEP IN ISRAEL

Beirut, July 24: Lebanese armed group Hezbollah broadcast drone video on Wednesday that it said showed air defence facilities, planes and fuel storage units at Israel's Ramat David airbase, nearly 50 km (30 miles) into Israeli territory.

It was the third in a series of videos released by Hezbollah which the group has said are meant to demonstrate how far its surveillance of Israel has reached. The first video

showed the Israeli port city of Haifa and the second the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

A spokesman for the Israeli military said in a statement on X that the video was filmed by a surveillance drone and the base's operations were not affected. The latest video was more than eight minutes long, and Hezbollah said, mostly shot on Tuesday. It included labels pointing out apparent military infrastructure. — Reuters

GERMANY BANS GROUP ACCUSED OF IRAN LINKS

Berlin, July 24: The German government on Wednesday banned a Hamburg-based organisation accused of promoting the Iranian leadership's ideology and supporting Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, as police raided 53 properties around the country. The ban on the Islamic Centre Hamburg and its various sub-organisations followed searches in November. — AP

sident of the Senate and traditionally would sit behind whatever dignitary is speaking, says a long-scheduled trip will keep her away on Wednesday.

And the next Democrat in line, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, is declining to attend.

Republicans targeted the absence of Harris, the new Democratic front-runner for the presidency, as

a sign of disloyalty to an ally. However, ex-president Donald Trump's running mate, J.D. Vance, said campaigning would also make him a no-show for the Israeli leader's speech.

Thousands of protesters opposed to Israel's war in Gaza, some carrying Palestinian flags, gathered near the US Capitol on Wednesday ahead of a speech by Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu to members of Congress.

A stage decked with banners included one declaring the Israeli leader a "Wanted War Criminal" in reference to an arrest warrant sought by International Criminal Court prosecutors.

Oscar-winning actor Susan Sarandon took to the stage and condemned the death toll. — Agencies

Russia not ready for talks, Ukraine tells China

Beijing, July 24: Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba told his Chinese counterpart that his government did not believe Russia was ready for "good faith" negotiations to end the war, his ministry said on Wednesday.

Kuleba's statement to China's foreign minister Wang Yi came as he visited China for talks starting

on Tuesday with Russia's most important ally.

China presents itself as a neutral party in the war, insisting that the only way to end it is by bringing both Ukraine and Russia to the negotiating table.

It says it is not sending lethal assistance to either side, unlike the United States and other Western nations, though it is a key po-

litical and economic partner of Russia, with Nato members branding Beijing a "decisive enabler" of the war.

The Ukrainian foreign ministry said Kuleba told Wang that Kyiv was prepared to negotiate with Russian representatives when Moscow is willing to hold talks "in good faith".

"Dmytro Kuleba reiterated Ukraine's consistent position that it is ready to negotiate with the Russian side at a certain stage, when Russia is ready to negotiate in good faith, but stressed that currently there is no such readiness on the Russian side," the ministry said Wednesday.

It cited Kuleba as saying: "I am convinced that a just peace in Ukraine is in

China's strategic interests, and China's role as a global force for peace is important". Kuleba is the first senior Ukrainian official to visit China since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

His trip is scheduled to last until Friday. China's foreign ministry said Kuleba and Wang held talks in Guangzhou. — AFP

MERCURY RISING World in April moved out of the El Nino climate pattern which amplifies temperatures

World breaks hottest day record for 2nd day in a row

London, July 24: The world again registered its hottest day on record on Monday, July 22, inching past on Sunday which had just taken the title, according to preliminary data from a European Union monitoring agency.

As heatwaves sizzled around the world and wildfires engulfed parts of the Mediterranean, Russia and Canada, the global average surface air temperature rose to 17.15 degrees Celsius (62.87 degrees Fahrenheit) on Monday. That was 0.06 C (0.11 F) higher

than Sunday's record according to the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service, which has tracked such data since 1940.

This includes temperatures in the Southern Hemisphere which is currently in winter, bringing down the worldwide average.

Scientists said it was possible that Tuesday or Wednesday of this week could again surpass Monday's record, as temperature peaks generally happen in clusters. The last record hot day was in July 2023, when the daily peak was

broken across four consecutive days from July 3 through 6. Before that, it was set in August 2016.

What makes this year's record unusual is that unlike in 2023 and 2016, the world in April moved out of the El Nino climate pattern which generally amplifies global temperatures owing to warmer-than-usual waters in the Eastern Pacific. Karsten Haustein, a climate scientist at Leipzig University in Germany, said it was remarkable that the record was breached again. — Reuters

EVACUATION AFTER WILDFIRE IN ITALY

Rome, July 24: Around 1,000 tourists were evacuated on Wednesday after a wildfire broke out in the southern Italian region of Puglia, firefighters said.

Three Canadair water bombers and a helicopter were deployed to try to contain the blaze.

"The fire is being tackled from the land and from the air," a fire service spokesman said. — AFP



A wildfire rages in Messina on Wednesday evening following strong winds. — AFP

CLIMATE ACTIVISTS UPSET AIR TRAFFIC

Frankfurt, July 24: Germany's Cologne-Bonn airport suspended flights for several hours on Wednesday after climate activists glued themselves to a runway, while authorities foiled similar actions at other European airports.

UK police said they had arrested nine members of Just Stop Oil for conspiring to disrupt Heathrow Airport. — Reuters

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	80,148.88 -0.35
Nifty 50	24413.50 -0.27
S&P 500*	5,478.95 -1.38
Dollar (₹)	83.72 0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	108.07 0.008
Euro (₹)	90.75 0.22
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	69,050.540 0.79
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	81.33 0.40
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.964 -0.005
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.233 -0.006

*As of 8:30 PM IST

LIC m-cap hits ₹7.33L-cr on shares gain

Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) market capitalisation hit a new high of over ₹7.33 lakh crore on Wednesday as LIC's equity shares gained 6.64 per cent on BSE. LIC shares gained close to 7 per cent intraday touching a high of ₹1,170 and finally closed at ₹1,159.60 up 6.64 per cent. LIC shares had hit life time high of ₹1,175 on Feb. 9, 2024. LIC is sixth most valued company by market cap on the stock exchanges.



L&T posts 12% gain in Q1 profit to ₹2,786 crore

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) posted a 12 per cent rise in consolidated profit after tax (PAT) to ₹2,786 crore in June quarter. The company has achieved consolidated revenues of ₹55,120 crore for the first quarter of the current fiscal, registering a year-on-year growth of 15 per cent with a robust execution witnessed in the projects and manufacturing portfolio on the back of a large order book, the company said.

ESIC schemes enrol 23L new members in May

Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) added 23.05 lakh new workers under the ESI scheme run by it in May 2024, the labour ministry said. As many as 20,110 new establishments were brought under the social security ambit of the ESI scheme in May, thus ensuring social security to more workers, the ministry said. Further, it stated that net registration grew 14 per cent compared to 20.23 lakh in May 2023.

Suraksha Diagnostic files papers with Sebi

Kolkata based Suraksha Diagnostic, a full -service and integrated diagnostic chain operating in East India, filed draft red herring prospectus with Securities and Exchange Board of India for an initial public offering (IPO). The IPO is an offer for sale of over 1.91 crore equity shares by the promoter and individual selling shareholders. Operating since 1992, the company was founded by Somnath Chatterjee.

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Hiring pace in July fastest in 18 years

Business activity grew on strong demand in services sector

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

India's business activity accelerated at its fastest pace in three months in July. Besides, companies also hired at the fastest pace in over 18 years. The country's business confidence saw an upward movement after moderating in June, while high input costs forced companies to keep raising sales prices, a private survey showed on Wednesday.

As per the data compiled by HSBC Flash India, composite PMI output index was recorded 61.4 at the start of the second fiscal quarter against June final 60.9, while India's services PMI business activity index stood at 61.1 in July against 60.5 in June final. "Similarly, the July manufacturing PMI output was at 62.2 against 61.9 in June," the survey



● **THE RISE** in output in July was led by increase in business activity in manufacturing sector, while the pace of expansion in services output also accelerated and remained well above its long-run average.

showed.

Pranjal Bhandari, chief India economist at HSBC, said that the composite output data signalled continued robust growth in India's private sector. "The rise in output in July was led by increase in manufacturing activity in manufacturing sector, while the pace of expansion in services output also accelerated and remained well above its long-run average," Bhandari said. "As a result, companies

turned more optimistic in July, following a moderation in business confidence in June," the chief economist added.

Rising from 60.9 in June to 61.4, the survey also showed that the headline India composite output highlighted the strongest rate of expansion for three months. "Moreover, the pace of increase was considerably above its long-run average. Similarly, the growth strengthened at goods producers

and service providers, with former leading the upturn," the survey noted.

The new orders placed with private sector firms in India rose sharply in July. "The upturn was broadly similar to June and the quickest in three months. As was the case for output, rates of expansion accelerated in the manufacturing and service sectors. Although the new export orders came in below that for total new orders, it remained significantly above the neutral level of 50.0," it showed.

"Moreover, rising since June, the latest reading indicated the second-strongest pace of expansion in the near ten-year series history (behind May)," it noted.

Job creation was stronger at manufacturing companies than at their services counterparts," the survey added.

Removal of indexation on asset sale to pinch pockets

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, JULY 24

The Finance Bill has removed the indexation provision available while paying taxes on the gains made from the sale of long-term assets, including property, and transfer of shares. This will take away the provision to index the capital gains from sale proceeds against inflation.

"Withdrawal of indexation has a big implication



for everyone," said Prashant Khatore, partner, at Ernst & Young.

"Earlier, a person who sold an asset class after holding for a long term could index the profit with

the yearly inflation rate. If the gain was lower than the indexed value, it could be termed as capital loss and the tax was not payable. Even if the gain was higher than the indexed value, the rate was applicable for the additional gain. Now this provision has been removed," said Khatore.

The capital gain tax will now be applicable for the entire gain made out of the sale or transfer. "It is proposed to amend

the said proviso to limit its applicability to cases

where long-term capital gain arises from the transfer which takes place before the 23rd day of July 2024, of a long-term capital asset, other than capital gain arising to a non-resident from the transfer of shares in, or debentures of, an Indian company referred to in the first proviso. This amendment will take effect retrospectively from 23rd July 2024," the Bill said.

RBI tightens norms for money transfers

FC BANKING BUREAU
MUMBAI, JULY 24

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday tightened the know your customer (KYC) record requirements for domestic money transfer services. According to the revised framework, the remitting bank will have to obtain and keep a record of name and address of the beneficiary for cash payout.

Remitting banks or business correspondents shall register the remitter based on a verified cell phone number and a self-certified 'officially valid document'. The central

bank said every transaction by a remitter should be validated by an additional factor of authentication.

The remitting bank will have to include the remitter details as part of the IMPS/NEFT transaction messages, which should now include an identifier to identify the fund transfer as a cash-based remittance.

A review of domestic money transfer was recently undertaken of various services facilitated in the current framework. Based on the review, these changes are being made, the RBI said.

Meta platforms get AI in Hindi

New Delhi, July 24: Meta AI is now available in seven new languages, including Hindi, according to the social media giant. The move, which extends the capabilities of Meta's AI assistant in the multilingual domain.

"You can also interact with Meta AI across WhatsApp, Instagram, Messenger and Facebook

in new languages: Hindi 'Hindi-Romanized Script', French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish with more to come," the Menlo Park, California-based company said.

Meta said it is expanding access to Meta AI - the assistant in its apps - and introducing new features to help users with answers and ideas. —PTI

TECH | BYTE

Analysts expect Copilot to generate recurring revenue for company

Microsoft betting on workplace AI bots

Redmond, July 24: Microsoft is betting that artificially intelligent assistants will transform workplaces around the world, generating new excitement and revenue for a very old product: the Office productivity software used by hundreds of millions of workers.

The lineup of AI assistants, which Microsoft calls Copilots, can automate manual tasks and generate or summarise text and images.

But this is no plug-and-play offering, according to customers and people who advise them. First, compa-

nies have to figure out what data to feed into a Copilot so it can perform effectively. Early adopters say that while Copilots excel at distilling information, they fall short in other respects. As a result, widespread adoption is expected to take a while.

"It is a success in terms of being the most visible business productivity enhancement based on artificial intelligence (AI) that exists today," said Adam Preset, a Gartner vice-president and analyst, who says he's talked with more than 1,000 clients about deploying



Microsoft Copilots. "But in terms of its impact on work by the average digital worker, the jury is still out."

Microsoft hasn't disclosed how many customers are paying for Copilot subscriptions but says plenty are making the leap despite growing pains. Jared Spataro, the corpo-

INDIA TO CUT BORROWINGS IF SMALL SAVINGS INFLOWS RISE

Mumbai, July 24: India could look at cutting gross borrowing later in the financial year if inflows into national small saving schemes (NSSF) are high, economic affairs secretary Ajay Seth said on Wednesday here.

NSSF consists of public investments in schemes like postal deposits, savings certificates, public provident fund and the senior citizens' savings scheme, among others.

The federal government has increased its reliance on borrowing from NSSF over the last few years to meet its funding requirements.

In the federal budget announcement on Tuesday, the government reduced gross borrowing by ₹12,000 crore (\$1.43 billion) to ₹14.01 lakh crore for the fiscal year, and cut the fiscal deficit target by 20 basis points to the 4.9 per cent.

Market participants were expecting the borrowing to be reduced by around ₹50,000 crore, after a larger-than-expected surplus transfer from the Reserve Bank of India.

However, the government decided to cut borrowing via shorter-dated treasury bills instead of government bonds.

India is aiming at NSSF collections of ₹4.20 lakh crore for the ongoing financial year, down from ₹4.67 lakh crore in the interim budget.

—Reuters

70% of investors burnt money in futures & options

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, JULY 24

A study conducted by Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has found that more than 70 per cent (7 out of 10) of individual intraday traders in the equity cash segment have incurred losses in FY 2022-23.

The study also noted the surge of over 300 per cent in the number of persons participating in intraday trading in equity cash segment in FY 2022-23 compared to FY 2018-19.

"The study is expected to enhance awareness among individual traders about the risks involved in intraday trading in the equity cash segment," Sebi said.

"One in three individuals who trade in the equity cash segment, trades intraday. Share of young intraday traders (age less than 30 years) has grown to 48 per cent in FY 2022-23 as compared to 18 per cent in FY 2018-19. Proportion of loss-makers increased to 80 per cent for traders with very frequent (more than 500 trades in a year) trading activity," it noted.

"The percentage of loss-makers among younger traders was higher (76 per cent in FY 2022-23) as compared to other age groups. Average number of trades by loss-makers was higher than the profit-makers. Over and above the trading losses incurred, loss makers expended an additional 57 per cent of their trading losses as trading costs in FY 2022-23; Profit makers spent 19



● **DURING FY23**, 76 per cent of individual traders with annual intraday turnover more than ₹1 crore, were loss-makers with an average loss of ₹34,977 during FY23.

per cent of their trading profits as trading costs in FY 2022-23," the study found.

"71 per cent of the individual traders incurred losses, with an average loss of ₹5,371 during FY23. Whereas, 29 per cent of the individual traders made profits, with the average profit by profit-makers being ₹5,989 during FY23."

During FY23, 76 per cent of individual traders with annual intraday turnover more than ₹1 crore, were loss-makers with an average loss of ₹34,977 during FY23, it said.

The study is based on a sample of individual clients of top-10 stock brokers, accounting for around 86 per cent of the individual client count in the equity cash segment during FY23, Sebi said.

Participation from Tier-1, Tier-2, Tier-3 cities increased to 3 times, 5 times, 10 times, respectively, in FY23 as compared to FY19, the study found.

GST on gold, silver likely to go up

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, JULY 24

The government is likely to increase the goods and services tax (GST) rate on gold and silver to 5 per cent from the current 3 per cent.

The government has brought down the basic customs duty on gold bars from 15 per cent to 6 per cent. After applying the GST rate of 3 per cent, the effective taxes on gold

have come down to 9 per cent from 18.5 per cent earlier. Similarly, the effective tax rate on silver bars also has come down to 9 per cent.

According to the industry, the customs duty rate reduction could be a precursor to GST rate hike.

"The government is likely to increase the GST rate on gold and silver to 5 per cent. While the customs duty reduction will have a positive impact on smug-

● **THE GOVERNMENT** is likely to increase the GST rate on gold and silver to 5 per cent.

While the customs duty reduction will have a positive impact on smuggling of gold

gling of gold, which has become rampant in recent times, a GST rate increase can compensate for part of the revenue loss," said Ajay Kedia, MD, Kedia

Commodities.

The increase in GST rates is good news for the state governments as the increased rates will provide them with higher tax revenue compared to their share of central tax revenues. "As the state governments get a higher share of the tax revenues, they might be keen to act against smuggling," said Somasundaram P R, former regional CEO, India, World Gold Council.

PLI allocation increases 77% in FY25

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, JULY 24

Electronics and IT, pharma, automobiles and auto components dominated the allocation under the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme in the budget. Overall PLI allocation in the Budget gone up by 77 per cent in FY25.

The aggregate allocation for different sectors under the PLI scheme in the Budget estimate is ₹14,182 crore against ₹8,007 crore in the revised estimate (RE) of FY24.

Of this, large scale electronics and IT hardware has been allocated ₹6,200 crore against ₹4,559 crore in FY24 RE. Automobiles and auto components have been given ₹3,500 crore against ₹483 crore earlier



— almost a six-fold increase. Both sectors together accounted for 68 per cent of the total PLI allocation.

Pharma too saw an increase in allocation from ₹1,696 crore to ₹2,143 crore. The food processing industry has been allocated ₹1,444 crore, while white goods (ACs and LED lights) saw allocation going up from ₹65 crore to ₹298 crore. Cell battery storage, specialty steel, and drones too witnessed

substantial hikes in allocation. The allocation for textiles went up from ₹5 crore to ₹45 crore.

However, toys, footwear, and leather sector as well as telecom and networking products saw minuscule allocation.

In the case of infrastructure sectors, roads and railways had a combined share of 47 per cent. Capital outlay towards roads increased 2.9 per cent to ₹2.72 lakh crore while that for railways rose by 5 per cent to ₹2.52 lakh crore. The Defence sector saw a 8.6 per cent higher capital outlay of ₹1.8 lakh crore.

Communications and housing and urban affairs witnessed 19.6 per cent and 7.9 per cent higher allocation.

TDS ON INSURANCE PAY-OUTS CUT TO 2% FROM EARLIER 5%

FC BANKING BUREAU
MUMBAI, JULY 24

The Union Budget 2024-25 has proposed to reduce the tax deducted at source (TDS) on payment of bonus or maturity proceeds in life insurance policies and on commissions paid to insurance agents (by insurers) from 5 per cent to 2 per cent.

The proposal to reduce TDS on life insurance policy cover, including on the sum by way of bonus, by amending Section 194DA of the Income tax Act will come into force from October 1, 2024 while amendment to Section 194D, pertaining to TDS on payment of insurance commission will take effect from April 2025.

The budget also announced that there will be simplification of the rules and regulations pertaining to foreign direct investment (FDI), which will be keenly awaited by foreign investors in the insurance sector.

The Budget reiterated the GST Council's views that the activity of apportionment of co-insurance premiums.

Shailaja Lall, Partner, insurance and reinsurance, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co., Insurance said, "this issue was the bone of contention between GST authorities and insurers for the past few years and is a welcome clarification for the insurance sector, as the heavy burden of potential GST payments for such arrangements will now be lifted."

