

National Essay Competition on Water related issues

Central Ground Water Board under Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation will be conducting a National Essay Competition on Water related issues.

SSB Officers Will Celebrate Republic Day on Border Out Posts

On the personnel initiative of DG, SSB Mrs. Archana Ramasundaram, it is first time that the Officers of the rank of Dy. Commandant and above posted in various Sector Headquarters, Frontier Headquarters and Force Headquarter New Delhi are going to Border Out Posts (BOPs) in far-flung areas on Indo-Nepal & Indo-Bhutan Borders and to J&K and Naxal affected areas to celebrate 68th Republic Day with National fervor.

Beijing specifies 198 key tasks for 2017

The Beijing municipal government will have 198 key tasks in 2017, and each task will be supervised by at least one government leader, the executive meeting of the municipal government has approved.

The 198 tasks are put into eight categories. They are as follows:

1. To set forth main goals for social and economic development.
2. To relocate Beijing's non-capital functions and advance the coordinated development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.
3. To promote the supply-side structural reform, and improve Beijing's economy both in quality and in efficiency.
4. To strive to address "big city problems" and expand the city's capacity for sustainable development.

5. To deepen the innovation-driven development strategy, and build Beijing as the national sci-tech innovation center
6. To adhere to the path of the advanced socialist culture, and build Beijing as the national cultural center.
7. To uphold the people-first principle, and safeguard and improve people's livelihood.
8. To strengthen the construction of the government itself.

Among these specific categories, to address "big city problems" and to improve people's livelihood are given priority with tasks under these two categories totaling 85; tasks of removing Beijing's non-capital functions number 26. Each of the 198 key tasks will be overseen at least by one municipal government leader.

As per the requirement of the city's 2017 government work report, breakthroughs should be made in three key areas. They are as follows:

1. To complete the construction of Beijing-Qinhuangdao Highway; to continue with the construction of Pinggu Rail Transit Line; to promote traffic integration in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.
2. To plant 100,000 mu (1 hectare equals 15 mu) of ecological water resource protection forest in Beijing and Hebei, and 40,000 mu of forest for environmental protection in Beijing and Tianjin; to advance environmental remediation and ecological repair of the Yongding River, the Chaobai River and the north section of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, among other inter-provincial rivers.
3. To properly link up industries; to guide certain industrial projects to relocate and cluster in areas such as Caofeidian demonstration zone; to promote the development of the Tianjin Binhai – Zhongguancun service platform for innovation; to support the green industrial development in Zhangjiakou – Chengde ecological function area.

The construction of the sub-center will focus on the building of the administration and ancillary facilities in 2017. According to the government's work plan, four municipal authorities, along with government-affiliated administrative departments, will start relocation at the end of this year.

The sub-center building also includes the road-system construction, improvement of the environment, landscape showcase work of cultural resources highlighted by the Grand Canal.

With regard to advancing the supply-side structural reform and improving the quality and efficiency of Beijing's economy, active moves will be made to phase out companies stuck in deficit. More than 50 "zombie enterprises" will be eliminated from the market. Health, senior care, culture and sports, recreation and tourism industries will be given to boost.

The will of Parliament

Yesterday Opposition MPs shed crocodile tears about the need for a sovereign Parliament. They were under the misapprehension that Parliament has no proper role in the Brexit process. They seemed to think only unelected Judges could uphold the sovereignty of Parliament against a government determined to implement the wishes of the electors as expressed in the referendum.

Let me explain a few home truths to them. The first is we do not currently have a sovereign Parliament. That was the main point at issue in the referendum. All too many MPs in recent decades have voted away the powers of Westminster, passing authority on issue after issue to the EU. The public voted to reverse that. I have spoken out against the puppet Parliament we currently suffer from. All too many laws, budgets and policies are determined in Brussels in ways the UK Parliament cannot gainsay.

Any opposition there is to implementing the wishes of the people should properly concentrate on the Parliamentary process. It should not need to go to the courts, and the courts themselves need to be careful not to think it is their job to set the Parliamentary agenda. If there was a big body of MPs who wanted to reverse the decision of the referendum and thwart the will of the people, there are ways they can seek to do so. The opposition parties have days allocated to their choice of business. They could use any one of those to hold a debate and a vote to prevent Brexit. They can use government debates on the EU which are available in abundance to make their case. They can make it during the various Statements the government issues. They can seek Urgent Questions on matters they rank as important. They can use their seats on the Brexit and European Affairs Committees to put their case. They can oppose the repeal of the 1972 European Communities Act when we get to it, when there will be government led votes where they can vote against.

The fact that they have chosen to do none of these things tells you that they rightly judge they must not be seen to deliberately seek to countermand the decision of the voters in the referendum. The Commons voted 6 to 1 in favour of a referendum, described as transferring the decision to the people by the government introducing the Bill. How can MPs who voted for the referendum go back on its central promise to let the people choose? If only more of these Opposition MPs would grasp that we do not currently have a sovereign Parliament. What a cruel irony that some Members of Parliament prey in aid the idea of a sovereign Parliament, whilst doing all they can to stop one being recreated. At least the Supreme Court was right to tell the Scottish Parliament that our membership of the EU is a matter for the whole UK and for the UK Parliament. They do not have veto on this national decision.

Cambodia: UN experts call for immediate release of five human rights defenders

25 January 2017 – Two United Nations human rights experts today called on the Government of Cambodia for the immediate release of five human rights defenders detained in May 2016 on charges, which they see as politically motivated.

The use of criminal provisions as a pretext to suppress and prevent the legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of expression and to silence human rights defenders is incompatible with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, (ICCPR), which has been signed by Cambodia, said the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, Rhona Smith, in a news release issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Ms. Smith recalled that, on 11 May 2016, a group of UN human rights experts sent a follow-up joint urgent appeal to the Cambodian Government on the cases of the five detainees, but has not received any response to date.

The experts requested detailed information on the legal basis for the detention of four staff of human rights NGO Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC) – Lim Mony, Ny Vanda, Ny Sokha and Yi Soksan – as well as the Deputy Secretary General of the National Election Committee and former ADHOC staff member, Ny Chakrya.

As a party to the ICCPR, Cambodia is obliged to respect freedom of expression and the right to a fair trial, which entails a prompt and fair trial within a reasonable period of time or release, Ms. Smith stressed.

With so much effort and resources invested in improving the functioning of the judiciary, which had begun to see improvements in some respects, all that is lost with these cases, she cautioned. They have damaged even further the standing of the Cambodian judiciary, which according to studies commands the least respect of the public among all the State institutions.

The Special Rapporteur's call was also endorsed by human rights expert Sètonджи Roland Adjovi, who currently heads the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.