

Heavy rains lash the State capital with brief intervals

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Over 18 districts would receive heavy rainfall in the next 24 hours, warned the Met on Thursday; heavy rains lashed the state capital since morning and continued with brief intervals till evening.

Earlier on Wednesday, 5 out of 11 sluice gates of Pagara Dam in Sagar were opened and water was released. People had to be rescued from the roofs of houses in Bildhav of Bina.

effort. A youth was swept away in the Sindh river in Sankua Dham of Datia. His body was found after 22 hours on Thursday.

Mandsaur. The flow of water in the streets was very fast. After the rain in Satna, the collectorate was flooded.

Ratlam, Ujjain, Mandla, Narsinghpur, Rewa. For the first time in the season, the rainfall figures in the state have come equal to the average rainfall.



Commuters move on the road amid rain in Bhopal on Thursday. Pioneer photo



Mayor Malvi Rai, BJP MLA Rameshwar Sharma, BMC Council Speaker Kishan Suryavanshi and others perform a bhoomi puja for the preparation of Durga Puja Pandal of Bittan Market Haat Vyapari Sangh ahead of the Navratri festival in Bhopal on Thursday. Pioneer photo

Miscreants vandalise Orion International School

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

School management staff was attacked while school was vandalised by miscreants at a private school in Shahpura; reason behind the attack remained unknown, police have started investigation.

The attackers injured the school secretary Abhinav Bhatnagar. He has lodged a complaint at Shahpura police station. Gyanendra Bhatnagar said that around 12 noon, some anti-social elements came to the school in the name of Vidyarthi Parishad.

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14 yrs jail to 3 in poppy husk smuggling case

Bhopal: District court sentenced three accused to 14 years of imprisonment and fined Rs 1 lakh each in the 7-year-old poppy husk smuggling case. The accused used to grind dondachuri with peanut shells and trade it.

// कार्यालय पुलिस उपायुक्त, नगरीय पुलिस जिला भोपाल //

- क्रमांक/पु.उपा.न.पु./भोरनर/निविदा/838/24 दिनांक :- 22.07.2024
सूचना पत्र
मध्यप्रदेश भण्डार क्रय नियम तथा सेवा उपाज नयम 2015 (यथा संशोधित 2022) के विन्दु क्रमांक 37 (I) एवं 37 (II) में निहित प्रावधान अनुसार नगरीय पुलिस भोपाल में विभागीय परिसंपत्तियों का संधारण अंतर्गत प्रशासकीय भवनों एवं आवसों में मरम्मत कार्य कराये जाने हेतु फर्मा/संस्था/विभाग की सूची तैयार की जाना है।

Labourer finds diamond worth Rs 80L

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A labourer found a 19.22-carat diamond in a mine in Madhya Pradesh's Panna district on Wednesday which could fetch about ₹ 80 lakh or more at the government auction, officials said.

District Collector Suresh Kumar said the 19.22-carat diamond Mr Gaud uncovered in a shallow mine could fetch ₹ 80 lakh or more in the auction. The gemstone would be put up for open bidding at the next diamond auction, the collector said.

Bank of Maharashtra (A Govt. of India Enterprise) Gautam Nagar Branch Bhopal - 462023 (MP.) POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule - 8 (1)] WHEREAS, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Maharashtra under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-Section (12) of Section 13 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated mentioned below calling upon the borrower and guarantor to repay outstanding Amount (mentioned below) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Table with 3 columns: Name & Address of Borrowers & Guarantor (s), Details of Property, Outstanding Amount. Includes details for Mangilal Verma S/o Girdhari Lal Verma and others.

Tiger movement witnessed in Bhopal

Bhopal: Tiger movement has been reported at two places in Bhopal. A tiger hunted a cow near Motherbull Farm on Kerwa Road, while it attacked a cow in Bairagarh Chichli. People are terrified due to the tiger's movement while forest department teams are also searching.

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.

Corporate Office: Unit No.802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V.Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400069 Vidisha Branch : 1st Floor, Gaurav Business Square, Opposite Adani Wilmar Plant, Sanchi Road, Vidisha - 464001 (M.P.)

E-Auction Notice for Sale of immovable Properties under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Asset and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" with no known encumbrances Particulars of which are given below:-

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL Government of India, Ministry of Finance, Department of Finance Services, (Banking Division) 797-II, Shanti Kunj, South Civil Lines, Jabalpur 482001 (M.P.) Case No.: RC/717/2019 in O.A. No. 1518/2018 BANK OF BARODA VS Bhayaji Patel E-AUCTION NO. 197/2024 Under mentioned properties will be sold by "on line e-auction" through website https://www.bankeauctions.com for recovery of a sum of Rs. 14,71,414.00 (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Seventy One Thousand Four Hundred Fourteen only) payable by you/him in respect of Recovery Certificate in O.A.No.1518/2018 issued by the Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal, Jabalpur with interest at 10.50% p.a. with simple interest from 04-12-2018 and costs payable as per recovery certificate till realization.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Reaching out

Netanyahu seeks support for Gaza war during US Congress speech, despite many senators skipping it

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called for US solidarity in his address to Congress, despite declining popularity and increasing opposition in his own country. In an address to the United States Congress, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought to rally American lawmakers behind Israel's ongoing military operations in Gaza. The speech, delivered amidst a backdrop of escalating violence and rising civilian casualties, underscored Netanyahu's determination to secure unwavering support from Israel's most powerful ally. He emphasised the existential threats faced by Israel from militant groups operating in Gaza, particularly Hamas. The Prime Minister framed the military actions as a necessary response to ongoing rocket attacks and acts of terrorism that have plagued Israeli communities. However, Netanyahu's speech did not address the mounting international concerns regarding human rights violations in the Palestinian territories. Reports from various human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have highlighted a range of human rights violations.



The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has been further exacerbated by a blockade that severely restricts the movement of people and goods, leading to shortages of essential supplies such as food, water, and medical care. The present Gaza offensive, which has gone over 250 days, has left a spree of death and destruction. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, at least 34,000 people have been killed, and more than 77,000 have been wounded in Israeli attacks. About 72 per cent of those killed are women and children. United Nations human rights chief Volker Turk has gone on record saying that a child in Gaza is killed or wounded 'every 10 minutes.'

Israel's actions violate international law and constitute collective punishment, disproportionately affecting innocent civilians and deepening the humanitarian crisis. The United States, as Israel's primary ally, plays a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This support has also placed the US under scrutiny, with calls for it to leverage its influence to promote peace and uphold human rights. The very weaponry provided by the US is being used by Israel against the civilian population in Palestine which is undergoing a horrendous time. There is growing advocacy within the US, both among the public and some members of Congress, for a more balanced approach. The US is urged to take a firm stand against human rights violations and to support diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a sustainable and just resolution to the conflict. A sustainable peace can only be achieved through a comprehensive and inclusive approach that addresses the legitimate concerns of both parties. The US has a moral and strategic responsibility to advocate for human rights and justice in the region. The US can play a pivotal role in paving the lasting peace in the region by telling Netanyahu to comply with the UN directives on Gaza and stop bombing the civilian targets to minimise civilian casualties.

PICTALK



Members of the State Disaster Management Authority perform rescue operation during a mock drill, in Prayagraj. PTI

Union budget 2024: A major thrust on agriculture

The budget's focus on sustainable agriculture and innovation highlights the Government's commitment to support the farmers and ensuring food security

Union budget 2024 - a thrust on agriculture for a visit by Biju Dharmapalan. In the Union Budget 2024 presented by Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, great emphasis has been placed on agriculture and space. Both are essential pillars for transforming our country into a developed nation.



The latter is futuristic, and the former is the lifeline of the present generation. No nation can survive without the farming community, and they are the 'Annadata'. In the changing global climate and environmental conditions, the traditional farming sector would not be sufficient to feed the population. The government has allocated Rs.1,51,851 crores for the agricultural and allied sectors. Stress has been given to agricultural research to increase productivity and release 109 new high-yielding and climate-resilient crops have become essential under the prevailing global climate conditions. During the past few years, we have noticed changes in the climate in

are scarcer. Experiencing drought-like situations in several parts of the country due to climate changes has badly affected the soil health, making the farmland unhealthy for future farming. Moreover, the frequency and severity of droughts are expected to rise, particularly in regions that are already water-stressed. Drought conditions reduce crop yields and affect soil health, making it more difficult for future crops to grow. On the other hand, excessive rainfall and flooding, becoming more common, can destroy crops, erode soil, and wash away essential nutrients. Extreme weather patterns will not only affect crop productivity and microbial biodiversity, which keeps our planet healthy. In addition, it will expedite the emergence of new pests and diseases that may affect crop growth and productivity. The emergence of new diseases may even lead to a pandemic affecting several crop species across the globe. This may jeopardise our food security. Developing resilient crops for the next century is a challenging task. It requires significant investment in research and devel-

opment. Our laboratories in the agricultural universities need thorough transformation. They need to be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities that can handle molecular breeding programmes and large crop phenomics facilities that can speed up the development of new crop varieties. Our scientific community should acknowledge the farmers and share the benefits of the genes taken from traditional varieties for developing resilient crops. By promoting healthy soils, biodiversity, and resilience, natural farming has the potential to support long-term food security and environmental health. Agriculture is not merely an occupation; it is the bedrock of our food supply and a critical component in balancing the health of our planet. So, we need to promote and incentivise our farmers who take up new technologies so that farming remains a viable and respected profession for youngsters.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

Pushpa Kamal Dahal falls from grace



K S TOMAR

The new coalition, dominated by the pro-India Nepali Congress, will now be led by the communist leader Oli who will have a daunting task of ensuring political stability

Politicians have been grabbing the power by following Machiavellian principle of showing complete disrespect to means, the morality and values. This is true of Pushpa Kamal Dahal who fell from the grace after facing humiliating defeat while seeking trust vote in Nepal parliament. While seeking trust vote in Nepal parliament, Prachanda faced the worst type of humiliating defeat as he got 63 votes (Rashtriya Swatantra Party-21, CPN(US)-10 and his party-32) as against 194 votes of new coalition combination of Nepali Congress (89 MPs) and Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (78 MPs) which also got support from other smaller parties like Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Janata Samajwadi Party (Upendra faction) etc. in the house of 275 where majority mark was 138 only. Oli has staked claim after president Ram Chandra Poedel invited the political parties having strength to form the government.



In a positive move, Dr. Rajan Bhattarai, the Foreign Affairs Department chief and a Standing Committee member of the CPN-UML emphasized that CPN-UML believes that Nepal's progress or the welfare of its people can be achieved only by adopting a Pro-India stance. He made it clear that the party's chairman, KP Sharma Oli, is keen on taking Nepal-India relations to new heights thereby aligning with the requirement and urgency of the modern era. Due to fragile nature of democracy in Nepal, unabated and persistent instability has been trademark of the government which is evident from 16 time change of guards in the span of 13 years thereby hitting the interests of the common people in the country besides pushing the country into financial crisis and debt liabilities especially huge loans advanced by China. In a midnight swoop and a dramatic turn of events on July 9, a secret deal was clinched between two former Prime ministers viz. Sher Bahadur Deuba of Nepali and K.P.S. Oli of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) which sealed the fate of current PM, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Prachanda. In this manner, yet another coalition of Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and Nepali Congress came into existence today following the humiliating defeat of Prachanda, a diehard loyalist of China' on the floor of house. New regime will be headed by Ex PM, Oli which had preceded withdrawal of the support to current PM, on July 3, 2024 thereby reducing it to minority. The Janata Samajwadi party led by Ashok Rai having 7 PMs also withdrew the support and recalled three ministers from Prachanda government. The coalition government will be dominated by Pro India, Nepali Congress, though a die-hard communist leader, former PM, Oli will be heading it for a term of one half year which will be followed by a takeover by former PM, Deuba of Nepali congress as agreed by two coalition partners. Foreign policy experts say that major factors responsible for the collapse of coalition of Prachanda-Oli, duo, included Power Struggle, style of functioning of prime minister, Policy Differences, Coalition Dynamics and Coalition Dynamics which may lead to more stable dispensation comprising of Nepali Congress, Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and Janata Samajwadi party. Amidst the toppling game,



OLI AND DEUBA COMBINE WILL BE UNDER COMPULSION TO KEEP EQUI-DISTANCE WITH TWO REGIONAL POWERS VIZ INDIA AND CHINA WHICH HAVE GOT GEO-POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE AFFAIRS OF NEPAL

midnight power sharing agreement between two former Prime ministers, viz. Sher Bahadur Deuba, and Nepali Congress and K.P.S. Oli chairman of Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) was signed on July 5, 2024 thereby leading to a sudden change of regime in Nepal. New coalition government of Oli and Deuba is bound to face multiple challenges which will be key to success otherwise its fallout could be midterm polls. The fragile nature of the new government consisting of the communists (Pro China) and Nepali Congress (Pro India) having opposing ideologies could pose a major challenge to keep them in unison and amalgamated. Oli and Deuba combine will be under compulsion to keep equi-distance with two regional powers viz. India and China which have got geo-political and strategic interests in the affairs of Nepal. Oli's previous stint as PM was marked by his extreme Anti India action of redrawing the map which had shown Indian territories including Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura and Kalapani as part of Nepal. It had exasperated India which rejected this misadventure thereby terming it as baseless besides being an attempt to spoil ties. Now, as dominant partner in the coalition, the onus of checking this tendency will lie on Deuba to prevail upon Oli to come

out of Anti-India mentality and protect age-old relations between two nations. The communists regimes led by Prachanda always gave clear indications about the commitment to China which will expect new government to go ahead with Belt and Road (BRI) initiative especially when outgoing PM has approved the proposal which had been signed between two countries on May 12, 2017. It will be an uphill task for Oli to stick to his predecessors' resolve to toe China's line about BRI as Nepali congress is totally opposed to it hence chances of any progress seem to be remote. It will be a test of the new government to deal with India's Agnipath scheme which is one of the major irritants so far. Nepal's border issues with India, including disputes over territories require a multifaceted approach. Strengthening the Nepal-India Joint Boundary Commission to expedite the resolution of boundary issues through technical and diplomatic means may yield positive results. The survival of the coalition will depend solely on mutual trust of partners and balanced diplomatic strategy and refrain from offending two regional giants which had been lacking in the past. (Writer is a senior journalist and a political analyst; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BUDGET REACTIONS

Madam — Apropos the news headline "Less Tax, More Jobs" (July 24). Finance Minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman's 2024 Union budget should be the budget of the whole country, but the FM has presented it as if it is the NDA's budget. To make matters worse, taxpayers have to foot the bill for the NDA government's political survival. There is nothing wrong when the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi criticizes the NDA government's Union Budget, claiming it undermines India's federal structure. He highlights neglect towards other states and vows to advocate for equal justice. INDIA protests against the 'Kursi Bachao' Budget in Parliament. Interestingly, FM Sitharaman, elected from Karnataka, provided nothing in the budget for her state, which is ruled by the Congress. In her Purvodaya scheme for the all-round development of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh, only Bihar and Andhra Pradesh benefit significantly. For instance, Rs 11,500 crore was allocated to Bihar for flood mitigation, while West Bengal, one of the worst flood-affected states, is crying for help. Salaried employees in the new tax regime will save up to Rs 17,500 in income tax. Corporate tax rates on foreign companies were reduced to 25%. Family pensions were enhanced from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000. However, nearly 60 lakh EPF pensioners have been receiving Rs 920 to Rs 1000 per month since 1995 without any increase. The government deserves praise for exempting three cancer medicines from custom duties and allocating Rs 2.2 lakh crore to make housing more affordable. It's also commendable that FM Sitharaman has introduced an internship program similar to Congress' Nyay Patra. Overall it is a mix bag but could have addressed the pressing issues on priority. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Tragedy at Tribhuvan International Airport



It is deeply shocking that eighteen people have lost their lives in a deadly plane crash at Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu. The plane, a twenty-year-old Bombardier CRJ-200 regional jet owned by the

private airline company Saurya Airlines, skidded off the runway and crashed. It seems that the aviation industry in Nepal has fallen short of both standards and expectations, failing to keep pace with other countries in terms of modernization and sophistication. It is a pity that Nepal has not learned any lessons from past incidents, leading to a continuing series of plane crashes. The aviation sector is crucial for Nepal's tourism and businesses. It is high time that the government of Nepal, along with private airline owners, collaborate to revamp the deteriorating aviation sector. They must pay due attention to improving passenger safety, modernizing logistics and infrastructure, and introducing new jets to avoid future accidents. Path-breaking reforms are essential. Janga Bahadur Sunuwar, Bagrakote

CONTROVERSIAL REMARKS

Madam — The Telangana-cadre IAS officer Smita Sabharwal is being criticized for questioning the need for a disability quota in civil services. She asked the "rights activists" to examine why the policy was yet to be implemented in police services, foreign services, and the defense sector. By raising such questions, she violated the code of conduct for civil servants and is punishable under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 and other relevant laws. Prominent coach and mentor of civil services aspirants in Hyderabad, Bala Latha Mallavarapu, challenged Smita to sit for the UPSC examination again and beat her score. The Supreme Court recently ruled in favor of Pankaj Kumar Srivastava, a 100 percent visually impaired candidate who cleared the Civil Services Examination in 2009 but was denied an appointment. This ruling marks a significant milestone in the fight for disability rights in India. inappropriate remarks. Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

BIDEN WITHDRAWS FROM THE RACE

Madam — Joe Biden Withdraws from Presidential Race. Madam, Accepting the views of prominent Democratic leaders, including former President Barack Obama, President Joe Biden has announced his withdrawal from the presidential race. Age is not on his side, and Donald Trump, after surviving an assassination attempt, has gained momentum. Vice President Kamala Harris is likely to take on the aging Donald Trump. In India, Kamala Harris' presumptive nomination elicited only lukewarm enthusiasm. During the 2019 election campaign, she criticised Prime Minister Modi's policies on Kashmir, saying, "We have to remind Kashmiris that they are not alone in the world." The possibility of tension in relations between the two countries, despite statements of warm friendship, cannot be ignored. Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

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FIRST COLUMN

BUDGET BALANCES FISCAL DISCIPLINE AND EMPLOYMENT

Union budget takes definitive steps to create jobs for India's youth



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The eleventh full-term budget under Modi 3.0 walks the fiscal discipline path, despite being a coalition government, he is heading. The surprise results from June 4th, which threw in a coalition government for Prime Minister Modi, perhaps for the first time in his career, did not stop his budget proposals, political with sound economics in the background. In the run-up to the budget, many had expected, that the Finance Act would be populist keeping in mind the state elections of Haryana, Maharashtra and Jharkhand scheduled later this year. However what came out from Nirmala Sitharaman's tab, was a document that chose to focus on core areas of long-term growth and decent infrastructure spending, without giving in to populist demands. The key theme as highlighted by Government is Employment.

Questions have been raised in post-budget analysis regarding the feasibility of the schemes announced for creating lakhs of jobs for the youth of the country. The apprentice scheme promising a government stipend for lakhs of youth per year, in some of the largest companies of India, may only be a game changer if these young interns are attentively skilled to be formally absorbed into jobs, once their tenure is over. There are serious concerns regarding the abundant availability of a relatively unskilled workforce, hanging around in large offices, without learning any meaningful skills.

Similar questions have been raised regarding the EPFO-linked new job incentivisation scheme, which has various blindspots, possibly pushing a well-thought-out policy push into a dark corner. It may be said that the policy push is primarily to bring more youth employed in the informal sector within a formal standard workforce and instil a financial literacy discipline in them early on. However, this financial literacy falls flat when one looks at the changes made in the tax structures for any investor punting in the speculative equities market. The increased rate of capital gains tax and a general push to the new income tax regime, seem to be at cross purposes of the financial literacy programme, the government wants youth to undertake to avail of full benefits of INR 15,000, as a first month's salary subsidy. The earlier tax regimes instilled a sense



of financial responsibility for any youth entering the formal job sector, with several choosing at least one product, as a means to save and claim tax rebates in the future. This set them off for a long financial discipline path during their tenure as working professionals, which now seems to be slowly being eased out. The counter-argument the government may have is, that they want the consumer economy to grow first, led by the youth, who may be more willing to spend on food items, entertainment etc, with the monthly salaries they would be drawing in their new jobs. However, it prevents them from getting into habit of savings, which are useful during rainy days or Covid type crises. Yes, the government, did well to maintain the fiscal discipline glide path, buoyed by a better than expected GDP growth, and lumpy dividend payouts from the central bank. Overall inflations, except for food are also within tolerable levels, giving the government, a cushion for spending on welfare projects, it feels are essential. Union budget 24-25 is an attempt woo back disgruntled voters.

The lesson BJP appears to have taken from the June 4 results is, that the youth are excited about huge temples, few smart glitzy trains, and cheap mobile data in their 'Made in India' phones, but they are increasingly getting anxious to earn money, have an engaging occupation, which feeds into their aspirational upwardly mobile lifestyle. Then there are pulls and pressures of coalition politics, with NDA's two partners TDP and JD(U) having their wish lists for catering to their core constituencies. A long-term dice has been rolled, perhaps NDA 3.0 with this budget has achieved the goldilocks balance.

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

Budget 2024: A blueprint for long-term growth



DEEPAK SOOD

The Union Budget 2024-25 reaffirms the Govt's dedication to long-term growth. India is well-positioned to harness its immense potential for rapid development



In a pivotal move aimed at strengthening India's economic prowess, the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 has made significant strides in assuring continuity of progressive reforms. There is cheer in the MSME, E-commerce and start-up worlds, which have been extended additional support as the country progresses on the road towards a Viksit Bharat. The Finance Minister made various announcements to empower the Garib, Mahila, Yuva and Kissan. The announcements made under this budget are timely and set to propel the Indian economy to new heights during the Amrit Kaal, enhancing its resilience in an ever-evolving global landscape.

A booster for MSMEs

The budget rightfully supports the bottom of the industrial pyramid by offering much-needed ease of credit for the MSME segment. India has 633.9 lakh MSMEs, where over 99% of them qualify as micro-enterprises that make up 630.5 lakh enterprises. One of the critical reasons why micro enterprises (with investments up to INR 10 million) do not graduate to being small or medium enterprises is the lack of access to formal credit. By doubling the MUDRA loan amounts and setting up new SIDBI branches, credit will now be more accessible to these organizations. Other steps (mandatory Trade Receivables Discounting System) have improved liquidity, while Industrial parks will provide the much-needed digital support that MSMEs usually cannot afford for growth. Additionally, the new credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs offers term loans without collateral or third-party guarantees, significantly easing the financial burden on small business owners and fos-

tering entrepreneurship. Such positive support for this crucial sector is bound to give it the confidence to shed its risk-averse nature and grow with ambition on the road to 2047.

Skilling and Job Creation

With this budget, the Government has responded positively to the need for job opportunities and skill development among youth in our country. The continued emphasis on skilling will allow training institutions and large corporations to participate in creating a pool of professionally trained manpower that would be readily absorbed by them and the larger MSME ecosystem, which is often strained for funds for training purposes. Meticulous implementation will, however, be key to setting the ball rolling in the right direction of creating jobs. Rural Economy

The rural economy

continued to receive support from the government, as strengthening this segment will be crucial for the sustained economic growth of the country. Budget 2024 had some big announcements for them that would increase productivity and food security in grains and oilseeds. Such measures will go a long way in creating new economic clusters that will support sustained growth.

With 1 crore farmers to be trained in natural farming, marketing, certification, and brand-

ing, organic farming is all set to receive a big stimulus. The focus on addressing the impact of climate on our food basket showcases the government's long-term vision towards building resilience in the ecosystem.

Start-ups and E-Commerce

There is general cheer in the start-up ecosystem across India over the abolition of the angle tax, proposed in the budget. Angel tax, introduced in 2012, was imposed on the capital raised by unlisted companies through the issue of shares to Indian investors if the share price exceeded the fair market value (FMV) of the company. Traders and artisans using e-commerce sites got a lift up in this budget when TDS was not just reduced but TDS delays were decriminalized.

E-commerce exports, \$2 billion now, are expected to be \$350 billion by 2030. With revised custom duties, the Government hopes to give the required fillip to these artisans/traders who sell their wares using websites, in line with its Make in India strategy.

Energy security

India is a fast-developing economy and our energy needs are rising rapidly. By encouraging private investment in setting up small nuclear energy reactors and encouraging R&D into newer forms of nuclear energy, the budget aims to achieve India's goals of energy security. With regular energy audits across

clusters, larger commercial thermal plants and a pumped storage policy, the budget aims to help India cope with the rising demand without missing a step. However, our green economy targets are very ambitious and much more needs to be done to ensure our transition to green fuels.

Digitization of Land Records

This one step is perhaps the most impactful step the budget has outlined for the growth of India's economy. Vast tracts of our land, especially in rural India, are often embroiled in disputes with no proper documentation. This is a key hurdle in land acquisition for major projects. By digitising these records across India, the Government will end middlemen and reduce the number of land cases in the legal system. Overall, the Union Budget 2024-25 reinforces the Government's commitment to sustained long-term growth.

With strategic investments and forward-looking policies, India is poised to navigate global challenges while harnessing its immense potential for socio-economic development. The road towards Viksit Bharat could have its set of challenges, especially given the global dynamics, but the sustained vision and progressive policy support will help realise the dream of a Viksit Bharat.

(The writer is secretary general of ASSOCHAM; views expressed are personal)



THERE IS GENERAL CHEER IN THE START-UP ECOSYSTEM ACROSS INDIA OVER THE ABOLITION OF THE ANGEL TAX, PROPOSED IN THE BUDGET

Commemorating 25 years of Kargil victory: A tribute to India's bravehearts

As we remember the 527 soldiers who laid down their lives, we celebrate the enduring legacy of their heroism and dedication to the nation

Visitors to Drass, a town situated at an altitude of 10,760 feet (3,279 metres) in India-administered Kashmir, are greeted with a signboard that says at -60 degrees Celsius on January 9, 1995, it was the second-coldest inhabited place on the planet. Drass, located in Kargil district, has an additional claim to fame. In the summer of 1999, it was on its western edge with rocky and barren Himalayan peaks that India and Pakistan fought their last war.



RAHUL KAMBLE

Pakistan had named its move to take over the control of Indian posts along the LoC as 'Operation Badr', India called its offensive 'Operation Vijay'. It was a war fought in the era of satellite news channels. The battles were broadcast directly to homes in both countries, making Drass and Kargil as a whole, a symbol of India's nationalism, inspiring a raft of jingoistic Bollywood movies. This July 26 is the 25th Kargil Vijay Divas. On this day in

1999, the Indian forces threw out the Pakistanis from the incursion points in the general area of Kargil, which they had illegally occupied, bringing to a close a two-month war. It was a tough war, fought on sheer grit and courage, as gutsy young officers, most of them in their twenties, led equally brave soldiers up naked rock faces and managed to evict the enemy within weeks. Names such as Tiger Hill, Tololing, Point 5140, Point 4700, Three Pimples, Chorbat La, Point 5203, Point 4875, Khalubar, and Jubar Top became household names across the country. On 26 July 1999, the Kargil conflict officially came to an end. The Indian Army announced the complete eviction of Pakistani intruders, but a price was paid

for it in blood and tears. We lost 527 of our brave soldiers; 1363 came back wounded. The Indian army has marked July 26 - the day the Kargil war ended - as 'Vijay Diwas' (Victory Day). Every year for the past 25 years, the whole nation celebrates proudly on this day. Army also undertakes commemorative treks on the icy features, where our Braves became invincibles. What seemed an impossible task to the world, was accomplished in a mere 50 days, with all the features lost, back under our control. The '50 Day War' as it is fondly called, was a record in itself. Whenever the story of Kargil is told, it shall be incomplete without paying homage to the steely resolve and cold



courage of these young men who went to fight for their nation knowing that they might never return. Barely out of the academy, they fought against all odds, with single-minded devotion, and set new benchmarks in heroism. Their spirit and daring will be difficult to replicate. The war will always be remembered for its strategic and tac-

tical surprise, the self-imposed national strategy of restraint in keeping the war limited to the Kargil-Siachen sector, military strategy and planning, and the dedication, determination and daring junior leadership at the tactical level. In fiercely fought combat actions, on the most difficult terrain that gave immense advantage to the enemy, we were able to evict Pakistani troops from most of their surreptitiously occupied positions. The Pakistani leadership was forced to sue for a ceasefire and seek the withdrawal of its troops from the remaining areas. Operation Vijay - the Indian codename for the war - was a blend of strong and determined political, military and diplomatic actions, which enabled us to transform an

adverse situation into a military and diplomatic victory. As two prime ministers of Pakistan later acknowledged, 'Kargil war was Pakistan's biggest blunder and disaster.' A reflection on the Kargil War can never be complete without a mention of the brilliant junior leadership that we witnessed during battles. Such acts by young officers and men can never be forgotten. They make us proud. Commanding officers of many infantry battalions displayed steely resilience and single-minded devotion to duty. There were actions by young artillery forward observation officers and battery commanders who took over infantry companies when their company commander colleagues were killed. A victory in war is

achieved when battles are won. Battles are won when soldiers put duty before themselves. Soldiers who put their lives at stake in wars and war-like situations and expect nothing in return. But what the nation owes to them is recognition and gratitude. For every single brave deed noticed and recognized, many went unnoticed in the fog of war. These legendary tales deserve mention not only in our military history books but also in school textbooks to serve as inspiration for young people. This success shall not be taken for granted. With heights averaging 15000 feet, bone-chilling temperatures and a dominating hostility, the Kargil war in itself is a global legend.

(The author is freelance writer; views are personal)

Biden says he quit re-election bid to save US democracy

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden said his decision to quit the 2024 presidential race and endorse Kamala Harris as the Democratic presidential nominee was aimed at unifying the nation and passing the torch to a new generation.



serve as president but in the defence of democracy, which is at stake, I think it's more important than any title," he said. "I believe my record as president, my leadership in the world, my vision for America's future all merited a second term," Biden said, three days after he withdrew from the November 5 presidential election.

half years together. "I've made my choice. I've made my views known... Now, the choice is up to you, the American people," he said. Biden continued to emphasise what he believes is at risk this election, which he's repeatedly cast as an "inflection point" to save the nation's founding principles.

now will determine the fate of our nation and the world for decades to come," he said. Harris, 59, who is of Indian and African origin, has now emerged as the presumptive presidential nominee of the Democratic Party.

mies, but as fellow Americans," he said. Biden also looked ahead to what he still hopes to do in these final six months. He zeroed in on the need to address gun violence, and climate change, continuing to improve the economy and reforming the US Supreme Court.

world. "We'll keep rallying a coalition of proud nations to stop Putin from taking over Ukraine and doing more damage. We'll keep NATO stronger, and I'll make it more powerful and more united than at any time in all of our history," he said.

Netanyahu will meet with Biden and Harris

Washington (AP): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to make a long-awaited White House visit Thursday to meet with President Joe Biden and likely Democratic nominee Vice President Kamala Harris at an important moment for all three politicians.

Netanyahu's White House visit, his first since before President Donald Trump left office in 2020, comes at a time of growing pressure on all three to find an endgame to the nine-month war that's left more than 39,000 dead in Gaza. What's more, dozens of Israeli hostages and the remains of others who have died are still languishing in Hamas captivity.

Protestors burn US flag near Congress

Washington (PTI): Pro Palestinian-protestors on Wednesday lowered an American flag and burned it down a few blocks away from the US Congress.

The protesters in several hundreds were protesting against the US policy in the Middle East and the bombing of innocent civilians by Israelis in Gaza and parts of Palestine. Six people were arrested by the local police.

Cease-fire talks face delays after Netanyahu's fiery speech

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Officials from Egypt, Israel, the United States and Qatar were expected to meet Thursday in Doha with the aim of resuming talks for a proposed three-phase cease-fire to end the war between Israel and Hamas and free the remaining hostages.



Relatives and supporters of the hostages held captive by Hamas in the Gaza Strip take part in a protest to demand their immediate release outside of the U.S. Embassy Branch Office in Tel Aviv, Israel, Wednesday.

they are sleeping in the streets. The Health Ministry in Gaza says more than 39,100 Palestinians have been killed in the war. Hamas slammed Netanyahu's speech to Congress.

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's fiery speech to the United States Congress, accusing him Thursday of obstructing efforts to end the war and return the hostages.

they also rejected Netanyahu's vision for Gaza's future — which would consist of a demilitarized civilian administration in the enclave — and accused Netanyahu of being dishonest about aid delivery into the Gaza Strip.

after the International Criminal Court requested to issue arrest warrants against him for war crimes. The ICC also requested warrants for his Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, Hamas officials Mohammed Deif, Yehya Sinwar, and Ismail Haniyeh.

after being detained in Washington dur In Tel Aviv - A group representing the families of Israeli hostages held in Gaza said Thursday that six hostage relatives have been released after they were briefly detained during Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to the joint session of Congress.

Kamala Harris unfit to rule: Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Unleashing a volley of attacks against his new campaign opponent Vice President Kamala Harris, former president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has said she is "unfit to rule" and described her as a "radical left lunatic".



country if she ever gets the chance to get into office. We're not going to let that happen," Trump said. Trump, who has previously called Biden "Sleepy Joe," gave Harris the nickname "Lyn Kamala."

gerous people. When you're dealing with them, you can't be too nice. You really can't be. So if you don't mind, I'm not going to be nice. Is that okay?" he asked his supporters amidst huge applause from the audience.

four more years of dishonesty, incompetence, weakness and failure, Trump said. Trump alleged everything Harris touches turns into a total disaster. He mentioned Harris as many as 45 times in his speech.

British officer suspended over ill-treating man

London (AP): A British police officer was suspended from his duties Thursday after a video was posted on social media that appeared to show an officer kicking and stamping on the head of a man lying on the floor of a terminal at Manchester Airport.

Greater Manchester Police said the incident occurred while police were trying to break up a fight at the airport's Terminal Two on Wednesday. Three officers were assaulted, with one suffering a broken nose and another requiring hospital treatment, the force said.

NORAD tracks Chinese and Russian bombers near Alaska

AP ■ BEIJING

Two Chinese and two Russian long-range bombers were tracked flying over international waters near Alaska and US and Canadian fighter jets were sent up in response, their joint aerospace command said.

Defense Ministry said the joint patrol also flew over the Chukchi Sea, which is on the north side of the Bering Strait. Russian fighter jets and strategic bombers were joined by Chinese strategic bombers in the exercises, which lasted more than five hours, the ministry said.

jet escorting a Chinese bomber. Another photo posted online by the military channel of China's state broadcaster CCTV showed Russian and Chinese long-winged bombers flying in parallel formation against mostly blue skies.

Nepal: Black box of crashed aircraft found, probe committee formed

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepalese authorities on Thursday recovered the black box of the aircraft that crashed here a day before and handed it over to a probe team formed to inquire into the tragic accident that killed 18 people, including a child.



director general of the Civil Aviation Authority, said the black box of the crashed aircraft has been recovered and handed over to a probe team for necessary action.

includes four other experts. The team has to submit its probe report along with recommendations within 45 days. The dead bodies are in the process of identification after conducting a post mortem and they will be handed over to the family members by Friday, Pandey said.

Kathmandu (PTI): Captain Manish Raj Shaky, the lone survivor of a deadly plane crash in Nepal that killed 18 other people on board, was saved after the cockpit of the aircraft was sheared off by a freight container seconds before the rest of the aircraft went up in flames, a media report said on Thursday.

Pokhara International Airport for regular maintenance service. Of the deceased, 15 died on the spot while three died during treatment at a local hospital, authorities said.

"We rescued Captain Shaky from inside the container," The Rising Nepal newspaper quoted DIG Joshi as saying. Doctors have initiated an investigation into the brain scars of Shaky. Shaky is currently receiving treatment at Kathmandu Medical College (KMC). According to the doctors involved in treatment, although the injuries in different parts of the body and the broken bones at two places of the backbone have not caused serious problems, the doctors are investigating to find out the cause of the scars on Shaky's brain.

ther information only after the Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan of Shaky's brain scars. Captain Shaky's health condition showed improvement on Thursday as compared to Wednesday. The doctors said he is "free from danger" and can speak. He can also consume liquid food.

on Thursday. In response to the tragedy, a five-member probe commission has been formed to investigate the incident. The commission will be led by Ratish Chandra Lal Suman, former Director General of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN). The commission is tasked with delivering its report and recommendations within 45 days to prevent similar accidents in the future. Authorities are conducting an autopsy on the 18 people who lost their lives in the accident. The postmortem of the deceased began on Wednesday evening at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH).

BHOPAL | FRIDAY | JULY 26, 2024

GAMBHIR'S FIRST HEADACHE: PANT OR SAMSON FOR T20I SERIES

PTI ■ COLOMBO

New India head coach Gautam Gambhir will have the onerous task of choosing between Rishabh Pant and Sanju Samson during the three-match T20I series against Sri Lanka starting from Saturday. While most of the key stars of the T20 World Cup winning side...



after Gambhir took over as the coach and Hardik Pandya, a sure-shot candidate for captaincy was surpassed by Suryakumar Yadav. In this backdrop, the presence of Gambhir, a fiercely opinionated former India opener...



in T20Is hasn't exactly been a straight forward one for India, especially during the time Pant was out of action due to a horrific car accident in December, 2022. Ishan Kishan was around for some time before he fell out of favour after leaving the tour of South Africa midway.

couple of fifties and strike rate of 133 plus. But it will be fair to say that 27 of those matches have come in the period between 2020 to present, having made his debut back in 2015. So in three and half years, 27 matches sporadically isn't a lot of games to build on confidence.

other hand, Pant from his 74 T20I games has three fifties and a strike-rate of a shade below 127. Samson's average is thus pretty similar to the Delhi Capitals skipper, who scored at 22.70 per game. In terms of sheer numbers there is not much to choose between the two.

It will also purely depend on what the new team management feels. When it came to Rohit Sharma, he has blind faith in Pant's capabilities and Samson despite being in the squad wasn't even up for discussion during the T20 World Cup. However, in the next tour following the T20 World Cup when most first XI boys were rested, Samson played the last three games in Zimbabwe and was also appointed vice-captain to Shubman Gill.



F1 driver Esteban to join American Haas team from next season

AP ■ KANNAPOLIS (US)

Frenchman Esteban Ocon will drive for Haas from next season as a replacement for Kevin Magnussen, the American Formula 1 team said on Thursday. Details of the deal were not announced, with Haas only saying that the 27-year-old driver committed to a 'multi-year contract starting with the 2025 FIA Formula 1 World Championship'.

came at the Hungarian Grand Prix in 2021 for Alpine after a crash in wet conditions took out much of the field. 'I am thrilled to embark on this new chapter in my Formula 1 career,' Ocon said. 'I'll be joining a very ambitious racing team, whose spirit, work ethic, and undeniable upward trajectory has really impressed me.'

Djokovic, Nadal could meet in 2nd round at Paris Olympics, Swiatek faces Begu first

AP ■ PARIS

Top-seeded Novak Djokovic could meet his longtime rival Rafael Nadal in the second round of the Paris Olympic tennis tournament.



She will be the first tennis athlete to carry the US flag. Djokovic and Swiatek have not won Olympic gold. Djokovic owns 24 Grand Slam trophies, more than anyone else in tennis apart from Margaret Court, but his only Olympic medal was a bronze in Beijing in 2008.

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP SEMI-FINAL India start firm favourites against Bangladesh

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

Shafali Verma will be aiming to come out all guns blazing while Smriti Mandhana will be more than motivated to get a big one as India start overwhelming favourites against Bangladesh in the semi-final of the women's Asia Cup here on Friday.

However, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur knows that in Asia Cup, it is only the semi-final and final matter the most and they would not miss the fact that Bangladesh on select days can be a dangerous side.



ranks. Slow left-arm orthodox Nahida Akhter and young leg-spinner Rabeya Khan have both claimed five wickets apiece.

The medium pace department comprises veteran Jahanara Alam along with Ritumoni, who also has chipped in with three wickets.

With pitches at the Dambulla Stadium slowing down considerably during the second half, India would like to defend a total on the big day. The semi-final will, however, be an afternoon game.

could well be enough for a place in the final. TEAMS INDIA: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Richa Ghosh (WK), Uma Chetry (WK), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Jemimah Rodrigues, Renuka Thakur, Dayalan Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil, Sajana Shreyavan.

Former AICF chief Sanjay Kapoor elected FIDE India zone president

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former All India Chess Federation (AICF) chief Sanjay Kapoor has been unanimously elected the president of FIDE India Zone, the sport's apex body in the country said on Thursday.

administrator. Kapoor's new role marks a pivotal moment for chess governance in India, entrusting him with the responsibility of overseeing the game's growth and development across the globe.

Chess Olympiad has shown me the incredible potential we have, and I am excited to work towards a bright future for chess in India and internationally,' he added. Kapoor has been at the forefront of successfully staging the 44th edition of the Chess Olympiad in India.

Indian athletes' confidence has reached new high: Gagan

PTI ■ PARIS

Olympic medalist shooter Gagan Narang said Indian athletes' mindset has changed over the years and their confidence has touched unprecedented levels, encouraging them to set their sights on a gold medal.

of thinking our athletes have today. We used to feel scared, under-confident because other countries were better. But slowly that's changed, the mindset (has) changed,' Narang told reporters here.

'They don't think anyone is above them. They rate competitors at par and that's a very positive sign for Indian sport,' Narang added. The 41-year-old said there has been an 'unprecedented coordination' between the Sports Ministry, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and the national federations.

Paris aims to reset Olympics with audacious games and wow opening

AP ■ PARIS

Paris has long been a city of dreamers: Just look at the Eiffel Tower, for decades the world's loftiest structure. Audacity also underpins the French capital's plans for its first Olympic Games in a century, which open Friday with an opening ceremony for the ages.

France's world-renowned capital of fashion, gastronomy and culture could also help secure the Olympics' longer-term future. Olympic organizers were struggling to find suitable host cities for their flagship Summer Games when they settled on Paris in 2017, enticed by its promise of innovations and the potential for the city of romance to rekindle love for the Olympics, especially with younger audiences that have so many other entertainment options.



Paris also hopes to reassure climate-conscious Generations Z and beyond by staging Games that are less polluting, more sustainable and more socially virtuous than their predecessors. Many of the sports venues are temporary, because Paris didn't want to repeat the mistake of previous Olympic host cities that built new arenas and then had no use for them.

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volleyball in the Eiffel Tower's shadow — and breakdancing added to a growing list of Olympic sports that target young audiences, expect plenty of viral moments on Instagram, TikTok and elsewhere. Crowds will be back for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic forced Tokyo to push back its Games to 2021 and keep spectators away, and the Beijing Winter Games in 2022, when China was locked down.

the Seine's banks as athletes are paraded along the river on boats. During the extravaganza, a no-fly zone extending for 150 kilometers (93 miles) around the capital will close Paris's skies, policed by fighter jets, aerospace-monitoring AWACS surveillance flights, surveillance drones, helicopters that can carry sharpshooters and drone-disabling equipment.

130 people on Nov. 13, 2015. Paris is also taking gambles in hopes of leaving an indelible impression on the Olympics' global audience of billions. The decision not to stage the opening ceremony in the traditional setting of France's biggest stadium — the Stade de France that was among the 2015 attackers' targets and is now the venue for Olympic track and field and rugby sevens — and to host skateboarding, archery and other sports in temporary arenas in the heart of Paris have made safeguarding the Games more complex.

will compete on famously giant waves that first form in storm belts off Antarctica. Up to 45,000 police and gendarmes, plus 10,000 soldiers, are safeguarding Paris and its suburbs that together are hosting most of the 32 sports that will crown Olympic champions in 329 medal events. The gold, silver and bronze medals they'll hand out are inlaid with a hexagonal, polished chunk of iron taken from the Eiffel Tower.