

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday made an ardent plea in Parliament for adopting alternative fuels, and said sales of electric vehicles (EVs) were set to rise by 10 times by 2022 end in the country. The Minister cited official figures to show a uptick in demand for EVs in the recent past. Between 2019-20 and 2020-21, sale of two wheeler EVs rose by 422% going up from 28,508 to 1,49,068; three wheelers by 75% from 90,216 to 1,57,682; and four wheelers up by 230% from 4,695 to 15,860. The number of electric buses increased from 80 to 1,177 — over 1,200%.

Sixteen Chinese nationals have been granted Indian citizenship since 2007 and the applications of 10 are pending, the Union Home Ministry told the Rajya Sabha. DMK MP Tiruchi Siva asked for details about the asylum and citizenship requests of communities from China, including Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongolians and other democratic dissidents since 2019. Only nationality wise data is maintained. Community wise data is not maintained. India was not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereon. "All foreign nationals (including asylum seekers) are governed by the provisions contained in the Foreigners Act, 1946; The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939; the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and the Citizenship Act, 1955," the reply stated.

Fake job cards, widespread corruption, late uploading of muster rolls, and huge pending payments for wages and materials are among the issues hampering the MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) scheme, apart from insufficient funding, according to a Parliamentary Standing Committee report submitted to the Lok Sabha.

The Union Home Ministry has placed the U.S. based Hewlett Foundation on its watchlist following an investigation that foreign contributions it sent were being used for climate awareness campaigns, an activity not permissible under the FCRA [Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act], a senior government official said. From November 2021, the foreign donor

PHOOL DEI

1. Phool Dei festival is known as the harvest festival of Uttarakhand. The term 'Dei' refers to a ceremonial pudding which is the key food in this festival that is made from jaggery. This festival is celebrated in the Garhwal and Kumaun regions of Uttarakhand every year in the flowering season (March-April) for about a month.

2. It is celebrated on the first day of the Hindu month, Chaitra. Children, particularly young girls, go into farms, forests and gardens after bathing and collect fresh flowers to offer to the local deities as a welcome gesture for the onset of spring season. The local belief is that placing flowers at the doorsteps of houses for the gods will bring prosperity and blessings.

3. The groups of children, known as Phoolyari, bring flowers daily to the households and receive money and sweets in return from each family on the last day of spring. The commonly used flowers are red rhododendron flowers or buransh (the state tree of Uttarakhand), the yellow pheonly flowers (Reinwardtia indica) and mustard flowers.

4. The celebration of Phool Dei indirectly rooted a sense of affection and protection towards nature, especially locals flowers and trees, in our minds.

MOULING NATIONAL PARK

1. Mouling National Park of Arunachal Pradesh is located in the right bank of river Siang. It was established in 1982 with an objective to create a favourable habitat for plants and animals. This park has been recognized as one of the 18 biodiversity hotspots. The vegetation of the area varies according to the altitude.

2. The upper reaches are covered with temperate alpine and coniferous forest and The lower area is covered with tropical evergreen forest. The climate of the area is extremely humid with high rainfall and no well-defined dry season.

3. Many endangered species like takins, snowclouded leopard, golden langur, hornbill, monal scaly antelope, serow are spotted here. Dabung Waterfall and Nirbung Waterfall are two of the many attractive waterfalls inside the sanctuary.

WEATHER-BASED INDEX INSURANCE SCHEME

1. Department of Fisheries has said that there is no proposal for providing weather-based index insurance scheme to cover the loss suffered by the fishermen due to adverse climatic changes. Weather Based Crop Insurance aims to mitigate the hardship of the insured farmers against the likelihood of financial loss on account of anticipated crop loss resulting from incidence of adverse conditions of weather parameters like rainfall, temperature, frost, humidity etc.

2. Crops covered - Major Food crops (Cereals, Millets & Pulses) & Oilseeds; Commercial / Horticultural crops Farmers covered - All farmers including sharecroppers and tenant farmers growing the notified crops in the notified areas are eligible for coverage. However, farmers should have insurable interest on the insured crop. Non-loanee farmers are required to submit necessary documentary evidence of land records and / or applicable contract / agreements details (in case of sharecroppers / tenant farmers).

3. All farmers availing Seasonal Agricultural Operations (SAO) loans from Financial Institutions (i.e. loanee farmers) for the crop(s) notified are covered on compulsory basis. The Scheme is optional for the non-loanee farmers. They can choose between WBCIS and PMFBY, and also the insurance company. Perils covered - Following major weather perils, which are deemed to cause "Adverse Weather Incidence", leading to crop loss, shall be covered under the scheme. Rainfall - Deficit Rainfall, Excess rainfall, Unseasonal Rainfall, Rainy days, Dry-spell, Dry days Relative Humidity Temperature - High temperature (heat), Low temperature Wind Speed A combination of the above Hailstorms, cloud-burst may also be covered as Add-on/Index-Plus products for those farmers who have already taken normal coverage under

has not been able to send donations to any NGO or association in India. The official said the U.S. based donor was placed under the "Prior Reference Category (PRC)" under provisions of the FCRA after it emerged that the body also sent funds through the European Climate Foundation (ECF).

Russia said that peace talks with Ukraine were not easy but there was some hope of reaching a compromise and neutrality for Ukraine was being seriously discussed. "The negotiations are not easy for obvious reasons," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told RBC news. "But nevertheless, there is some hope of reaching a compromise. Neutral status is now being seriously discussed along, of course, with security guarantees," he said.

Intellectual property rights held by international pharmaceutical companies on COVID19 vaccines may be relaxed for up to five years, according to a proposal by the European Union (EU) against the backdrop of a festering two year old dispute at the World Trade Organization involving India, the U.S., South Africa and the EU.

The Federal Reserve on Wednesday raised interest rates by a quarter of a percentage point and projected its policy rate would hit a range between 1.75% and 2% by year's end in a newly aggressive stance against inflation that will push borrowing costs to restrictive levels in 2023.

The UN's top court on Wednesday ordered Russia to suspend its invasion of Ukraine, saying it was "profoundly concerned" by Moscow's use of force. "The Russian Federation shall immediately suspend military operations that it commenced on the territory of Ukraine," pending the final decision in the case, presiding judge Joan Donoghue told the International Court of Justice.

The government has no plans to privatise the Indian Railways, Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav told Parliament on Wednesday, following questions raised over the issue by the Opposition.

Sri Lanka's Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Wednesday to discuss bilateral matters and further Indian assistance to the island nation, which is in the grips of an extraordinary economic crisis.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the Centre's one rank, one pension (OROP) scheme for the armed forces. A Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud held, "We find no

WBCIS.

4.The perils listed above are only indicative and not exhaustive, any addition deletion may be considered by insurance companies. Insurance Period (Risk period) would ideally be from sowing period to maturity of the crop. Risk period based on the duration of the crop and weather parameters chosen, could vary with individual crop and reference unit area and would be notified by SLCCCI before the commencement of risk period.

5.The 'net premium payable' in case of the insured loaneer cultivator is financed by the Lending Bank. Insurance companies - Public and private sector General Insurance Companies empanelled by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC) and Farmers Welfare and selected by concerned State Government / Union Territory (UT) implement WBCIS.

NATIONAL BAL BHAVAN

1.National Bal Bhavan is an institution located at Kotla Road, New Delhi. It is an autonomous body run and funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD). It was founded in 1956 by Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.

2.It was established with the purpose to provide opportunities for creative pursuits to children in the age group of 5 to 16 years. It enhances the creative potential of children by providing them various activities, opportunities & common platform to interact, experiment, create and perform according to their age, aptitude and ability.

3.It offers a barrier-free environment with immense possibilities of innovation, minus any stress or strain. Indira Gandhi was appointed as the first chairperson of National Bal Bhavan.

MEMBERSHIP TO NATO

1.Ukrainian President said that Ukraine would no longer press for its membership at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Ukraine's interest in securing membership of the organisation has been at the centre of its geopolitical tensions with Russia. North Atlantic Treaty or the Washington Treaty states the parties to the treaty seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area. The signatories affirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and express their desire to live in peace with all people and governments.

2.They are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security. Process to secure NATO Membership Article 10 of the treaty provides for entry of a new member to accede to the treaty by unanimous agreement of the existing members. Once the member countries of the NATO have established consensus about a country's potential membership, it is called upon to initiate accession talks with the alliance. MAP - Following this, they may be invited to join the Membership Action Plan (MAP).

3.Reaching this stage does not secure membership. It is a preparatory mechanism providing advice, assistance and practical support tailored to the specific needs of applicant countries. It may continue even after the applicant country has become a member. Bosnia and Herzegovina were invited to commence MAP in April 2010. MAP obligations - The five chapters of the MAP identify issues that might be taken up, also suggesting mechanism through which the preparations for "possible eventual membership" can be taken forward.

4.They constitute issues relevant to politics and economics, defence/military, resources, security and legality. Confirming intent - This process begins with NATO experts and representatives of the invited countries at the NATO's headquarters in Brussels. The idea is to obtain formal confirmation of the invitee's willingness and ability to meet the political, legal and military obligations and commitments of the NATO membership.

5.The second step of the process requires the applicant country to issue a formal letter of intent to NATO. This acts as a confirmation to the obligations and commitments of the organisation. Necessary amendments are, then, made to make the invitees party to the Washington Treaty followed by ratification of the applicant countries' constitutional protocols to facilitate the membership.

6.Acceding to the Treaty - After all NATO members notify their acceptance to the US government about the applicant, the Secretary General would call the potential new members to accede to the Treaty. [The US government is the depository of the Washington Treaty.] Following the invitee depositing their

constitutional infirmity in the OROP principle as defined in the government's communication of November 7, 2015, on the implementation of the pension scheme."

Signalling a possible turnaround in ties, China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi could visit India later this month, the first such visit by a Chinese official since the crisis along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) sparked by the Chinese military's transgressions in April 2020.

instruments of accession with the U.S. State Dept, the applicant becomes a member of the NATO.