



# the pioneer

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## GIVE PEACE A CHANCE



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, in Kazan, Tuesday PTI

**PTI ■ KAZAN**

Putin hours after arriving in this central Russian city to attend the 16th BRICS summit. In his televised opening remarks, the Prime Minister conveyed to the Russian leader that New Delhi "fully supports" the early return of peace and stability in the region. Modi also said that his second visit to Russia in the last three months reflected "close coordination and "deep trust" between the two countries." We are in constant touch on the issue of ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. As I said earlier, we believe that problems should be resolved in a peaceful manner," the Prime Minister said. "We fully support the early return of peace and stability. All our efforts give priority to

humanity. India is ready to provide all possible cooperation in times to come," he said. "We have the opportunity to discuss all these issues," he added. On his part, Putin noted the "good condition" of trade turnover between Russia and India. In his remarks, Modi also referred to his summit talks with the Russian leader in Moscow in July. Our annual summit resulted in strengthening cooperation in every field, he said. The Prime Minister also congratulated Putin on Russia's successful presidency of BRICS. Many countries want to join the grouping now, he added. "It is a matter of great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to visit a beautiful city like Kazan for the BRICS summit. India has deep and historical ties with this city," Modi said. "The opening of India's new consulate in Kazan will further strengthen these ties," he added. It is learnt that the Ukraine conflict figured prominently at the meeting. In the summit talks on July 9 in Moscow, Modi told Putin that a solution to the Ukraine conflict is not possible on the battlefield and peace efforts do not succeed in the midst of bombs and bullets. Weeks later he travelled to Ukraine. In his talks with Zelenskyy, Modi said both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to end the ongoing war and that India was ready to play an "active role" to restore peace in the region. India has been maintaining that the conflict in Ukraine must be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.



Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi during a press conference, in New Delhi PTI

### We are trying to restore the trust: Army Chief

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/PTI ■ NEW DELHI/BEIJING**

With India and China reaching an agreement on patrolling along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Tuesday said as of now "we are trying to restore the trust" and both sides will have to "reassure each other" to achieve this. His assertion in New Delhi came a day after India announced an agreement with China on patrolling. China on Tuesday confirmed that it has reached an agreement with India to end the standoff between the two armies in eastern Ladakh. It means both the armies will now resume patrolling in their respective zones as was the practice before May 2020. Following the Galwan clash in June that year, both sides deployed a large number of troops on the LAC leading to heightened tension. **Continued on page 2**

## Hoax threats leave financial scars

**RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI**

While there seems to be no end to the menace of bomb threat messages targeting Indian airlines, as about 80 more flights, operating on domestic and international routes, received fresh threats from Monday night to Tuesday, it has also had a huge financial impact on the airline operators who already under financial stress, operations stakeholders like security forces logistics and regulatory bodies to under take the drill to ensure safe flight. According to estimates from aviation industry sources, it costs about Rs one to three Crores, on an average, to undertake the security drills and the burden is on all the stakeholders from government to the private agencies. Which means given the total of 180 flights that have undergone the process after the hoax calls an additional burden of about Rs 300 Crore. "Following the laid down protocols, relevant authorities were immediately alerted, and all security procedures strictly adhered to, as per guidance from the regulatory authorities and security agencies," an Air India spokesperson said in a statement. Protocols for the Bomb Threat Assessment Committee (BTAC), is convened in the event of a bomb threat call to an aircraft or airport, to tackle the spate of the ongoing "random" Internet-based threats being made to various Indian airlines. On Monday night, the BTAC that assembled at seven airports of Delhi, Mumbai, Jaipur, Pune, Mangalore, Bengaluru and Kozhikode declared as "hoax or



### More CRPF schools get bomb threats

**SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI**

Days after the crude bomb blast outside the Central Reserves Police Forces (CRPF) public school in Delhi's Rohini area, an email threat was received at the central agency's school in Telangana's Hyderabad on Tuesday threatening to blow up five schools across the country. However, official sources later confirmed that the email turned out to be a hoax. According to police sources, an email was received in a CRPF school in Medchal near Hyderabad threatening to blow up three CRPF schools in Delhi and Hyderabad, and two Kendriya Vidyalayas within the forces' office premises in other cities. The three CRPF schools include two in Delhi (Rohini and Dwarka), one in



Hyderabad (Telangana); while the two Kendriya Vidyalayas are within the paramilitary forces' office premises at Panchkula (Haryana) and Rampur (Uttar Pradesh). Deputy Commissioner of Police, Dwarka, Ankit Singh said, "The CRPF school in Dwarka did not receive any message or mail regarding the same. However, the message was shared to us by stay alert. **Continued on page 2**

nonspecific" bomb threat messages sent to 30 flights belonging to three carriers - Air India, Vistara and Indigo. The threat was assessed as "non specific" as it was found that one X handle posted these "bombs onboard" messages for 10 flights each of these three carriers between 10.46 pm and 11.42 pm. The protocol undertaken by the BTAC has been tweaked and a fine assessment, acting on a set of new 'red flags', is being undertaken now, the sources added. **Continued on page 2**

## Kalyan Banerjee ko gussa kyon aata hai?



Members of Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf (Amendment) Bill leave after a meeting at Parliament House Annex, in New Delhi, Tuesday PTI

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

In a bizarre incident, All India Trinamool Congress Member of Parliament Kalyan Banerjee created a ruckus during a crucial Waqf meeting in Parliament on Tuesday where he smashed a glass water bottle and hurled it towards the Chair. Banerjee injured himself and jeopardised the safety of other

Jagdambika Pal of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), during a heated exchange of words with BJP's Abhijit Gangopadhyay, a former Calcutta High Court judge. This is the second time Banerjee has made news for odd reasons, the last time he had mimicked a presiding officer of the Parliament. The act was condemned by the President of India, Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues. According to sources, the panel voted nine-eight on a resolution moved by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey to suspend Banerjee for a day for his choice of words for the panel chairman, and for smashing a glass bottle and throwing it towards Pal. After the meeting concluded, Banerjee refused to talk to reporters about the incident. After being administered first aid, Banerjee was seen being escorted back to the meeting room by AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and AAP leader Sanjay Singh. **Continued on page 2**



Officials at the blast site of Ordnance Factory Jabalpur (OFJ), in Jabalpur district, Madhya Pradesh, Tuesday PTI

### Blast at Jabalpur Ordnance Factory, many injured

**PNS ■ JABALPUR**

More than a dozen workers were injured in a powerful blast at the Ordnance Factory Khamaria in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district on Tuesday morning, an official said. The blast took place at around 9.45 am when explosive material was being filled in the bombs at a refilling section of the factory, the official from the establishment said. Among the injured persons, two were in a serious condition and admitted to a hospital. Another worker was missing and was possibly trapped under the debris of the section in which the blast took place, he said. The blast was so powerful that it was even heard by people a few kilometres away, as per eyewitnesses. The Ordnance Factory Khamaria is one of the major ammunition production units under the Department of Defence Production. More than a dozen workers received injuries in the blast and efforts were on to locate a missing worker, who was possibly trapped under the debris of the building, the official said. A probe has been ordered into the incident and the exact cause behind the blast will be known after completion of the investigation, he said. Fire brigade and security staff of the factory launched a relief and rescue operation, the official added.

## Delhi is most polluted city: IQAir

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

Even before the arrival of winter, Delhi along with several cities of north India is gasping for clean air as air quality has degraded to alarming levels over the past few days. Based on the real time data, Delhi ranks top on the list of most polluted cities in the country. It was the second-most polluted city in the world on Tuesday, a live ranking on IQAir's a Swiss based air quality monitoring website indicated, after only Lahore in neighbouring Pakistan. AQI in Lahore recorded 394. A layer of smog engulfed Delhi and surrounding areas, including Noida, on Tuesday morning, even as the air quality plummeted to the 'very poor' category at 327, followed by Haryana's Jind where the AQI stood at 311. Meanwhile, out of 36 monitoring stations in the National Capital, 26 are in the red zone, with the AQI recorded in the "very poor" category, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board. These stations



A smog as air quality deteriorates, in New Delhi, on Tuesday Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

include Anand Vihar, Bawana, Dwarka, Jahangirpuri, Mundka, Narela, Patparganj, Rohini, Shadipur, Sonia Vihar, Wazirpur, Alipur, Ashok Vihar, Aya Nagar, Burari, Mandir Marg, and others. A thick layer of fog was seen in areas like Anand Vihar, Kalkaji, Nehru Place, and Akshardham Temple, as Delhi's air quality continued to deteriorate. Factors contributing significantly to pollution include transportation, stubble burning, and dust pollution, with emissions from transportation accounting for approximately 11.45 per cent of Delhi's air pollution, according to the Centre's Decision Support System for Air Quality Management. As the air pollution in Delhi reaches the red zone, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Tuesday wrote letters to the transport ministers of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, urging them to ensure no diesel buses from their states plied to the national capital in view of GRAP II restrictions in place. Rai announced a slew of measures, including enhanced water sprinkling to control road dust, use of dust suppressants and deployment of additional traffic personnel to ease traffic congestion, among others. **Continued on page 2**



## Driving to Gurgaon? Pack a meal, and a diaper

District administration has identified 18 hot spots on the city roads

**BY PARVESH SHARMA**

To tackle traffic congestion in the city, the Gurugram district administration has identified 18 spots on the city roads which have reported heavy traffic movement and congestion. The officials have asked traffic police and other departments to take correctional steps in this regard. These places include Delhi-Gurugram Expressway, Sohna Road, Delhi-Jaipur Highway, Sheela Mata Road, Old-Delhi Road and other major roads. The city administration recently wrote to traffic police asking for a reduction in jams at the identified spots. Officials have advised enforcement and increased police presence on roads so that road congestion is cleared quickly. "We conduct drives to reduce congestion and ensure traffic movement remains smooth. We have also increased the presence of

traffic police personnel at these 18 hot spots and the enforcement has been made strict. We are also conducting awareness among the vehicle owners to follow traffic rules," Virender Vij, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) told The Pioneer. Another traffic congestion reason is rain. A few hours of rain causes severe water logging in different areas of Gurugram, which in turn results in traffic disruption in the city. The traffic police have also identified more than 55 places in the city, including major key points on the expressway, that witnessed water logging due to rain. Rainwater collected at various spots also hampers the traffic movement on the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway. The traffic movement at this major junction of the expressway slowed down, especially when two-wheelers and four wheelers faced huge inconveniences due to rainwater.



Among the 18 spots identified are Ambience Island, Iffco Chowk, Subash Chowk, Hero Honda Chowk, Umang Bhardwaj Chowk, Sohna Chowk, Kherki Daula toll plaza, Dwarka Expressway, Huda City Centre, Hero Honda Chowk, Subhash Chowk Underpass and Subhash Chowk. Gurugram Deputy Commissioner has asked authorities to take strict measures to check violations of traffic norms. He asked officials to launch a drive to check wrong parking, ferrying of dangerous goods and seizure of old vehicles that are not allowed to ply on roads. The city traffic police department said they have increased police presence at these hot spots and measures in line with the Graded Action Response Plan (GRAP). Traffic police issued over 24,000 penalties in the previous month. Offences include wrong-side driving, helmet-less riding, wrong

parking, jumping signals, underage driving, speeding, without a driving licence, without a high-security number plate, using a mobile phone while driving, overloading, and driving without seat belts. "To make people aware of traffic rules in Gurugram, people should follow the traffic rules in public places so that they can save themselves and their families from road accidents and avoid being victims effort is being made by the traffic police in Gurugram to get rid of the problem of traffic jams and ease the traffic in the cyber city by taking continuous action against the violators as per the rules," Vij said. "To curb the traffic menace across Gurugram we have been organising special drives from time to time. We have issued a clear direction to the traffic personnel to be present on the roads and curb traffic violations, he added.











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PAPER WITH PASSION

Breathless in Delhi

Delhi's air quality has once again plunged into the 'Very Poor' category, marking the beginning of the dreaded annual pollution season

As the Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 312 on October 21, 2024, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) announced the activation of Stage 2 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in Delhi-NCR...



A significant contributor to Delhi's poor air quality is the burning of crop residue in neighbouring states like Punjab and Haryana. Despite bans and incentives for alternative disposal methods, stubble burning remains a widespread practice...

PICTALK



People buy lanterns ahead of the Diwali festival, in Solapur

Seeking validation: A necessity more than an add-on to our vanity

Though contentment offers a deep sense of inner peace, validation serves as a crucial motivator

Much to the contrary of the popular belief about happiness being commensurate with the degree of material success, my late father asserted that the key to happiness lies in contentment. Both views have their share of advocates...



others is indeed required for us to stay on course, not simply for the ego boost it brings but also for the motivation it gives us to strive and march forward in making a mark in the world.



ASHA IYER KUMAR

done." These acknowledgements are crucial motivators. They tell us that our efforts matter, that our contributions are recognised, and that we are moving in the right direction.

Trump tries hard to win the second term

The traits Trump exhibits on the golf course serve as a metaphor for his approach to life and politics: a willingness to bend the rules and win at any cost



BHOPINDER SINGH

American sportswriter Rick Reilly wrote a book called Commander in Cheat: How Golf Explains Trump, to explain Donald Trump's incorrigible ways. He alludes to Trump's self-claimed prowess in Golf and his purported handicap of 2.8 by a fawning Golf Digest by saying, "If Trump is a 2.8, Queen Elizabeth is a pole vaulter."



Trump had shockingly claimed that fame had enabled him to grope women! Then Vance had heeded to his moral conscience as a practising Christian and lamented, "Fellow Christians, everyone is watching us when we apologize for this man. Lord help us".

TODAY, THE FORGOTTEN IMAGE OF PENCE IS REFLECTIVE OF THE CONUNDRUM THAT MANY COMMITTED REPUBLICANS FACE IN TRUMP'S CANDIDATURE - HE REFUSES TO SUPPORT TRUMP AFTER "ALL THAT HE HAS DONE" AND CANNOT BRING HIMSELF TO ENDORSE A PARTISAN RIVAL, KAMALA HARRIS, EITHER

ly put fealty to the Constitution above the unreasonable demands of a man he had once slavishly addressed as 'my President', on the fateful 6th January 2021.

cannot bring himself to endorse a partisan rival, Kamala Harris, either. This lurking ambiguity in Republican ranks (or amongst the 'undecided') could tilt things decisively in the forthcoming cliffhanger of a Presidential contest.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MAHAYUTI GAINS EDGE

Madam — This refers to the news report, 'BJP releases 99-strong candidate list' (October 21). On one hand, alliance partners of Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) are still struggling to finalise the seat-sharing formula for Maharashtra Assembly polls...

Yamuna pollution on the rise



health and wildlife in the areas surrounding the river Yamuna. Now, as we see, pollution levels have reached an alarming stage. Instantaneous steps should be taken in order to address the issue as soon as possible.

The current condition of the Yamuna River has been raising concerns for the past few days as the festive season arrives. The river is covered with a very thick layer of froth.

opposite and talking about bringing the opposite policy to his state. He wants to encourage those who have more children and is planning to punish those who have fewer.

IMMIGRANTS FACE UNCERTAINTY

Madam — The escalating diplomatic row between India and Canada will have the more than 4 lakh Indian students studying in Canada worried and concerned about their future.

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## FIRST COLUMN

## THE PATH TO TRUE GROWTH

Constant comparison overshadows cooperation, empathy and joy of life



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

All of us, whether we like it or not, have to compete from the time we are born until the time we die. Though most of us indulge in healthy competition all the time, nevertheless, one thing common to all kinds of competitions is the underlying desire to win a victory for the self or to defeat others. While competing, a person brings out their skill, ability, art, acumen, or talent to show that they are superior, stronger, better, more powerful, more skilful, more learned, or more competent than others. It is this habit of making comparisons with others that creates the competition background.

That is why we always see this subtle desire in people who are winners, to hear some words of praise about themselves or their performance. To fulfil this ultimate objective of massaging their egos, one does not care if the other person feels disappointed, depressed, defeated and even humiliated, ridiculed, or booted. This drive to be recognised as "better" than others sometimes overshadows the simple joy of participating or improving oneself. To understand this kind of behaviour, one needs to understand human psychology because the roots of comparison and competition have been sown into our minds since our childhood days. From school grades to sibling rivalries, we are conditioned early to pit our success against others' failures. Hence, they become more rigid with time. We need to understand that the core objective behind the competition is not simply the desire to win, but it is intertwined with the motive of laying aside the softer and nobler sentiments of cooperation, kindness, and gentleness, even if only for a while. In competition, one puts all energies and talents into bogging down or defeating another person, leaving them behind in the race while making a forward thrust to reach



the goal before anyone else. As the famous philosopher Schopenhauer said, "The world is a battle of will and intellect." But in this battle, one often loses sight of empathy and connectedness, which are essential for human growth.

It may also put a limit on one's spirit of giving, helping, cooperating and sacrificing. Remember! Anything small and insignificant in the beginning has the potential to grow and become big. Hence, we must not forget that even though a spark or flame of fire may be small to start with, it can reduce a big apartment with valuables to ashes if it grows into a big fire. Thus, we should be careful and vigilant, because if the whole society catches this contagion or infection of selfishness or rivalry, it may spoil the charm of life and the atmosphere in society. Some people link competition to motivation and developing an attitude toward high performance. But they fail to understand that this evil trait to defeat others, which may look like a harmless thing initially, may eventually develop into a spirit of revenge, feelings of hatred or enmity, bitter jealousy, confrontation, hostile attitudes and ugly outbursts. These effects are not limited to the individuals involved but spill over into communities, organisations and even nations. Look at global politics or corporate boardrooms, and you will see this principle at play on a massive scale. Hence, it all depends upon the emotional maturity of a person whether or not he or she is affected. Because this seed of evil, as it grows, takes the form of a big tree with many branches; so, too, does selfishness or the spirit to downgrade others to gain ascendancy for the self. It may proliferate into many evils or obnoxious habits. Hence, one must try to curtail selfishness and give up the ambition of winning by vengeance for the applause and praise of the self. Remember! The only competition that should matter to us is the one that takes place within ourselves. Hence, it is better to defeat one's inner demons first and become victorious from within to be an example for others to follow.

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

## NEP 2020: A blueprint for transformative education



GURMEET SINGH

While NEP promises radical changes through holistic learning and flexible assessments, implementation challenges continue to hamper its progress

NEP 2020 was founded on the guiding principles of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. This was primarily to prepare the young ones to face the diverse national & global challenges for the present & future. The Policy aims to lead to a multi-disciplinary, holistic under-graduation syllabus, create wider choices of combinations of Subjects, Integration of Vocational Education with regular Subjects and multi-entry and multi-exit points with regular appropriate certification at various stages. The aim is to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth, economy and/or background. This should eventually lead to transformative changes which shall change the lifeline of education in our country. The emphasis is going to be on holistic education, early childhood care, flexible assessments, skill development, integration of technology, teacher training and higher education reforms. These are aimed at designing a learner-centric and inclusive education for a future-ready system:

By embracing these India is poised to provide quality education to everyone with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the 21st century. The motto has been to provide "Equitable and Inclusive Education" to ensure that no child should be denied quality education because of their socio-cultural background and 100 per cent GER is reached by 2030. Looking at all the facts presented alone, one gets a feeling that this is going to be a real game changer in the education system of our country but the reality remains that it has not taken off even after three years of its approval. The major reason is that a majority do not understand the spirit of this very meaningful policy. If implemented in letter and spirit then our country shall be comparable to the best in the world in the field of education. An in-depth analysis and exploring what lies ahead; One can divide this whole NEP-2020 into four main capsules which this Policy envisages:

Teaching in the mother tongue or spoken language, Learn to leave, Teach to Transform and Educate to Empower. These highlighted Capsules shall completely sum up the entire NEP-2020, which none has so far put appropriately and completely. Elaborating each one of these shall drive home all the points: **Teaching in spoken language:** The importance of this cannot be undermined. Original thinking comes only in the mother tongue (spoken languages) and this advantage has never been given to our students in any of our earlier policies. English has always been overemphasised and a wrong notion has been created that English is knowledge whereas the fact remains that it is just a language and not knowledge. Knowledge can always be acquired by knowing a language. Our beginners have always been worried about learning English rather than developing an understanding of a concept in their way, therefore majority of the students are lost in this learning of the English language rather than focussing on the original thinking. This has been given an appropriate weightage under NEP. A student shall learn to



INDIA IS POISED TO PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION TO EVERYONE WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO THRIVE IN THE 21ST CENTURY. THE MOTTO HAS BEEN TO PROVIDE "EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION" TO ENSURE THAT NO CHILD SHOULD BE DENIED QUALITY EDUCATION BECAUSE OF THEIR SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND

develop an understanding of what subjects to learn and what to pick up eventually in higher classes which has not been the case so far. A course used to be thrust upon them. This very important facet has been very appropriately addressed in this.

**Learn to Leave:** Having decided what course to take up for secondary and higher education, a student used to be trapped forever whether one liked the subject/course or not. (In the older education system for example if one had opted for Physics or Sanskrit: one was stuck with that forever whether one liked these subjects or not) There was no way to move out unless one gave up higher education or started afresh. The other difficulty was that due to some odd circumstances if one had to discontinue the education there was no way to restart unless you lose years/ time, but in this, one could leave anytime or rejoin anytime (Comes under Multi entry/ Multi exit system).

In the present system if one stayed away for a few years one could not come back to education in desired subjects but under NEP-2020 one can restart anytime one's education by including the credits earned before leaving. Therefore, under the present NEP, no one shall stay away or be denied education because of circumstances. This was not the case in the older system.

**Education to empower:** Under this education is to give due benefits to society by developing the right kind of skill. For Example, an electronic engineer is not able to do even basic electrical repairs or a mechanical engineer is not in a position to rectify even a basic fault. Integration of vocational courses with regular ones to provide practical skills for employment, benefiting students with diverse academic interests or lim-

ited access to traditional pathways or linking them with one another are some of the hallmarks of the present system.

This is to develop the right syllabus to reduce disparities. Emphasis in this is on equitable access to quality education. Essentially NEP 2020 shall be attempting to reduce unwanted syllabus for comprehensive understanding towards skill-based education.

**Teach to transform:** the teaching in the older system was not of any speciality. One acquires the right skills through one's efforts to be useful to society. Under this, it shall be essential to train teachers and educational staff to deliver child-centred education for job placement, which shall be an important feature so far lacking to a large extent.

**Challenges:** One of the biggest features of this has been the wide choice of subjects that one could take. Now this wide spectrum of subjects will be possible to be taken by students if there is a way to keep a record of a student's movement and subjects taken. In a Country like ours which has more than 39K colleges, about 1000 Universities and 4.33 crores students (Nearly 80 per cent are in graduation and the remaining 20 per cent are from post-graduation classes), it shall be impossible to maintain a record of this kind unless there is a mechanism similar to computerised banking arrangement which maintains all types of record impeccably. For this an Academic Bank of Credit has been proposed where every institution shall be registered to enable a record of these movements of students, subjects taken and credits earned can be maintained like what is done in banking.

**Biggest flaw so far:** Unfortunately, to date, not even 50 per cent of Institutions have reg-

istered themselves in this (in ABC) which is the real key to the success of this policy. This is a way to keep records of students' subjects, their movements and credits earned.

**Sharing of resources:** Under NEP a wide umbrella of choice of subject, record of early education, movement from one institution to another and credits cleared/earned by a student shall be possible only if the resources are shared by various institutions.

It will be impossible for any particular college to offer all subjects and to offer teaching in a variety of courses unless there is a huge staff to do this. It will be humanly impossible to achieve all this unless sharing is done particularly when online teaching has now come in a big way in our university system.

Similarly, the resources for science laboratories, libraries research facilities as well as Entrepreneurship schemes can be very effectively shared to make the education truly inclusive as per the aims of NEP 2020. Therefore, in conclusion, this policy shall succeed if: Every institution registers with ABC (Academic Bank of Credit) Sharing of resources starts in a big way in earnest in all areas like teaching, especially in online modes, libraries, Laboratories and instrumental facilities; Open schooling system for all without any conditions and Establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India immediately to monitor the registration of ABC etc. It shall not become a roaring success unless all agencies like MOE, UGC etc take concerted efforts to bring about a radical change.

(The writer is a Former Vice-Chancellor of Pondicherry University and Gandhigram Rural Institute, Dindigul; views are personal)

## Revolutionising India's food security: Route optimisation cuts costs, carbon emissions

With over 81 crore beneficiaries, the Govt is now leveraging advanced data-driven route optimisation tools as part of the PM GatiShakti master plan

The Government of India provides free food grains to more than 81 crore beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) making it the largest food security programme in the world. This vast operation—from sourcing food grains from farmers to delivering them to ration cardholders—relies on a complex, decades-old supply chain. The Food Corporation of India (FCI), state procurement agencies, millers, transporters, warehouses, and Fair Price Shops (FPS) all play a critical role in this network. However, its design has historically been shaped by administrative convenience more than scientific optimisation. Supply routes were planned manually by



SANJEEV CHOPRA

state officials, a process prone to sub-optimality, bias and human error. In October 2021, the Prime Minister launched the PM GatiShakti Master Plan aiming to enhance multimodal connectivity and optimise logistics across the country. One of its key pillars, "Optimisation," envisions selecting the most efficient routes for transporting goods,

thereby saving time and reducing costs. In line with this vision, the Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) launched a national route optimisation exercise in March 2023, in partnership with the World Food Programme (UNWFP) and the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT) from IIT Delhi. This exercise, targeting the annual transportation of 6.8 crore metric tons of food grains through the PDS, marks a transformative step towards building a more efficient and cost-effective food supply chain. The process was comprehensive: geo-locations of warehouses and FPS, along with their capacities and road distances, were collected from each state. Using this data, cus-

tom algorithms were developed for each state to determine the most optimal supply chain routes. More than 50 physical workshops were held by DFPD and FITT officials to guide states in data collection and demonstrate the benefits of route optimisation. These optimised routes were then validated on the ground to ensure they accounted for local conditions, and a state-specific intra-state optimisation tool was developed to allow for adjustments in the supply chain—such as adding or modifying entities like warehouses or FPSs. For instance, Bihar developed an annual movement plan based on its PDS requirements, food grain volume, and monthly transport routes. The customised algorithm factored in different



possibilities of local procurement within the state and the grain required to be sourced from the FCI. This gave the state a clear view of its yearly logistics, allowing for cost-saving adjustments. By choosing the optimal option, Bihar reduced transport distances by 19 per cent, saving over Rs 3.09 crore per month. Similarly, Mizoram optimised its routes by eliminating unnecessary transfers of food grains

between warehouses, achieving a 50 per cent reduction in distance and saving an estimated Rs 1.27 crore monthly. A significant milestone in this effort was the integration of the route optimisation tool with the GatiShakti platform, which now houses geo-locations of FPSs and warehouses across all states. This integration enables the platform to generate the shortest possible motorable routes from FCI godowns to state godowns, and further from state godowns to FPSs. The platform also allows real-time route re-optimisation based on updated infrastructure data (such as new roads) from other ministries. Since March 2023, route optimisation assessments have been completed for 30 out of 31 states, with intra-

state route optimisation tools developed for 15 states so far. Early results from 12 states show tremendous promise, with transportation costs reduced by an estimated Rs 112 crore annually. Once fully implemented across all states, savings could exceed 250 crore per year. This initiative is not only an economic win but also an environmental one. Global food miles—representing the distance food travels from production to consumption—account for nearly one-fifth of total food system emissions. Optimising India's food distribution routes can contribute significantly to reducing CO2 emissions, aligning with the country's climate change commitments under the Paris Agreement and its Conference of Parties (COP) targets. The

reduction in fuel consumption will also help conserve foreign exchange reserves. Looking ahead, DFPD is exploring the possibility of earning carbon credits under the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS), offering states an added incentive to complete the route optimisation process and earn tradable carbon credit certificates. This step would not only strengthen India's commitment to a climate-smart supply chain but also potentially generate financial benefits. In conclusion, The integration of advanced technologies and data-driven tools is setting the stage for a smarter future in public distribution, one that safeguards both our resources and the planet. (The writer is Secretary, Food & Public Distribution, Govt of India; views are personal)







# India well positioned to capitalise growth opportunities: FM Nirmala Sitharaman

PTI ■ NEW YORK



The global economic environment may present challenges but India is well positioned to capitalise on new growth opportunities, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said, underlining that as nations re-evaluate their supply chains, India hopes to become a key partner for many countries seeking to diversify their sources of goods and services.

India's advantage. As nations re-evaluate their supply chains, India hopes to become a key partner for many countries seeking to diversify their sources of goods and services," she said at the lecture organised by the Deepak and Neera Raj Center on Indian Economic Policies at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs.

economic reforms and economic growth with IBM Chairman and CEO Arvind Krishna. From New York, Sitharaman will head to Washington DC to participate in the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the 4th G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governor (FMCBG) Meetings, besides the G20 Joint Meeting of FMCBGs, Environment Ministers, and Foreign Ministers; and G7 - Africa Ministerial Roundtable. Sitharaman noted that it may be an understatement that "we are living through times of profound uncertainty, which is steadily rising before us."

Global Innovation Index and its growing influence in sectors like high-end capital goods, renewables and pharmaceuticals, signal its potential to become a vital player in global markets. "Another vital aspect of the policy agenda has been the strengthening of India's financial sector. The soundness of our banking system marked by low levels of NPAs (nonperforming assets) and enhanced provisioning for bad loans reflects the reforms we have undertaken to improve asset quality," she said. She added that by 2047, as India celebrates 100 years of independence, "we will have a chance to define a new era of prosperity, not just for our own citizens, but for the global community as well."

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## Insurance industry can use e-commerce, telecom network to distribute policies: LIC chief



PTI ■ MUMBAI

State-owned life insurance behemoth LIC's chief executive and managing director Siddhartha Mohanty on Tuesday pitched for using the e-commerce and telecom network to distribute policies deep in the country. "As we are serious about 'insurance for all', we must rethink how we distribute and market insurance products," Mohanty said, speaking at an event organised by CII here. He said the current channels, including agents, brokers, and bancassurance have been effective, but fraught with its own limitations given the challenge of taking insurance to each citizen of the country. Specifically, the current models have "limitations" to taking insurance to the vast and underserved rural market, the LIC executive said, adding that the future is in opening non-traditional channels. "Collaborating with non-traditional players, such as telecom companies, fintech firms and e-commerce platforms, we can significantly

## Consumers worried about data breaches: PwC India survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Consumers are worried about data breaches, and a large number of them are not aware of their rights related to personal data, according to a PwC India survey.

understanding of the basic tenets of privacy among all," Krishnan said. The survey also found that 56 per cent of consumers are not aware of their rights related to personal data and 69 per cent are not aware of their rights to take back their consent.

## Reliance Infrastructure to launch Dhirubhai Ambani Defence City



PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reliance Infrastructure on Tuesday announced setting up of Dhirubhai Ambani Defence City (DADC) the largest integrated project for Manufacturing of Explosives, Ammunition and Small Arms in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. The company has been allotted 1000 acres of Land in Watad Industrial Area of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra to develop DADC. It will be the largest GREENFIELD project in Defence Sector in India by any Private Sector company.

## India likely to grow at 7.2 per cent: RBI Deputy Governor

PTI ■ NEW YORK



India's GDP growth is projected at 7.2 per cent in 2024-25, around 7 per cent in the next fiscal, and after that, there is a strong likelihood that the growth will revert to the 8 per cent trend, said Reserve Bank of India deputy governor Michael Debabrata Patra.

during the pandemic, a new growth trajectory averaging 8 per cent seems to be forming during 2021-24, he said. India is now regarded as the fastest growing major economy in the world. Already the fifth largest economy in terms of market exchange rates, it is poised to become the third largest economy by 2030, the senior RBI official said and added the country is already the third largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity.

# Adani Group to acquire Orient Cement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Billionaire Gautam Adani-led Adani Group on Tuesday said it will acquire CK Birla group firm Orient Cement at a valuation of Rs 8,100 crore, as part of its expansion drive.

cement capacity by ~30 MTPA within two years of Ambuja's acquisition." By acquiring OCL, Ambuja is poised to reach 100 MTPA cement capacity in FY25, he added.

focus on cement and infrastructure, is the ideal new owner to drive continued growth at Orient Cement for our people and stakeholders," he said.

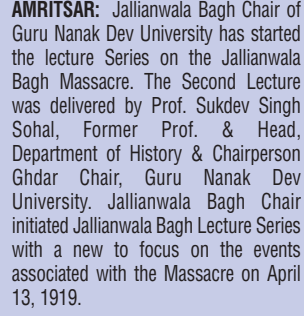
## Power Grid board approves raising up funds via bonds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Power Grid Corporation's board on Tuesday approved a proposal to raise up to Rs 5,000 crore through issuance of bonds on private placement basis.

### INBRIEF

#### JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE-LECTURE SERIES II AT GNDU



AMRITSAR: Jallianwala Bagh Chair of Guru Nanak Dev University has started the Lecture Series on the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. The Second Lecture was delivered by Prof. Sukdev Singh Sohal, Former Prof. & Head, Department of History & Chairperson Ghdar Chair, Guru Nanak Dev University, Jallianwala Bagh Chair initiated Jallianwala Bagh Lecture Series with a new focus on the events associated with the Massacre on April 13, 1919.

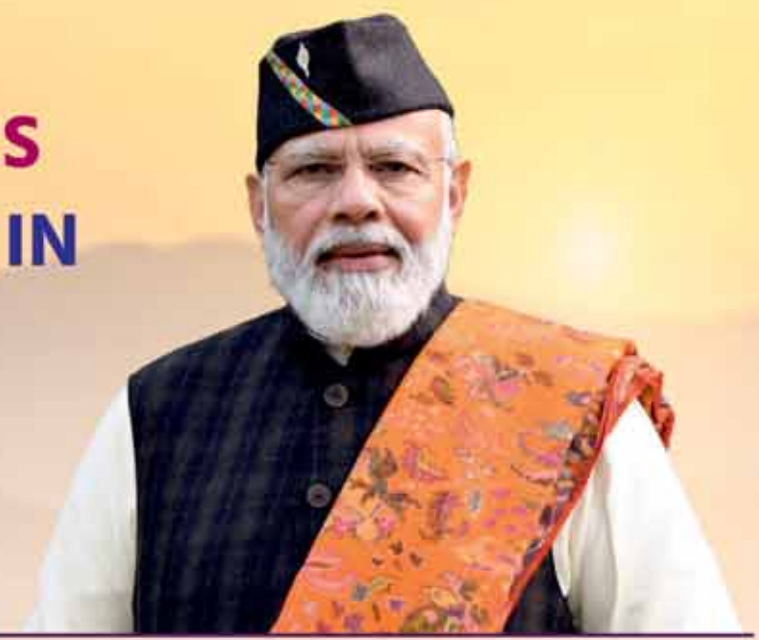
#### N. F. RAILWAY TO OPERATE FOUR DIESEL SPECIAL JOYRIDES

MALIGAOIN: The Northeast Frontier Railway has decided to operate four Diesel special Joyrides under the toy train service of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) between Darjeeling and Ghum from 21st October to 05th December, 2024 on daily basis to cater the passenger rush during the peak season. It may be noted that DHR, a UNESCO World Heritage Site witnesses footfall of thousands of local as well as foreign tourists during this peak season.





# DISCOVER NEW EXPERIENCES AND A SENSE OF BELONGING IN Uttarakhand



“Under the guidance of Honorable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, we are committed to harnessing the overall development, natural beauty, rich cultural heritage and immense potential of the state. Our aim is to make Uttarakhand a model of progress, where tradition and innovation meet and every person contributes towards the prosperity and welfare of the state.”

**Pushkar Singh Dhami**  
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

**EXPERIENCE THE AMAZING  
CONFLUENCE OF DEVOTION,  
CULTURE AND ADVENTURE**

“Uttarakhand is the land of gods. The way this state is moving on the path of development by keeping law and order at the forefront is praiseworthy. This effort is also necessary to maintain the identity of Devbhoomi. Therefore, I believe that in the near future, Devbhoomi Uttarakhand will become the centre of attraction for the spiritual consciousness of the entire world and we have to develop Uttarakhand according to this potential.”

**Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister

## Uttarakhand Tourism Sector

Provides best incentives  
for investment.



## For weddings, it has become a New Destination.

Devbhoomi is a religious, spiritual, beautiful destination with lush green and snowy fort of mountains which has better connectivity, excellent infrastructure and all the necessary facilities. Dhami Sarkar along with pilgrims and tourism in the state, at present this place is giving special emphasis on promoting the tradition of destination wedding and the facilities are constantly being developed. People are taking interest in organizing destination weddings at the holy religious, spiritual and natural places of Uttarakhand. But, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal, he expressed hope that in the coming time, Uttarakhand will gain prominence in the near future as a prime destination wedding location. Devbhoomi Uttarakhand is a holy place which is famous for marriage celebrations. Now Shri Triyuginarayan temple located in Triyuginarayan village of Rudrapur district of Uttarakhand is one of them. It is believed that this is the place where Lord Shiva circumambulated the sacred Shiva with Mother Parvati. This is why every year a large number of couples get married in the sacred bond of marriage in this place. This place is establishing a new identity as

a destination wedding location. Similarly, in the sacred city of Haridwar, a large number of couples tie the knot in the sacred bond of matrimony at Shantikunj every year, following all traditional rituals. Speaking of the pilgrimage town of Rishikesh, it is currently emerging as a major wedding destination for both Indian and international youth. Mussoorie, Nainital, and Renuagar are among the luxurious venues with all modern amenities, where the trend of destination weddings is gaining popularity both domestically and abroad. Uttarakhand also offers hill stations like Auli, known as 'Mini Switzerland,' for those looking to marry in the lap of nature. Due to the developed facilities for tourism and pilgrimage in Uttarakhand, the attraction towards wedding destinations here is increasing. After the Prime Minister's slogan 'Wed in India,' it is now expected that the Dhami government will work swiftly in this direction. The 'Wed in India' movement will, in the coming times, establish Uttarakhand as the perfect destination for weddings. This will not only boost local businesses but also create new livelihood opportunities.

## A State of Pilgrimage and Tourism, Something Special for Every Age

You must visit these charming places:  
These picturesque places situated in the lap of nature will touch your heart.

There are many such places in the charming natural wealth of Uttarakhand, which are no less than a treasure. If you come to Devbhoomi then definitely visit these places. Away from the hustle and bustle of tourists, these lesser-known destinations make your trip more exciting. You are able to connect directly with nature. From the picturesque Kartikeya Swami Temple to the tranquil village of Peora, the breathtaking views of Khirsu and the untouched beauty of Mandu, places like this have a unique charm. Don't forget to enjoy birdwatching among the birds in the lush green delightful Pangot of Chaukori. The peaceful atmosphere of Gwaldamakh Abbott Mount, Shitalakhet and Nagthat are places that provide coolness to the mind. These hidden treasures of Uttarakhand are surely you to go on a unique journey. Surely you will be impressed by the peace and natural beauty of this place. Believe it, you will be able to reach such a place, which

you haven't even imagined before. A visit to these places will give you an experience to be remembered throughout your life. Sachin Kurve, CEO of Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board, says that these lesser-known destinations of Uttarakhand offer a glimpse of the rich cultural heritage of the state. For example, Kartikeya Swami Temple is situated in the beautiful landscape of Uttarakhand. It reflects traditional architecture and spiritual significance. We are providing offbeat destinations in every nook and corner of the state and our aim is to provide unique experiences to tourists and promote sustainable tourism development.

Uttarakhand is called the 'land of gods'. The state not only boasts of breathtaking natural beauty, but also offers travelers a unique opportunity to experience the local culture and traditions through homestays. In such a situation, the homestay running under 'Deendayal Upadhyay Grih Awas Yojana' has not only provided self-employment to the local people, but it is also making a significant contribution to the economy of the state. The homestay system has gained momentum under the 'Deendayal Upadhyay Grih Awas Yojana' started by the Uttarakhand government. The objective of this scheme is to uplift the economic condition of the local people by providing them a sustainable source of income. Under the scheme, local people get the opportunity to host domestic and foreign tourists at their own homes. In this way tourists get an opportunity to understand the indigenous cuisine, local culture, historical heritage, traditional hill lifestyle and art of Uttarakhand. Through this they are reaching places about which they had not heard before.

Ranging from cozy cottages to traditional wooden houses that reflect the architecture of the region, each homestay offers tourists a comfortable and welcoming environment, allowing them to connect with the local community.

The development of homestays in Uttarakhand has had a positive impact on the economy of the state. These accommodations provide tourists with not only unique and present with Uttarakhand Tourism Department there are around 5000 registered homestays listed. Nestled in the lap of Himalayas in these homestays provide comfortable cottages to traditional wooden houses that reflect the region's architectural style, each homestay offers tourists a welcoming and comfortable environment, allowing them to connect with the local community. The development of homestays in Uttarakhand has had a positive impact on the state's economy. These accommodations provide tourists with not only a unique and personalized experiences but also promote local businesses by creating employment opportunities. As a result, their contribution is strengthening the local economy. Homestay owners often collaborate with local artisans, farmers, and service providers. This promotes local supply chains and sustainable development. Homestays have played a crucial role in curbing migration from the state. Homestays have played a significant role in preventing migration

## A UNIQUE CONFLUENCE OF UNSEEN ADVENTURES

Uttarakhand provides a unique  
experience to adventure  
sports lovers around the world.

When it comes to adventure tourism in the country, Uttarakhand has become a favorite destination for adventure lovers due to its diverse landscapes. There is no dearth of exciting activities here. You get to play many exciting sports here and that is why this state provides an extraordinary experience for adventure lovers around the world. Many tourists come to Uttarakhand. Many tourists come to Uttarakhand. Many tourists come to Uttarakhand. For adventure lovers, there are many exciting sports and activities available here including river rafting, trekking, hiking and bungee jumping. **TREKKING AND HIKING** You can travel to remote places of Uttarakhand through trekking and hiking. Here one can enjoy trekking on the traditional Roopkund track amidst lush green forests and grasslands or

passing through the valley of flowers can give a pleasant feeling. For long walkers, Kedarkantha and Gaumukh Tapovan tracks provide a memorable experience of a lifetime. **BUNGEE JUMPING** Also known as the Yoga Capital of the World, Rishikesh is also known for its high-intensity adventures as it is the site of the highest bungee jumping in the entire country. Thrill lovers who want to defy gravity come here to go bungee jumping amidst the spectacular Himalayan hills. **SKIING** Auli, located in Chamoli district, is known as the center of skiing lovers. Adventure lovers visit Auli to find their way through its winter wonderland with snow-capped mountain slopes. This spectacular venue is also famous

for hosting the National Winter Games, where athletes get the perfect opportunity to showcase their prowess.

**RIVER RAFTING** The rivers of Uttarakhand not only enhance the beauty of the state but also excite the lovers of white water rafting who come here for the thrill. When tourists conquer the rapids through white water rafting or boat on the water during a serene canoeing or kayaking in the Ganges, Tons and Alaknanda rivers, they definitely get to experience different thrills.



**PARAGLIDING** Thrill lovers can also take a trip to the sky here and enjoy the grandeur of Uttarakhand by paragliding. They can also take a sky flight from the scenic spots of Nainital, Mukteshwar, or Pithoragarh and view the magnificent Himalayan regions. Apart from adventure, the tourism sector of Uttarakhand has also brought prosperity to the local residents and created employment opportunities. This has also encouraged the development of adventure tourism infrastructure.



In 2024, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, awarded the title of Best Tourism Village to four villages in Uttarakhand: Jakhoul village and Harsil village in Uttarkashi district, Gunji village in the border area of Pithoragarh district, and Supi village in Bageshwar district.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stated that rural areas are becoming centers of tourism. Additionally, every tourist destination can develop its own revenue model. To boost the rural economy, we need to promote businesses like homestays and small hotels.**

from the state. It must be said that this initiative has not only increased income but also provided a solid foundation for local people to stay, promote, and develop their communities. It has helped preserve the state's cultural heritage and traditions, ensuring that future generations remain connected to their roots. The popularity of homestays in Uttarakhand is in itself proof that this initiative is touching the hearts of travelers. Tourists are not just seeking comfortable accommodation; they also enjoy strengthening connections with new destinations and people. The homestay initiative is connecting tourists with the local way of life and presenting a fresh image of the state in their minds. They are leaving with happy memories after staying here.