

Capital’s air quality reported moderate

Delhi records maximum temperature of 25.6 degrees C

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The maximum temperature in the national capital on Saturday rose to 25.6 degrees Celsius, one notch above the season’s average, the India Meteorological Department

(IMD) said.

The minimum temperature settled at 10.8 degrees Celsius, normal for the season, the IMD said. The relative humidity for the city oscillated between 90 per cent and 42 per cent, it said.

On Friday, the maximum temperature of the national capital was 28.4 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature settled at 9.7

degrees Celsius.

The 24-hour air quality index (AQI) of Delhi was recorded in the ‘moderate’ category (reading 180) at 4 pm, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). An AQI between zero and 50 is considered ‘good’, 51 and 100 ‘satisfactory’, 101 and 200 ‘moderate’, 201 and 300 ‘poor’, 301 and 400 ‘very poor’, and 401 and 500 ‘severe’.

Man arrested for shooting friend over money dispute

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A 50-year-old man was arrested for allegedly killing his friend over money in southwest Delhi’s Palam Gaon area, police said on Saturday. The accused has been identified as Kamal Sharma, a resident of Palam Gaon, they said. The victim, Prakash Aggarwal (45), a resident of Hauz Qazi, ran a sanitaryware shop in Chawdi Bazaar. His wife told police that she had last spoken to Aggarwal at 6.30 pm on Thursday and he had told her that he was with Sharma in Palam village, a senior police officer said.

After that, his phone got switched off and she could not contact him.

On Friday, Aggarwal’s body was found with gunshot wounds at an isolated spot near Pochanpur village, following which a case was registered at Dwarka Sector-23 police station, the officer said.

On the same day, police received information that Sharma was involved in Aggarwal’s murder.

A trap was laid and he was nabbed on Friday near Dwarka Sector-11-12 with two pistols in his possession,

Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Shibesh Singh said.

Sharma confessed to killing Aggarwal and dumping his body near Pochanpur, they said.

During interrogation, he revealed that he is in property business and had recently opened a Mother Dairy booth. He has a past criminal record and was once arrested for assault, police said.

Sharma and Aggarwal had known each other since 2017. Aggarwal had helped Sharma secure a bank loan against property. Sharma had been returning the money regularly to the bank through Aggarwal, police said.

However, instead of depositing the money in bank, Aggarwal siphoned it off. They had a showdown when the bank officials visited Sharma and told him that no money had been deposited in the last 12 months, police said.

Sharma called Aggarwal to his Mother Dairy booth in Palam village and shot him twice in his chest, police said. He, along with his servant Vishal, dumped the body at an isolated spot near Pochanpur village, they added.

2 killed, 3 injured as car rams into truck

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two persons were killed and three others injured in the early hours of Saturday after they allegedly rammed their Mercedes car into a moving truck in Delhi Cantonment area in southwestern part of the city, police said.

Officials said they received information regarding the accident on the Dhaulia Kuan-Gurugam stretch at around 2.50 am. Vinod Kumar, Krishan Solanki, Nitin, Jitender and Karan Bhardwaj, all residents of Palam village in southwest Delhi, were returning home after attending a wedding in Faridabad, Haryana, Deputy

Commissioner of Police (southwest) Gaurav Sharma said.

Of these Kumar, the car owner and driver, and Solanki died. The other three are undergoing treatment, police said. They said the medical report will ascertain whether the driver was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the accident.

However, no proof of drunken driving was received so far.

A case has been registered at the Delhi Cantonment police station and an investigation is underway. Teams have been deployed and CCTV cameras are being checked, police said.

City records 635 Covid cases, two deaths; positivity rate 1.13%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi on Saturday reported 635 fresh Covid-19 cases and two deaths, while the positivity rate dropped to 1.13 per cent, according to data shared by the city health department.

With this, the national capital’s case count increased to 18,55,409 and the death toll climbed to 26,097, the latest health bulletin stated. The number of COVID-19 tests conducted a day ago stood at 56,199, it said.

Delhi had on Friday reported 635 cases with a positivity rate of 1.22 per cent, and four deaths.

On Thursday, the national capital reported 739 cases with a positivity rate of 1.48 per cent, and five deaths.

The number of daily cases in Delhi has been on the decline after touching the record high of 28,867 on January 13.

The city had recorded a positivity rate of 30.6 per cent on January 14, the highest during the ongoing wave of the pandemic.

Amid the decline in daily cases of COVID-19 in Delhi, the number of patients under home isolation has also significantly fallen in the last two weeks.

The number of home isolation cases on February 1 had stood at 12,312, and on February 18 it had dipped to 1,860, and further down to 1,721 on February 19.

The number of containment zones, which were also slowly falling in this period, came down to 9,742 on February 19 from 10,868 on February 18, according to official figures shared by the health department.

The surge in Covid cases in Delhi during the third wave of the pandemic was largely due to the Omicron variant of the virus which is highly transmissible.

There are 15,306 beds for Covid patients in Delhi hospitals and 301, or 1.97 per cent, of them were occupied. A total of 301 Covid patients were in hospitals, Friday’s health department bulletin stated.

Group of poets seeks Kejriwal’s apology

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A group of poets Saturday demanded an apology from Aam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal, accusing him of insulting poets in his rebuttal to his former party colleague Kumar Vishwas’ allegations that he had sympathies with pro-Khalistan elements. In an open letter, the poets said they were hurt at Kejriwal’s alleged attempt to ridicule them and said he should have used facts to counter the charge instead of “insulting” poets. The 40 poets who have signed the letter include Gajendra Solanki and Dinesh Raghuvanshi.

They also raked up the charge that Kejriwal had stayed at the house of an alleged pro-Khalistan terrorist during the 2017 assembly polls in Punjab and referred to a fake letter, which extended support to the AAP in the ongoing polls, attributed to proscribed organisation Sikhs for Justice.

Kejriwal threat to unity of country, says Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Calling Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal a big threat to the unity and integrity of the country, Congress Delhi unit president said that the Kejriwal’s devious strategy of holding on to power by hook or crook, including joining hands with anti-national elements to be in power as disclosed by his one-time associate Kumar Vishwas, has come as a rude shock.

A large number of Congress workers gheraoed the residence of Chief Minister at Civil Lines and demanded Arvind’s resignation.

Kumar said that Kejriwal’s closed-door meetings with separatists and receiving fund-



ing from terrorist groups and the source of AAP’s funds, should be probed as he has now become a threat to the

country.

Kumar said that Kejriwal came to power on the anti-corruption plank has now

become the fulcrum of corruption and a refuge for all corrupt MLAs and Councillors of the Aam

Aadmi Party, which was clearly evident from the arrest of an AAP Municipal Councillor of the East Delhi MCD by the CBI.

The Congress leader accused Kejriwal of shielding the corrupt politicians from whom he takes a large cut. He said that 80 per cent Ministers of the Arvind Cabinet and 50 per cent AAP MLAs have been charged with various offences and had the Jan Lokpal been constituted, they all would have been behind the bars by now.

Speaking on the occasion, Delhi Congress vice president Jai Kishan said that in the past seven years, Kejriwal took corruption to a new high and failed miserably in every sector.

Kejriwal Govt hosts concert to pay homage to Lata Mangeshkar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government hosted a tribute concert on Saturday to pay homage to Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar here.

The 92-year-old melody queen died at a private hospital in Mumbai early this month.

The chief guest at the event was Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and was held at the Central Park in Connaught Place.

Several classical artists performed at the event, paying tribute to the nightingale of India. It was also attended by Bollywood artists Shilpa Rao and Annu Kapoor. “We have gathered here to pay tribute to the great personality Lata



Mangeshkar. Sadly, Lata di is not among us.

Her songs will remain immortal in the next 100 to 200 years,” Sisodia said. The audience was left mesmerised by the beautiful renditions of Lata Mangeshkar songs by school children.

Police suspect same persons planted IEDs in Ghazipur, Seemapuri

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police investigating the recoveries of IEDs in Ghazipur and Old Seemapuri has found that the design and component of the explosives were same and that a stolen motorcycle was parked near both the spots.

Investigators believe that the same persons were behind planting the IEDs within a month. The sketches of two suspects have been prepared, a senior police officer said, adding that efforts are being made to nab them at the earliest.

The IEDs found in an Old Seemapuri house on Thursday and in the Ghazipur flower market on January 17 were prepared with the intention of carrying out blasts at public places across the city, Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana had said on Friday. Such activities are not possible without local support, he had added.

The investigation revealed that both IEDs were made with a mix of ammonium nitrate and RDX, the senior police officer said. Both explosives were defused in a controlled manner and no one was injured.

In a CCTV footage collected from near the Ghazipur spot, a black Hero Splendor motorcycle was seen parked

nearby. And after the IED recovery in Old Seemapuri, the police recovered a similar bike from near Dilshad Garden Metro Station. It was found to be stolen and investigators believe it is the same motorcycle seen in the CCTV footage collected from the Ghazipur spot.

The improvised explosive device (IED) recovered from the Old Seemapuri house, weighing 2.5 to 3 kg, was defused and the house owner and a property dealer were questioned in this connection.

The recovery of the IED at the Ghazipur flower market came ahead of Republic Day celebrations on January 26 for which the security apparatus in the national capital was on high alert.

Delhi Police chief Asthana earlier said the Special Cell and other teams were investigating the case. The investigators are probing forward and backward linkages. “We are trying to pre-empt every such incident in Delhi and expose any local and foreign network,” he added.

Officials from the National Investigation Agency and the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorist Squad had on Friday visited the scene of crime in Old Seemapuri as multiple agencies have been working on the case.

Woman found dead in Rohini

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A 20-year-old woman has been found dead in Rohini’s Prem Nagar area, police said on Saturday.

According to police, a PCR call was received at the Prem Nagar Police Station on Friday regarding the death of a person, identified as Aashipa.

During spot inspection, she was found dead on the floor and no injury marks

were apparently visible on the body, a senior police officer said.

Based on the circumstances, inquest proceedings have been carried out and the place of incident was photographed by a crime team as well as the forensic team of Rohini district, the officer said.

The body has been sent for post-mortem and the area sub-divisional magistrate has been informed, police said.

Authorities to conduct structural audit of G’gram society towers

PTI ■ GURUGRAM

Days after two people died when a tower at Chintels Paradiso society in Gurugram partially collapsed, the authorities said they will conduct a structural audit of four other towers to determine if they are safe for living.

While 20 families of Chintel’s partially collapsed Tower D were shifted out to temporary accommodations, the option has also been given to 200 flat owners of Towers E, F, G and H, officials said. The builder will pay shifting charges and rent. “Till the IIT-Delhi conducts a structural audit and declares them safe, all towers fall under unsafe category,” DC Nishant Kumar Yadav told PTI.

He said flat owners were worried so they allowed them to shift out. However, he said they are first shifting residents of Tower D. Meanwhile, a worried resident, Saloni, said “Where do we go now? My child has his board exams coming up and is already traumatised by the collapse of Tower D. Now, where do we find a new place at such short notice.”

The residents claimed that people from Tower D, where the houses collapsed on February 10, are camping like refugees and asked how others will be accommodated. “My flat has developed cracks and we lay awake each night after the collapse, scared of dying. I have spent Rs 40 lakh on furniture and interiors. How can I just go? We are ruined,” said Seema, who lives on the sixth floor of Tower F. Gurugram dis-

trict’s Town and Country Planner RS Bhat is currently stationed in the society to oversee the repair and rehabilitation work. Bhat said they have asked the builder to provide lodging facility to the residents opting for it.

Meanwhile, Police collected samples from the damaged structure and sent it to the Forensic Science Laboratory, Madhuban. “Also, the structural audit report regarding reasons for the collapse of the floors of the residential tower is awaited from the DTCP and further action will be taken in consonance with law thereupon,” a statement issued by police said.

Chintels India in an official statement said, “We stand by our homebuyers in these difficult times. We are fully cooperating with the authorities and our onsite team is constantly working round the clock to ensure smooth rehabilitation of the affected residents.” “We have submitted all contract copies of the project contractor to the DTP Gurugram. In case any defects are found in the structure, we will duly compensate affected buyers or accommodate affected residents in alternate arrangements while necessary repair work or even fresh construction is completed,” the company said. “Even if some residents are not happy with our arrangements, we are willing to reimburse them for their investments and even pay their rentals while they are making alternate arrangements,” it added.

City Govt replacing its old diesel, petrol vehicles with electric ones

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With an emphasis on fighting air pollution, the Delhi Government has started scrapping its old petrol and diesel vehicles and procuring electric ones.

The General Administration Department (GAD) has recently procured 12 electric vehicles to be used by ministers and top officers of the Delhi government.

“We have also started the process to identify and send such vehicles that have completed their lifespan for scrapping,” said a senior GAD officer. According to a National Green Tribunal (NGT) order, the use of diesel and petrol vehicles older than 10 years and 15 years respectively is banned in Delhi.

After the launch of the Electric Vehicle Policy in August 2020, various departments and autonomous bodies of the Delhi government have started replacing old petrol and diesel vehicles in their fleets with electric vehicles.

“It is being done on case-to-case basis keeping in mind the relatively higher prices of

electric vehicles as compared to conventional vehicles,” said a senior Delhi government officer.

In February last year, the Delhi government had directed all its departments and autonomous bodies to hire or purchase only electric vehicles for their fleets. “All departments of the Delhi government will now use only electric vehicles. Over 2,000 petrol and diesel vehicles will be replaced with electric vehicles,” Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had said.

The GAD is also working on replacement of several old vehicles with VIP series of registration numbers like 0001 parked in a lot near the Delhi Secretariat.

“While these vehicles will be scrapped, their VIP registration numbers will be retained for registration of new vehicles to be procured by the department,” the officer said.

Under Delhi’s Electric Vehicle Policy, 12 four-wheeler models are available and eligible for purchase and scrapping incentives provided by the government.

WORLD 5
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Battle for UP enters testing phase today

SP-BJP locked in tough fight on 59 seats in 3rd phase in Yadav belt

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party faces an uphill task of regaining its erstwhile bastion from Kasganj to Kannauj as Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections enter its most crucial third phase.

This phase will cover 59 constituencies spread across 16 districts in central and south-central parts of the State on February 20. Akhilesh Yadav is also in the fray from Karhal Assembly seat in the third phase seeking election to Assembly for the first time.

Almost half the seats going to the polls are what is called the real cow belt in State politics. The region spread between Firozabad to Kannauj is a traditional Samajwadi Party (SP) bastion comprising 29 seats. The majority of them have a high concentration of Yadav voters.

In these eight districts, the BJP had done exceedingly well in 2017, winning all but five seats. All eight seats in Etah, Kasganj went to the BJP and the party also won all three in Kannauj and Auriya. Mainpuri was the only district where the SP could retain three out of four seats.



Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav addresses a public meeting, a day before the third phase of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, at the GIC ground in Lakhimpur on Saturday

In Firozabad, the SP managed to win just one seat — Sirsaganj. Hariom Yadav, the sitting SP MLA, is now in the fray as a BJP candidate. The BJP inflicted the unkindest cut of all on the SP in Etawah, Mulayam Singh's hometown where the BJP managed to win two out of the three seats. Only Akhilesh's uncle Shivpal Yadav could manage to survive the BJP wave in Jaswantnagar.

The SP chief Akhilesh attempting a course correction has tried to set his house in order by reaching out to his estranged uncle Shivpal. The SP has persuaded Shivpal to contest election on its symbol thus confining him to his own constituency. This time Akhilesh has also restricted the influence of his family mem-

bers in ticket distribution.

Though the SP has tried to win over non-Yadav OBCs, its ability to wean away this section of voters would be put to test in this phase. The area from Kasganj to Kannauj has a fair population of non-Yadav backward communities like Lodha, Maurya, Shakya, Baghel, and Kushwaha. All these caste groups have been effectively mobilised by the BJP in the last seven years to create a formidable social coalition.

Akhilesh has been promising to hold a caste census in UP if his party wins in this election. The underlying message of this plank is for backward communities at large where a new debate has been triggered with the BJP Government extending the benefits of reser-

vations to the economically weaker sections of the upper castes in government jobs and educational institutions.

The competing SP-BJP narratives are put to test in districts like Etah. Kalyan Singh's legacy still has resonance among the Lodha-Rajput voters in four Assembly segments here. One seat is reserved, and in the other three SP has given tickets to Yadav candidates. The BJP has been more diverse in its ticket allocation as it has sought to accommodate both Lodha and Shakya communities.

The BJP's pitch on suraksha and law-and-order is also drafted to send a subtle message to have-nots in the backward blocks vis a vis the better offs like the Yadavs and Kurmis.

The BJP has also sought to micromanage its campaign in UP, focusing especially on seats which it won by a narrow margin. For instance, the party held Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally in Patiyali. The seat which has over 1 lakh Muslim voters was won by the BJP by a very narrow margin in 2017. The BJP followed the Modi rally with another election meeting by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The SP would also be tested in the Bundelkhand region where the BJP won all 13 seats which are going to the polls in this phase. Except for Jalaun, the SP has been weak in the Jhansi division.

2,000 Indian students left in lurch in Canada as 3 colleges shut shop

Verify credentials of colleges before paying fees, cautions Indian High Commission

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 2,000 Indian students have been left stranded in Canada after abrupt closure of three educational institutions there. Taking note of this development, the Indian High Commission, Ottawa, on Saturday advised Indian citizens to examine the credentials of the colleges there before paying fees.

The institutions were closed reportedly in the wake of protests by hundreds of truckers of Canada converging in Ottawa to protest against mandatory vaccination for corona for crossing the US-Canada border.

Issuing the note of caution, the Indian embassy assured the stranded students that it was in touch with the local authorities and the elected representatives to find ways to resolve the issue at the earliest. It was learnt that a majority of affected students are from Punjab, Haryana and Gujarat. The students were left in the lurch reportedly after the notice of closure of three institutions run by Rising Phoenix International Inc in wake of the ongoing protests in Canada.

The closure of the colleges has led to the immigration status of at least half of them under threat. The three private colleges and a recruiting firm reportedly filed for creditor protection in mid-January and allegedly claimed the financial crisis occurred due to the ongoing corona pandemic.

Meanwhile, spending lakhs of rupees on fee and travel, the students have lost their student



status and their visa and other documents have become invalid, reports indicated.

According to information, 1,173 students were studying in person at the three colleges in Montreal while 637 were pursuing online classes from home in Punjab and other places. They had been eagerly awaiting on-campus learning to begin to shift base to Canada. While some of the parents lost their life's savings, others had raised loans to send their wards abroad.

"The High Commission has been approached by several students from India who were enrolled in the three institutions run by Rising Phoenix International Inc, namely, M College H Montreal, CED College in Sherbrooke and CCSQ College in Longueuil, all in the province of Quebec, Canada, and who have been affected by the notice of closure of these institutions," the advisory said on Friday.

The High Commission was

in close contact with the federal Government of Canada, the provincial Government of Quebec province as well as elected Canadian representatives from the Indian community to provide support to the affected students and for the resolution of this issue.

Students were also informed that the Canadian authorities were giving grace period to the affected ones to take admission in other institutions. The advisory said if the students find any difficulty in reimbursement of their fees or transfer of fees, they may file a complaint with the Ministry of Higher Education, Government of Quebec.

"The provincial Government of Quebec has advised that the affected students may directly contact the institutions where they are registered, and in the event that they find any difficulty in reimbursement of their fees or transfer of fees, they may file a complaint with Ministry of Higher

Education, Government of Quebec," it said.

"Students from India planning higher studies in Canada are again advised to make thorough checks of the credentials and standing of the institution where they are seeking admission before making any payment to such institutions. Please demand a certificate of recognition by the Canadian provincial Government from the institutions and verify the institution selected is included in the list of designated learning institutions published on the Government of Canada website. Students should not make any payments or reveal their personal information to any unverified person/ institution offering students visa on payment," the advisory said.

Indian students in Canada or those planning to travel to Canada are advised to register online with their nearest Indian Mission or Post on the MADAD portal.

Punjab set to witness multi-party contest

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Battle lines are drawn in the Border State of Punjab for the multi-party contest on Sunday for all the 117 seats.

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) S Karuna Raju on Saturday said all arrangements have been made to ensure free, fair, and peaceful elections in the State. He said that total State machinery is working round the clock to ensure peaceful, free, and fair elections.

Raju said that as many as 2,14,99,804 electorates, including 1,12,98,081 males, 1,02,00,996 females, and 727 transgender. There are 1,304 candidates — 1209 males, 93 women and two transgender are in the fray in 117 constituencies, he added.

He said 231 candidates are from national parties, 250 from State parties, 362 from unrecognised parties and 461 are inde-



Polling officials carry EVMs and other election material to leave for election duty, a day before Punjab Assembly elections at Polo Ground, in Patiala on Saturday

pendent candidates. He said that as many as 315 contesting candidates are with criminal antecedents.

The CEO said that 24,689 polling stations and 51 auxiliary polling stations have been established at 14,684 polling station locations of which 2,013 are identified as critical, while 2,952 are vulnerable pockets. He informed that there would be 1,196 model polling stations,

196 women managed polling stations and 70 PwD managed polling stations. He said that webcasting of all the polling stations is being done.

Apart from three Special State Observers, the ECI has appointed 65 General Observers, 50 Expenditure Observers and 29 Police Observers to keep a keen eye on poll conduct.

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Kejriwal retorts to terror sympathiser barb: Added 12,430 classrooms

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Facing allegations of harbouring separatist ideas, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal dedicated 12,430 new classrooms to the children of Delhi and derided those who called him a "terrorist" sympathiser.

"We had planned for 11,000 classrooms but ended up building 12,430 high-tech classrooms across 240 schools in just 3 years. This is what happens when you elect an honest Government. The man these corrupt leaders call a terrorist has built 12,430 classrooms today; he is fulfilling the dreams of Babasaheb and Bhagat Singh. These politicians can continue to call me a terrorist and I will continue terrorising their sleep by building world-class schools & hospitals for the poor," he said.

Kejriwal said the schools

will blur the fault-lines of caste and class as children of rickshaw-pullers and labourers will sit on the same desk as those of officers and judges.

"We've built over 20,000 new classrooms in Delhi in the last 7 years. All the State Governments and the Centre together haven't even come close to the figure. On average a school has 50 rooms; we can consider that we've built 250 new schools with these 12,430 classrooms. Had this country met our standard of education 75 years back, this society would've touched great heights," he said.

Kejriwal said his Government will do its best to build schools and hospitals on the Delhi model in other States as well. "Open offer to all parties, if you want to revolutionise education and healthcare, the Delhi Government will happily loan you Manish Sisodia and



Satyendar Jain. Politicians fear good schools; if the country has good schools the politics of caste and religion would get killed. Our Government school students won't vote on caste and religion but nation-building and progress," he said.

Kejriwal said these schools will act as cradles of staunch Deshbhaktis. "Bhagat Singh gave the slogan of 'Inquilab Zindabad'; today I give the slogan of 'Inquilab Zindabad, Shiksha Kranti Zindabad,' he

said.

At the same time, Sisodia said the Delhi Government is the only Government in India to spend one-fourth of its Budget on education. The Delhi Government's schools boast of better infrastructure than private schools today, he said, adding that the State Government has created infrastructure but it is now the duty of every student and teacher to convert these buildings into flourishing schools.

Sisodia said 3,70,000 students have switched from elite private schools to Delhi's Government schools.

Besides Sisodia, PWD Minister and Satyendar Jain senior officials, including the Education Secretary and Education Director, were present in the inauguration ceremony organised at Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Rajokri, Delhi.

Vishwas gets 'Y' category security

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Saturday decided to grant "Y" category security cover to former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Kumar Vishwas. The move comes after the Home Ministry reviewed the threat perception and security risks of Vishwas based on intelligence inputs in the wake of his allegations against AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

After the review, it was decided to give Vishwas "Y" category security through the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), sources said.

Under the "Y" category security, Vishwas, as a protectee, will be secured by four personal security officers of the CRPF on a 24/7 basis.

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'Covid over' a dangerous narrative: WHO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The lower severity of the Omicron variant combined with high vaccine coverage in some countries is "driving a dangerous narrative that the pandemic is over", World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned on Saturday.

"But it's not," he said during a live session at the Munich Security Conference 2022, currently underway in the German city. Ending the pandemic "must be the focus" of the world, he stressed.

His comments come amid new lab studies that have revealed that Omicron sub-variant BA.2 could cause severe illness like Delta and previously identified Covid-19 variants.

Various countries, including India, have started easing restrictions citing decline in cases.

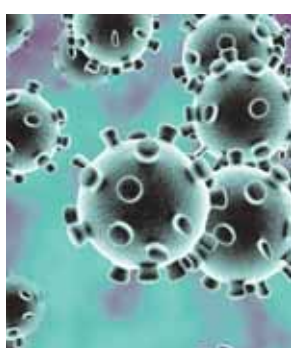
However, the WHO chief said, "conditions are now 'ideal

for more transmissible, more dangerous variants" of the virus to emerge."

Offering his assessment of the pandemic that has exploded, receded, and exploded again, Ghebreyesus said, "I'm sure when we met two years ago, when we were all coming to grips with the spread of this new virus, that none of us would have imagined we would now be entering the third year of the pandemic."

"In fact, the conditions are ideal for more transmissible, more dangerous variants to emerge. But we can end the Covid pandemic as a global health emergency this year," he cautioned.

"Not when 70,000 people a week are dying from a preventable and treatable disease. Not when 83 per cent of the population of Africa is yet to receive a single dose of vaccine. Not when health systems continue to strain and crack under the caseload. Not when we have



a highly transmissible virus circulating almost unchecked, with too little surveillance to track its evolution," he said.

All is not grim, however. "We have the tools. We have the know-how" to end the pandemic, Ghebreyesus said, adding, "In particular, we are calling on all countries to fill the urgent financing gap of \$16 billion for the ACT Accelerator, to make vaccines, tests, treatments, and personal protective equipment available every-

where."

The chief of the global health body spoke of a three-pronged approach that may help arrest the pandemic.

"Stronger governance: Instead of the confusion and incoherence that has fueled this pandemic; we need cooperation and collaboration in the face of common threats. Stronger systems and tools: We need stronger systems and tools to prevent, detect, and respond rapidly to epidemics and pandemics. Stronger financing: It's obvious that nationally and globally, we need substantial resources for strengthening global health security," it said.

The coronavirus pandemic, which began with infections being first reported from China in 2019, swept the world and locked it down in less than six months. The virus has since evolved, mutated, killed millions globally and infected many more.

Ukraine rebels mobilise troops amid invasion fears

Moscow: Pro-Russia separatist leaders in eastern Ukraine ordered a full military mobilisation on Saturday, while Western leaders made increasingly dire warnings that a Russia invasion of its neighbour appeared imminent.

In new signs of fears that a war could start within days, Germany and Austria told their citizens to leave Ukraine. German air carrier Lufthansa cancelled flights to the capital, Kyiv, and to Odessa, a Black Sea port that could be a key target in an invasion. NATO's liaison office in Kyiv said it was relocating staff to Brussels and to the western Ukraine city of Lviv.

Meanwhile, top Ukrainian military officials came under a shelling attack during a tour of the front of the nearly eight-year separatist conflict in eastern Ukraine.

The officials fled to a bomb shelter before hustling from the area, according to a journalist



from *The Associated Press* who was on the tour.

Violence in eastern Ukraine has spiked in recent days as Ukraine and the two regions held by the rebels each accused the other of escalation. Russia on Saturday said at least two shells fired from a government-held part of eastern Ukraine landed across the border, but Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba dismissed claim as "a fake statement".

Sporadic violence has bro-

ken out for years along the line separating Ukrainian forces from the Russia-backed rebels, but the recent shelling and bombing spike could set off a full-scale war.

The United States and many European countries have alleged for months that Russia, which has moved about 150,000 troops near the Ukrainian border, is trying to create pretexts to invade.

"They are uncivil and are now poised to strike," US Secretary of Defence Lloyd

Austin said Saturday during a visit to Lithuania. US Vice President Kamala Harris met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Munich Security Conference on Saturday, opening the meeting by saying the world was at "a decisive moment in history".

Zelenskyy suggested that the West bore some responsibility by not responding more forcefully when Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula in 2014. "When a bomb crater appears in the school yard, children have a question — has the world forgotten its mistakes of the 20th century? What attempts at appeasement lead to?" the Ukrainian leader said.

Earlier Saturday, Denis Pushilin, the head of the pro-Russia separatist government in Ukraine's Donetsk region, cited an "immediate threat of aggression" from Ukrainian forces in his announcement. **AP**

BJP alleges link between serial blast convicts, SP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day before 55 Assembly constituencies are to go to polls in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP on Saturday alleged a direct connection between the convicts of the 2008 Ahmedabad serial blasts and the Samajwadi Party (SP) in UP.

Dubbing the Opposition as a terrorist sympathiser, BJP leader and Union Minister Anurag Thakur shared photographs proving that the family member of a convict was associated with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav.

"One of the 49 convicts of the deadly serial blasts in Ahmedabad is Mohammad Saif, son of Samajwadi Party leader Shahbad Ahmed," said Thakur, sharing photos of then UP Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav with Ahmed. "Did Akhilesh call him over biryani"

Dubbing the Opposition as a terrorist sympathiser, BJP leader and Union Minister Anurag Thakur shared photographs proving that the family member of a convict was associated with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav

His son was the mastermind and involved in the blasts," he stated. Thakur stated that not only was SP associated with convicts of the 2008 Ahmedabad blasts, but they also appealed to the courts to withdraw cases against some of them. Citing the court's response to a petition by the Akhilesh-led government in 2014, Thakur said, "Now you are withdrawing cases against them, tomorrow will you award them the Padma Bhushan?"

The BJP leader alleged, "The SP grants protection to terrorists, therefore, PM Modi referred to their red caps as 'red

alerts for UP".

He said they raise questions against the police and are not "Samajwadi but Samaj Virodhi.

"We haven't forgotten the Batla House encounter. We are well aware of SP's affection towards terrorists. There is a clear cut connection between the SP and the Ahmedabad blasts convicts", said the BJP leader

On Friday, a court in Gujarat awarded death sentences to 38 convicts of the serial blasts that killed 56 people and injured over 200 in the state capital in 2008.

Modi inaugurates biggest in Asia ‘Gobar-Dhan Plant’ in Indore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Informing that 75 Bio-CNG plants are to be set-up in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the "Gobar-Dhan (Bio-CNG) Plant", the biggest in Asia, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

Launching the plant through video conferencing, Modi said the plant will clear "hills of garbage", free land to be converted into green zone, reduce carbon and specifically produce 17,000 to 18,000 kg CNG and 100 tonne bio-manure daily.

The CNG produced by the plant can run 400 buses, he said.

The Prime Minister emphasized that the initiative will help make the cities of the country clean, pollution-free and take them towards clean energy.

"This would be circular economy..", he said and point-

ed out that "the country today blending 8 percent ethanol in petrol which was only one percent before 2014 and the blending has increased from 40 crore liters to 300 crore liters."

It is also helping the cane growers in the country, said the Prime Minister.

"Lakhs of tonnes of garbage occupied thousands of acres of land for decades in cities across the country that caused air and water pollution, which is a major reason for the spread of diseases," the Prime Minister said adding the government is making efforts to free thou-

sands of acres of land in the country's urban areas from piles of garbage, which was being dumped there for decades, and convert these places into green zones in the next couple of years.

He said the garbage disposal capacity of the urban areas in the country has increased by four times since 2014.

The Prime Minister started his address with paying tributes to Rani Ahilyabai and recalling her link with the city of Indore. He said that mention of Indore reminds of Devi Ahiliyabai Holker and her sense of service.

Modi said Indore has sown country the way by clearing "garbage hill" and freeing 100 acres of land from it and converting it into a green zone.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan attended the function virtually.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, Modi recently launched the Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0. The vision behind the mission is "Garbage Free Cities" it is being implemented under the overarching principles of "waste to wealth" and "circular economy" for maximizing resource recovery - both of which are exemplified in the Indore Bio-CNG plant.

NIA conducts searches in connection with probe into J&K terrorism conspiracy case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted searches at multiple locations across Jammu and Kashmir, and Rajasthan in connection with the probe into the J&K terrorism conspiracy case.

The NIA conducted searches at eight locations in districts Sopore, Kupwara, Shopian, Rajouri, Budgam, Ganderbal of Jammu and Kashmir and Jodhpur district of Rajasthan in the case, the NIA said in a statement.

The case relates to planning and conspiracy for undertaking violent terrorist acts in Jammu and Kashmir, and other major cities including New Delhi by cadres of proscribed terrorist organisations Lashkar-e-Tayabba (LeT), Jaish-e-

NIA conducted searches at eight locations in districts Sopore, Kupwara, Shopian, Rajouri, Budgam, Ganderbal of Jammu and Kashmir and Jodhpur

Mohammed (JeM), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Al Badr and their affiliates like The Resistance Front (TRF) and People Against Fascist Forces (PAFF) among others.

The NIA has arrested 28 accused persons in the case till so far.

"During the searches, various incriminating documents, digital devices, SIM cards and digital storage devices have been seized," it said, adding further investigation in the case is continuing.

Maha charges & counter charges: Sena hits back at Rane for ‘threatening’ Thackerays

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid the continued exchange of charges and counter-charges between him and former BJP MP Kirit Somaiya, Shiv Sena's MP and chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut on Saturday not only warned BJP leader and Union Minister Narayan Rane of severe repercussions for "threatening" the Thackeray family, but also threatened to "expose" a major scandal involving the Enforcement Directorate (ED) which is being "used" by the BJP to topple the MVA Government.

Two days after he alleged that Somaiya had "extorted" Rs 400 crore by collecting anywhere from Rs 25 to 50 lakh from 423 people by promising houses in Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) project at Powai in north-east Mumbai,

Raut hit back at Rane for handing out to threats to the Thackeray family that the ED would be issuing notices to four persons in Matoshri, the official residence of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Talking to media persons, Raut said: "Narayan Rane is threatening us that he has our horoscopes. I want to tell him: Stop giving this kind of threats. We too have your horoscopes. You may be the Union Minister but this is Maharashtra. Don't forget this. We are your 'baap', you very well know what that means".

"You may use ED and Income Tax departments against us. But, we are not going to be scared.. Next week, we will come out a with a big scandal involving ED," Raut said.

EC censures BJP MLA T Raja, orders filing of case against him

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Saturday ordered the Chief Electoral Officer of Telangana to register a case against BJP MLA T Raja Singh for threatening people to vote for his party in Uttar Pradesh. The Commission also censured him and barred him from campaigning for the next 72 hours. Earlier this week, the poll panel had cited a video clip of Singh's purported remarks while issuing him the notice.

"...therefore, Commission without prejudice to any order/notice issued or to be issued in the matter, hereby, deposes the impugned statements made by T Raja Singh, member of Telangana Legislatve Assembly from Bharatiya Janata Party and

censures him for the violation of model code of conduct. Commission hereby orders CEO, Telangana to register FIR under relevant sections of IPC and the Representation of the People Act 1951," read the order.

The Commission further ordered prohibiting him from holding any public meetings, public processions, rallies, road shows and interviews , public utterances in media in connection with ongoing elections for 72 hours from 6pm on February 19.

In a video after the second phase of polling held in UP, he warned those voting against Yogi Adityanath's government, that they would be identified and made to leave the State if BJP wins the election. Singh has failed to reply the EC notice despite giving

more time. The Commission has asked to file within 24 hours but his lawyer sought time by February 21. On which the Commission given extension to submit his reply by February 19.

"The Commission has again seen the video recording of the impugned statement and observed that being a public representative such statements made by Raja Singh are utterly irresponsible and intimidating to the voters that have the undertone and propensity to undue influence the elections in UP" it said.

The Commission also observed that due to fast dissemination of information in this digital age, the statement made are not confined to the place of its occurrence.

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Two jawans of the Indian Army sacrificed their lives in the line of duty during an encounter in which one Lashkar-e- Tayyeba (LeT) terrorist was also eliminated in the South Kashmir district of Shopian on Saturday.

The army jawans received grievous bullet injuries while they were ascertaining the whereabouts of the hiding terrorists in village Chermarg Zainapora of Shopian. The house owner, where these terrorists were hiding, deliberately misled the security forces and provided terrorists the opportunity to cause collateral damage.

According to a police spokesman, "a joint cordon and search operation was launched by Police, 1stRR and 178Bn CRPF in village Chermarg Zainapora area of

Shopian after receiving inputs about the presence of terrorists in the area late last night".

"During the operation, a cluster of houses were taken into cordon and the process of evacuating civilians was initiated. During the process, as the search party started searching house belonging to Gowhar Ahmad Bhat, the house-owner intentionally misled the search party and denied sheltering the terrorist in his house". "While questioning the said person, a terrorist hiding in his house opened fire on the search party resulting in grievous injuries to two Army Jawans. The fire was retaliated effectively leading to an encounter. The injured Jawans were immediately evacuated to hospital for treatment however; both of them succumbed to their injuries and attained martyrdom", police spokesman added.

In the ensuing encounter,

the hiding terrorist was killed and his body was retrieved from the site of encounter. He has been identified as Abdul Qayoom Dar son of Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Dar resident of Laroo Kakapora Pulwama and linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT.

As per police records, the killed terrorist had a history of terror crime cases as he was working as terrorist associate before joining terror ranks. His house was also being used as hideout for terrorists and in April-2020 an encounter took place in his house & subsequently he was booked under PSA. Post his release in August-2021, he continuously kept on working as an associate for active terrorists. Earlier this week, SSP Pulwama officially intimated that he had left house and joined terror folds of LeT outfit. Consequently he was listed as "C" category terrorist.

Journalist Ravish Tiwari succumbs to cancer at 40

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ravish Tiwari, National Political Editor and Chief of National Bureau of The Indian Express, whose work blended scholarship with journalistic rigour to explain change in politics and society, died Saturday morning.

He had been suffering from cancer since June 2020. He was 40 and is survived by his wife, his parents and a

brother.

Condoling his death, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted, "Destiny has taken away Ravish Tiwari too soon. A bright career in the media world comes to an end. I would enjoy reading his reports and would also periodically interact with him. He was insightful and humble. Condolences to his family and many friends. Om Shanti."

CANCELLATION of NOTICE INVITING TENDER

No.SSA/CW/KGBV-Lumding/264/2020/8929 Dated –14/02/2022

The Re tender vide No. No.SSA/CW/KGBV-Lumding/264/2020/ 8059 Dated 17/12/2021 to carry out the Construction of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (Class VI to X) (Academic Block Assam type with RCC hostel building (G+2) (KGBV-type-ii), SSA, Assam at Lumding Block under Hojai District is hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons.

Sd/-Mission Director,
Janasanyog/CF/3433/21 SSA Assam,Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

e-Tender Notice

NIT No: RMSA/ICT/1505/2021/109 Dated:19/02/2022

Tenders affixing court fee stamp of minimum value Rs 8.25/- containing (a) Qualification Bid, (b) Technical Bid, (c) Commercial Bid in separate file/folder are invited from reputed Organizations for the Establishment of Analytics Powered E-Classrooms in Government Schools across Assam with Hardware, Software, and Services under ICT and Digital Initiatives Scheme.

Detailed Notice Inviting Tender may be seen at "http:// assamtenders.gov.in/" for eligibility, scope of work, tender terms and conditions etc. The tender document can be purchased by registering at "http://assamtenders.gov.in/"up to 14/03/2022 and making payment of non-refundable Tender Fee of Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees Five Thousand) only.

Tenders are to be uploaded on the prescribed tender form along with (a) bid security or earnest money deposit (EMD) for an amount of INR 2,38,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crores ThirtyEight Lakhs Only), valid for a period of 90 days from the date of submission, in the form of Demand Draft in favor of Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Guwahati payable at Guwahati. The tenders will be received upto 2:00 pm on 14/03/2022 and will be opened on same day at 3:00 pm at the Office of the Mission Director, SS (RMSA & SSA), Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam.

SS, Assam reserves the right to amend or cancel the Tender without assigning any notice or reason thereof. Moreover, in case of non-availability of sufficient bidder (or less than three bidder), authority has to right to take decision without prior notice.

Sd/- Mission Director,
Samagra Shiksha,(RMSA&SSA), Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog/CF/3427/21

SC scraps Maha Govt's decision to limit orchestra performers in bars

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has scrapped the condition imposed by Maharashtra authorities that limited the number of female and male performers in orchestra bars to four each, saying rules based on gender stereotypes have no place in the society.

"While the overall limit of performers in any given performance cannot exceed eight, the composition (i.e., all-female, majority female or male, or vice versa) can be of any combination," it said in an order.

A bench of justices K M Joseph and S Ravindra Bhat, which set aside the Bombay High Court judgement, said the "gender-cap" appears to be the product of a stereotypical view that women who perform in bars and establishments belong to a certain class of society.

The High Court had rejected a plea against the licence condition to keep only four women and four male

singers or artistes on the stage of the orchestra bars.

The top court said that the cap directly transgresses the fundamental rights of the performers as well as the licence owners under Article 15 (1) and Article 19 (1) (g) of the Constitution.

"As the authorities of this court have repeatedly emphasised, whenever challenges arise, particularly based on gender, it is the task of the judges to scrutinise closely, whether, if and the extent to which the impugned practices or rules or norms are rooted in historical prejudice, gender stereotypes and paternalism.

"Such attitudes have no place in our society; recent developments have highlighted areas hitherto considered exclusive male 'bastions' such as employment in the armed forces, are no longer so.

"Similarly, in the present case, this court holds that the gender cap imposed by the impugned condition is void," the bench said.

Power to quash criminal proceedings should be exercised sparingly: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The power to quash criminal proceedings should be exercised very sparingly and with circumspection and that too in the rarest of rare cases, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and S Ravindra Bhat made the observation while quashing a case of forgery and cheating against three individuals in a property dispute.

"This court has cautioned that, power to quash criminal proceedings should be exercised very sparingly and with circumspection and that too in the rarest of rare cases, it has specified certain category of cases wherein such power can be exercised for quashing proceedings," the bench said.

The apex court said that one of the categories where this power can be used is where a criminal proceeding is manifestly mala fide or maliciously instituted with an ulterior motive for wreaking vengeance on the accused and with a view

to spite him due to private and personal grudge.

The top court said that in the present case, the complaint has been filed against the accused with an ulterior motive of harassing the appellants. The apex court said that the magistrate while passing the order under Section 156 (3) of the CrPC has totally failed to consider the law laid down by the highest court.

The power under Section 156 (3) of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 (CrPC) can be exercised by the magistrate to direct the police to conduct investigation only in respect of a cognisable offence.

"In any case, when the complaint was not supported by an affidavit, the Magistrate ought not to have entertained the application under Section 156 (3) of the CrPC. "We are, therefore, of the considered view that, continuation of the present proceedings would amount to nothing but an abuse of process of law," the bench said.

Prime Minister flags off ‘100 Kisan drones’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a special drive aimed at helping farmers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday flagged off "100 Kisan drones" in different parts of the country including poll bound States-Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Goa--for spraying pesticides and other farm materials and assured full government support to the drone technology startups.

Speaking on the occasion, Modi noted that 'kisan drones' are the beginning of a new revolution and India will soon emerge as a global leader in the sector. Farmers can use high-capacity drones in the coming times to transport their produce like fruits, vegetables and flowers to markets in a minimal time, boosting their income.

The prime minister said a

new culture of drone start-ups is getting ready in India. Their numbers will soon be in thousands from over 200 now, leading to the generation of employment opportunities on a massive scale.

He said his government will ensure that there is no impediment in the sector's development and has already undertaken several reforms and policy measures to facilitate its rise. This is an example of how high the country can fly if policies are right, Modi said, noting that drones were mostly associated with the defence sector until a few years back.

The prime minister said his government did not waste time on apprehensions about opening up the drone sector but trusted India's young talent and moved ahead with a new mindset. He said his government has given prior-

ity to technology and innovations in the Budget and policy measures.

"From the announcements made in this budget to other policy decisions, the country has openly given priority to technology and innovation. Its results are in front of us today. In the present times, we are witnessing the diverse uses of the drones. During the Beating Retreat, the entire nation witnessed a spectacular display of 1000 drones," the prime minister said.

This is a new chapter in providing modern farming facilities in the 21st century, and not only will it prove to be a milestone in the development of the drone sector but also open infinite possibilities, he said. The prime minister said that Garud aerospace has set a goal of developing one lakh Made in India

drones in the next two years. This will generate new jobs and new opportunities for several youngsters. I congratulate the team of Garuda Aerospace and all my young friends for this accomplishment.

"Under "swamitva yojana", land records are being documented through drone technology, medics, vaccines are being supplied to various parts of the country and it is also being used for sprinkling pesticides etc on crops," the prime minister said.

Later in a tweet, the Prime Minister said; "Glad to have witnessed Kisan Drones in action at 100 places across the country. This is a commendable initiative by a vibrant start-up, @garuda_india. Innovative technology will empower our farmers and make agriculture more profitable."

Convinced that Russia would invade Ukraine: US President

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden has said that he is convinced and has reason to believe that Russian forces will attack Ukraine, including its capital Kyiv, in the coming week, warning that Russia will be responsible for a "catastrophic and needless war of choice" if it pursues its plans.

Biden's comments came amid heightened tensions between Russia and the US, fuelled by fears that Moscow plans to invade Ukraine. Russia has repeatedly denied that it



has plans to attack Ukraine.

Giving an update to reporters from the Roosevelt Room of the White House, Biden on Friday said the US is doing everything in its power to remove any reason that Russia may give to justify

invading Ukraine and prevent them from moving.

"Look, we have reason to believe the Russian forces are planning to and intend to attack Ukraine in the coming week -- in the coming days. We believe that they will target Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, a city of 2.8 million innocent people," Biden said.

"Make no mistake: If Russia pursues its plans, it will be responsible for a catastrophic and needless war of choice. The United States and our allies are prepared to defend every inch of NATO territory from any

threat to our collective security as well," he said.

Biden said that he is convinced that Russia is going to invade Ukraine.

He ruled out sending troops in to fight in Ukraine but said the US will continue to support the Ukrainian people.

Responding to a question if he thinks it is wise for the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to leave Ukraine if an invasion is as imminent as the US, Biden said, "that's a judgment for him to make and a determination as to whether or not. I've spoken with Zelenskyy

a dozen times -- maybe more, I don't know."

Biden said that the US and its allies and partners will support the Ukrainian people. "We will hold Russia accountable for its actions. The West is united and resolved. We're ready to impose severe sanctions on Russia if it further invades Ukraine," he said.

"But I say again: Russia can still choose diplomacy. It is not too late to de-escalate and return to the negotiating table," he said.

Noting that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey

Lavrov have agreed to meet on February 24, Biden said if Russia takes military action before that date, it will be clear that they have slammed the door shut on diplomacy.

"They will have chosen war, and they will pay a steep price for doing so -- not only from the sanctions that we and our allies will impose on Russia, but the moral outrage that the rest of the world will visit upon them," he said.

On Friday, Russia announced nuclear drills, even as leaders of nations from the West looked for ways to ease the

tensions.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Friday warned that it would be "catastrophic" if the Russia-Ukraine conflict escalated into a war, while underlining that there was "no alternative to diplomacy."

Biden on Thursday said that the threat of Russian invasion of Ukraine is very high right now.

"It's very high because they (Russia) have not moved out troops, number one. Number two, we're briefed that they are engaged in false flag opera-

tions," he had said.

The US on Thursday told the UN Security Council that its information indicates clearly that over 150,000 Russian forces amassed around Ukraine's borders are preparing to attack Ukraine "in the coming days" and Moscow "plans to manufacture a pretext" for its strike. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in his address to the Security Council, said over the past months, without "provocation or justification", Russia has amassed more than 150,000 troops around Ukraine's borders.

Harris on Ukraine: World at "a decisive moment in history" By Aamer Madhani



AP ■ MUNICH

Vice President Kamala Harris warned Russia on Saturday that it will face "unprecedented" financial penalties if it invades Ukraine and predicted that such an attack would draw European allies closer to the United States.

The world is at "a decisive moment in history," she told Ukraine's president, who said he just wants peace for his nation.

Harris spoke at the annual Munich Security Conference the day after President Joe Biden said he was "convinced" that Russia's Vladimir Putin has made the decision to invade neighbouring Ukraine.

"Let me be clear, I can say with absolute certainty: If Russia

further invades Ukraine, the United States, together with our allies and partners, will impose significant, and unprecedented economic costs," Harris said. Harris aimed to make the case to a largely European audience that the West has "strength through unity" and that an invasion would likely lead to an even bigger NATO presence on Russia's doorstep.

Later, at the start of a meeting with Ukraine's leader, Harris called it "a decisive moment in history" and told Volodymyr Zelenskyy, "Any threat to your country we take seriously."

He responded: "We clearly understand what is going on. This is our land. We want peace."

He also said he needs Western allies to take "specific steps," alluding to Ukraine's requests for even more military and economic assistance.

Zelensky also noted that with Russian troops at his country's borders, Ukraine's army is in fact "defending all of Europe."

Germany's Scholz says now is "moment of truth" for Iran deal



AP ■ MUNICH

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Saturday that "now is the moment of truth" to determine whether Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers can be salvaged, and the Iranian leadership needs to make a choice.

Negotiators from Iran and the remaining parties to the agreement - Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China - are working in Vienna to restore life to the accord, which granted Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

The United States has participated indirectly in the talks because it withdrew from the deal in 2018 under then-President Donald Trump.

President Joe Biden has signaled that he wants to rejoin the deal. Under Trump, the US reimposed heavy sanctions on Iran. Tehran has responded by increasing the purity and amounts of uranium it enriches and stockpiles, in breach of the accord - formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

Scholz told participants at the annual Munich Security Conference on Saturday that talks have come a long way over the past 10 months and "all elements for a conclusion of the negotiations are on the table." But he also criticized Iran for stepping up its enrichment and restricting inspections by monitors from the UN nuclear agency.

"We now have the opportunity to reach an agreement that makes it possible for sanctions to be lifted," Scholz said. "At the same time, it's the case that if we don't succeed very quickly in this, the negotiations threaten to fail."

US defense chief: Russia "uncoiling and poised to strike"

AP ■ VILNIUS

US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin assured the three Baltic nations Saturday that they would not be on their own if faced with security threats from Russia, but he stopped short of promising a permanent deployment of American troops in the former Soviet republics.

Austin was in Lithuania as a massive Russian troop buildup and other actions have Western officials saying that Moscow could invade Ukraine at any time, although Russia has denied planning an invasion.

"They are uncoiling and are now poised to strike,"

Austin said Saturday about the readiness of Russia's troops to attack Ukraine.

Lithuanian officials voiced concern that Russian President Vladimir Putin's alleged ambitions could expand to the entire region.

"The battle for Ukraine is a battle for Europe. If Putin is not stopped there, he will go further," Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said during a joint news conference with Austin.

"They are choosing the way that is based on force. We need to send a very clear and unambiguous message that it would be faced by a very clear and swift response" Landsbergis said.

EU chief: Russia could be cut off from markets, tech goods

AP ■ MUNICH

Moscow would have its access to financial markets and high-tech goods limited under Western sanctions being prepared in case Russia attacks Ukraine, one of the European Union's top officials said Saturday.

The comments from Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the EU's executive commission, came as tensions over Russia's intentions toward Ukraine intensified. US President Joe Biden said Friday he was "convinced" Russian President Vladimir Putin has decided to invade the neigh-

bouring country.

"The Kremlin's dangerous thinking, which comes straight out of a dark past, may cost Russia a prosperous future," von der Leyen said Saturday during the annual Munich Security Conference, where US Vice President Kamala Harris also spoke.

Von der Leyen said the EU's executive arm has developed a "robust and comprehensive package" of financial sanctions with the US, UK and Canada.

"In case that Russia strikes, we will limit the access to financial markets for the Russian economy and (impose) export controls that will stop the pos-

sibility for Russia to modernize and diversify its economy," she added. "And we have a lot of high-tech goods where we have a global dominance, and that are absolutely necessary for Russia and cannot be replaced easily."

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said that during a Tuesday meeting with Putin he "made clear that any further violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine will have high costs for Russia, politically, economically and geo-strategically".

"And at the same time, I stressed that diplomacy won't fail because of us," Scholz added.

Chinese cities announce rewards for tip-offs on Hong Kongers fleeing COVID-19

PTI ■ BEIJING

Multiple Chinese cities have announced cash rewards for tip-offs about people illegally crossing into the mainland from Hong Kong which is experiencing a massive fifth COVID-19 wave, overwhelming the local health system, state media reported on Saturday.

Zhuhai, Huizhou and Dongguan in China's south Guangdong province close to Hong Kong have announced cash rewards for people who report suspected illegal crossings from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) amid reports of people fleeing to mainland by road and sea to escape the spread of the contagion, state-run Global Times reported on Saturday.

Hong Kong, a Special Administrative Region of China, reported 6,063 infections in addition to 7,400 preliminary-positive cases on Saturday, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post newspaper reported.

With the death of 15 patients, the coronavirus-related death toll reached 280. The latest infections brought the overall tally to 46,763 cases.

Such was the caseload that hundreds of suspected COVID-19 patients, who were

forced to wait outside public hospitals for admission over the past few days, had now been moved indoors.

As the situation deteriorated, reports say Hong Kong is busy converting auditoriums and dormitories to accommodate surging cases even as it plans to build a Wuhan style makeshift hospital to accommodate hundreds of patients.

Chinese cities Zhuhai and Dongguan have announced cash rewards capped at 100,000 yuan (USD 15,785) for tip-offs for suspected smuggling of Hong Kongers by vehicle or boat.

The reward for reporting group smuggling is 30,000 yuan (over USD 4,600) and 10,000 yuan (over USD 1,500) for individuals illegally crossing the border, according to official notices.

Chenzhou and Nan'an cities also released similar notices against the backdrop of five confirmed COVID-19 cases being found among 15 who were smuggled from Hong Kong to the mainland via Zhuhai by boat on February 14.

Upon arrival in Zhuhai, some travelled to other mainland cities, leading to flare-ups in cases -- two each in Chenzhou and Guangzhou and one in Shanghai, the Global Times reported.

Western Europe cleans up after storm leaves at least 12 dead

AP ■ LONDON

Crews cleared fallen trees and damaged buildings across several countries.

A gust of 122 miles an hour (196 km an hour) was provisionally recorded Friday on the Isle of Wight. If confirmed, it would be the highest ever in England. Hurricane-force winds began at 74 mph. The Met Office weather service said more strong winds would hit the southern coasts of England and Wales on Saturday, with the potential for further damage, while snow and ice could cause disruption further north. The UK's National Rail association said "routes across most of Great Britain" remained affected by the weather on Saturday morning, with disruptions to continue throughout the day.

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Australia says China warship fired laser at its patrol plane

AP ■ BRISBANE

The Australian Defense Department said that a Chinese navy ship fired a laser at one of its surveillance aircraft, putting the lives of the crew in danger.

The incident happened on Thursday when the P-8A Poseidon plane detected a laser illuminating the aircraft while in flight over Australia's northern approaches, the department said.

Such episodes are not uncommon as the US and its allies accuse China of asserting its military might, and have taken steps to challenge Beijing's growing clout in the western Pacific and elsewhere.

The department said in a statement Saturday that the laser came from a People's Liberation Army Navy vessel. It was accompanying

another Chinese ship that transited through the Torres Strait. Both ships were now in the Coral Sea, east of Australia, it said.

"Illumination of the aircraft by the Chinese vessel is a serious safety incident," the Defense Department said.

"We strongly condemn unprofessional and unsafe military conduct. These actions could have endangered the safety and lives of the ADF personnel."

Lasers present a serious problem because when aimed at aircraft they can injure pilots or temporarily blind them -- which can present safety risks particularly as they are taking off and landing.


Two years ago, the US also accused the Chinese navy of firing a laser at one of its Poseidon

planes over the Pacific. China denied it, saying the plane had circled at low altitude over its warship despite repeated warnings.

In 2019, Australian navy helicopter pilots reported being were hit by lasers while exercising in the South China Sea, forcing them to land as a precaution.

In 2018, the US issued a formal complaint to the Chinese government over the use of high-grade lasers near the military base in Djibouti that were directed at aircraft and resulted in minor injuries to two American pilots.


Tensions have ratcheted up particularly in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost in its entirety, while the US and its allies insist on freedom of navigation and overflight in international waters.



सत्यमेव जयते
MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



NATIONAL SC-ST HUB
Safalta ki pechhaan



एन एस आई सी
N S I C

NATIONAL SC-ST HUB SCHEME

NOTIFICATION

“Launch of Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (SCLCSS) for SC/ST”

The National SC-ST Hub (NSSH) Scheme is an Initiative of the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Govt. of India, having the objective of providing professional support to the SC/ST entrepreneurs for enhancing their participation in public procurement. The National Small Industries Corporation Ltd. (NSIC) is the implementing Agency. There are various components under NSSH under which assistance is provided to the SC/ST entrepreneurs for their capacity building and market linkage.

Under the SCLCSS component, **25% subsidy** is provided for procurement of Plant & Machinery and equipment through institutional credit to the eligible Micro / Small Enterprises of manufacturing sector owned by SC/ST entrepreneurs.

Now the Ministry of MSME, Govt. of India has included the SERVICE SECTOR also for Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (SCLCSS).

Therefore all the SC/ST entrepreneurs, both Manufacturing and Service sectors can avail 25% subsidy under SCLCSS by submitting their application to the concerned Prime Lending Institutions (banks from which Term Loan has been availed for procurement of plant & machinery after **15.11.2021**) in the prescribed format within the prescribed timelines. The timelines shall be notified for each quarter of FY 2021-22 on www.scsthub.in

To know about other benefits including SCLCSS for the SC/ST entrepreneurs, please visit NSSH website www.scsthub.in.

National SC-ST Hub Cell
National Small Industries Corporation Ltd.
NSIC Bhawan, Okhla Industrial Estate, New Delhi-110020
Toll Free No. 1800-11-1954, E-mail : nsshsupport@nsic.co.in

RE TENDER NOTICE

No.SSA/CW/KGBV-Lumding/264/2020/ 8928 Dated -14/02/2022

The Mission Director, SSA, Assam, invites fresh bids for the following work from registered contractors [Class- I (A, B & C)] under A. P.W.D.(Building) Assam, having experience of similar nature of work. Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 22/02/2022(04:30 PM) to 08/03/2022 (2:00 PM)

The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in

Name of Work	Package No	Place	Approx. Value of Work	Time of completion	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	E.M.D. to be drawn in favour of	Tender Cost
CONSTRUCTION OF KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (CLASS VI TO X) (ACADEMIC BLOCK ASSAM TYPE WITH RCC HOSTEL BUILDING (G+2) (KGBV-TYPE-II), SSA, ASSAM	1L	Lumding ,Hojai	Rs.1,91,28,900.00 [Per site]	12 (twelve months)	Rs.3,82,578.00 (for General) Rs.1,91,289.00 (for reserved Category) [PER SITE]	The Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Guwahati-19	Rs.5000.00

Janasanyog/CF/3430/21


ASSAM STATE SOCIETY

Sd/-Mission Director
SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Jewellery sector to get export boost

Under India-UAE trade pact, says Comm secy

New Delhi: The domestic jewellery sector will get a huge export boost in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) market as it would get duty-free access there, while the gulf nation will get greater access to the gold market here as India will give duty concessions on import of up to 200 tonnes, Commerce Secretary B V R Subrahmanyam said on Saturday.

India has agreed to concessional import duties on gold

imports of up to 200 tonnes per year. India imported about 70 tonnes of gold from the UAE in 2020-21. "We are a major importer of gold. India imports about 800 tonnes of gold every year. In this particular agreement, we have given them (UAE) a TRQ (tariff rate quota) of 200 tonnes where the tariff (or import duty) in perpetuity will be one per cent less than whatever is the tariff charged for the rest of the world.

"Therefore, the UAE has a one per cent price advantage in gold bars. That one per cent tariff difference means those 200 tonnes will be diverted to the UAE," the secretary told reporters here.

He said the biggest gain for India is "that we get zero duty

access" to the UAE market for domestic jewellery. There was a five per cent duty on Indian jewellery and now, "it's gone to zero", so the gem and jewellery sector is "gung-ho", he added.

TRQ is a quota for a volume of imports that enter India at specified tariffs. After the quota is reached, a higher tariff applies on additional imports. TRQ would also be there for copper, polyethylene and polypropylene.

India and the UAE on Friday signed a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA), under which a number of domestic goods will get zero duty access to the UAE market. The pact may come into force in April or May.

To protect sensitive sectors,

he said, India has kept certain segments out of the ambit of this agreement.

These include dairy, fruits, vegetables, cereals, tea, coffee, sugar, food preparation, tobacco, petroleum waxes, coke, dyes, soaps, natural rubber, tyres, footwears, processed marbles, toys, plastics, scrap of aluminium and copper, medical devices, TV pictures, auto and auto components and sectors under the production-linked incentive scheme.

Sectors where there is a boost in domestic manufacturing and which are coming under the PLI scheme, "we have kept them outside this agreement", the secretary said.

When asked about the inclusion of the digital trade

chapter in the agreement, the secretary said that for the first time, this sector is there in the trade agreement signed by India and it shows that India is ready to talk on this bilaterally. "There will be a lot of harmonisation in regulatory standards on how you manage digital trade between India and UAE... We (India) are discussing digital trade or e-commerce with the European Union, Australia, the UK and Canada," he said.

Explaining the chapter, joint secretary in the department of commerce Srikar Reddy said that this is a "best endeavour" chapter where the dispute settlement mechanism will not apply. "We are focusing on how to harness the future

economic growth opportunity that digital trade provides.

"We have provisions in the chapter regarding paperless trading, consumer protection, unsolicited commercial electronic messages, personal data protection, cross-border flow of information and cooperation of digital products and electronic payments," Reddy said.

Norms for customs duties on electronic transmission are linked with the current moratorium, which is there in the World Trade Organization (WTO). Talking about the safeguard mechanism present in the India-UAE agreement, the secretary said there is a permanent safeguard mechanism that will kick in if there is any sudden surge in imports. **PTI**

EV charging stations expand 2.5 times in 9 mega cities

New Delhi: Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations have expanded by two-and-a-half times across nine mega cities, including Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, in the last four months, the power ministry said on Saturday.

Efforts by the government resulted in 2.5 times increase in charging stations in Surat, Pune, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai in the last four months, a power ministry statement stated. According to the statement, additional 678 public EV charging stations were installed between October 2021 and January 2022 in these nine cities. **PTI**

5 firms submit proposals to set up semiconductor, display plants

New Delhi: The Government has received proposals from five companies for setting up electronic chip and display manufacturing plants with investment of Rs 1.53 lakh crore, an official statement said on Saturday.

Vedanta Foxconn JV, IGSS Ventures and ISMC propose to set up electronic chip manufacturing plants with USD 13.6 billion investment and have sought support of USD 5.6 billion from the Centre under the Rs 76,000 crore Semicon India Programme, the Ministry of Electronics and IT said. **PTI**

NTPC surpasses highest annual generation of previous yrs units

New Delhi: NTPC has recorded a generation of 314.89 Billion Units upto 18th Feb'22, surpassing the maximum annual generation of 314 BU achieved in 2020-21.

Last year, the generation was 270.0 BU till 18th Feb, indicating improved performance and an increase in demand for power in the current year. NTPC Korba (2600 MW) in Chattisgarh is the top performing thermal power plant in India with 94.32% Plant Load Factor

between April'21 to Jan'22, as per the data published by Central Electricity Authority.

This demonstrates the expertise of NTPC in Operation and Maintenance of the power plants and the high levels of operational excellence.

The total installed capacity of NTPC is 67,832.30 MW having 23 coal based, 7 gas based, 1 Hydro, 19 renewable energy projects. Under JV, NTPC has 9 coal based, 4 gas based, 8 hydro and 5 renewable energy projects.

BigBasket acquires Kerala startup Agrima Infotech

Thiruvananthapuram: India's largest online grocery seller BigBasket has acquired the enterprise business unit of a deep-tech company incubated by Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) with a view to revolutionising offline retail in the country.

BigBasket, a Tata enterprise, will be implementing Kochi-based startup Agrima Infotech's unique customer vision technology platform, Psysight, at the self-checkout counters of the former's retail stores. The acquisition was announced by BigBasket CEO Hari Menon on the sidelines of a two-day virtual 'Huddle Global 2022' of KSUM that got underway here on Saturday.

Psyight, created by Anoop Balakrishnan, Arun Ravi and Nikhil Dharman under Agrima Infotech, helps identify all Indian fruits and vegetables uniquely from an image without using barcodes, an official statement said here.

KSUM Chief Executive Officer John M Thomas described the acquisition as a "milestone" for any Kerala startup. "It not only reiterates the strength of our startup ecosystem, but shows the great impression firms such as BigBasket have about our startups," he noted.

"I hope the deal would encourage startups to move ahead strongly in their attempt to scale up their business," he said. **PTI**

KPTL announces merger with JMC Projects

New Delhi: Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd on Saturday announced a merger with JMC Projects (India) Ltd which will create one of the largest engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) companies in the country.

With the appointed date of April 1, 2022, the merger process is expected to be completed in Q4 FY23, it added.

"The Board of Directors of Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd (KPTL) and JMC Projects (India) Ltd. (JMC) in their respective meetings held on 19th February 2022 have approved the scheme of amalgamation which inter alia provides for the merger of JMC with KPTL (Scheme)," a company statement said.

The merger is subject to approvals from the Gujarat bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), statutory authorities, stock exchanges, shareholders, creditors and such other authorities, as may be required, it added. **PTI**

Takuya Tsumura to take over as new president & CEO of Honda Cars India

New Delhi: Japanese auto major Honda on Saturday said it has appointed Takuya Tsumura as the new President & CEO of Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) with effect from April 1, 2022.

The appointment comes as part of the management changes announced annually by Honda Motor Co Ltd.

Tsumura, 54, will take over from Gaku Nakanishi, who moves from India to regional headquarters in Asia and Oceania region - Asian Honda as General Manager, Automobile Business for the region.

During his four-year

tenure in India, Nakanishi, in his role as President & CEO of HCIL, steered the company through one of the toughest business phase for the Indian auto industry, struck by unprecedented COVID crisis and slowdown, the automaker said in a statement.

These years also saw the company taking some tough but important decisions to manoeuvre the course of HCIL operations towards strengthening its business constitution, it added.

Nakanishi played a key role in expanding HCIL exports with the opening of new desti-

nations and also led several initiatives in the field of sales and service to enhance customer experience and dealer profitability, the company noted.

Tsumura has been associated with Honda Motor for more than 30 years. He has worked in several international markets including Thailand, Australia, China, Japan, Turkey, Europe and Asia & Oceania regions.

Tsumura was in-charge of South Asian countries, including India from 1997 to 2000. Honda sells a range of models like City, Amaze and WR-V in the Indian market. **PTI**

Punjab...

From Page 1

As many as 2083 sector officers have been deployed to assist polling parties, he added.

Polling will be held from 8 am till 6 pm and counting of votes will take place on March 10. Punjab is witnessing a multi-corned contest among the

Congress, AAP, SAD-BSP alliance, BJP-PLC-SAD (Sanyukt), and the Sanyukt Samaj Morcha, a political front of various farmer bodies.

The ruling Congress which is seeking to retain power has come under severe attack from its political opponents over various issues, including drug menace and corruption. The Congress is banking on decisions like reducing electricity tariff and fuel prices, taken during current CM Charanjit Singh Channi's 111-day tenure.

The AAP, which has emerged as a major contender, is eyeing to wrest power while projecting the Delhi model of governance.

The stakes are also high for the Shiromani Akali Dal which is contesting the polls in alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party after breaking ties with the BJP in 2020 over the farm laws issue. With Sukhbir Singh Badal in the driving seat, the SAD called itself "Punjab's party" and promised all-around development of the State.

The BJP, which used to be a junior partner during its previous alliance with the SAD, is fighting the elections as a major partner. Allying with Amarinder Singh-led Punjab Lok Congress and Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa-led SAD (Sanyukt), the saffron party has asked voters to go for a "double-engine Government" for "Nawan" (new) Punjab. The Sanyukt Samaj Morcha, comprising various Punjab farmer bodies, which had taken part in the stir against the Centre's now-repealed farm laws, is contesting the polls in alliance with Haryana Bharatiya Kisan Union (Chaduni) leader Gurnam Singh Chaduni-led Sanyukt Sangharsh Party.

Prominent faces who are in the fray are Chief Minister Channi, Aam Aadmi Party's chief ministerial face Bhagwant Mann, Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu, former CMs Amarinder Singh and Parkash Singh Badal, and Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal.


UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
 (A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking)
 Corporate Identity No. U40109UR2001SGC025867/2358
 Victoria Cross Vijeyta Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwali Road, Dehradun Telephone-(0135)2763672-76,Fax-(0135) 2760289
 No: 80/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 Dated:- 18.02.2022
E-TENDER DATE EXTENSION NOTICE
 E-tender Specification No. CCP-I/56/2021-2022 invited by this office for Works under Uttarakhand Transmission Strengthening and Distribution Improvement Program (UTSDIP) with financial support of M/s ADB on turnkey basis are hereby extended due to unavoidable reasons. The prebid meeting of the e-tender shall be held on 19.3.2022 at 11:30hrs in online mode. The e-tender can be purchased and submitted upto 11:30hrs of 11.4.2022. Part-I of the e-tender shall be opened on 11.4.2022 at 16:00hrs.
 Other terms & conditions will remain same as per original tender notice. For further details, please visit our website www.uktenders.gov.in.
SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER CORPORATE (C&P-I)
 SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION . Use LED Bulb, Save Electricity (Toll Free No. 1912)
 * Pay Electricity bill online 24x7 from www.upcl.org. (For information on Electricity theft, informer may report to Toll free No 18001804185/ Fax No 0135-2760911)


UJVNL LIMITED
 (An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)
 H. O. "UJJWAL" MAHARANI BAGH, GMS ROAD, GORAKHPUR - 244006, CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC023586
 Tele:- 0135-2763508, 2763808, Fax: 0135-2763507, website:- www.ujvnl.com
 No. 69 Date : 19.02.2022
e- Procurement Date Extension-01
 Due to unavoidable reasons the date of submission & opening of the following online bids invited by the office of the Executive Engineer (E&M), Maneri Dam, Maneri, Uttarkashi is being extended as below:
 (1) Tender No. :- 12/EE(E&M)/Maneri Dam/2021-22(Tender ID: 2022_UJVNL_41799_1)
 (2) Tender No. :- 13/EE(E&M)/Maneri Dam/2021-22(Tender ID: 2022_UJVNL_41800_1)
 (1) Name of work: Supply and Replacement of Steel Wire Rope with socket and pin etc. for three numbers of Radial gates of Maneri Dam in Distt- Uttarkashi (2) Name of work: Design, Fabrication, Supply, Erection and Commissioning Of Trash Racks at Maneri Dam in Distt- Uttarkashi
Last date/Time for receipt of bid in the e-portal : 01.03.2022 up to 17:00 Hrs
Last date/Time of submission of hard copy of bid : 03.03.2022 up to 17:00 hrs
Date of opening of bid (Part-I) on : (1) 04.03.2022 from 12:30 Hrs, (2) 04.03.2022 from 15:30 Hrs.
 Other terms and conditions will remain unchanged. For more details please visit web site <http://uktenders.gov.in>. **Executive Engineer E&M)**
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

FORM A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
 (Under Regulation 8 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2019)
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF M/s H L BUILDWELL PRIVATE LIMITED

RELEVANT PARTICULARS	
1. Name of corporate debtor	H L BUILDWELL PRIVATE LIMITED
2. Date of incorporation of corporate debtor	09-09-2005
3. Authority under which corporate debtor is incorporated / registered	Registrar of Companies, Delhi
4. Corporate Identity No. / Limited Liability Identification No. of corporate debtor	U70101DL2005PTC140561
5. Address of the registered office and principal office (if any) of corporate debtor	1. Unit No- 14, Plot No 31, Lower Ground Floor, Road No 44, Vikas Tower Building, Rani Bagh, Pitampura, New Delhi-110034 2. Site No.5, Sector-70, Mohali, Punjab 160070
6. Insolvency commencement date in respect of corporate debtor	15.02.2022 (Order passed by Hon'ble Adjudicating Authority on 15-02-2022 in Company Petition No. JB-321/ND/2021)
7. Estimated date of closure of insolvency resolution process	14.08.2022
8. Name and registration number of the insolvency professional acting as interim resolution professional	Mr. Deepak Kumar Garg IBBI/IPA-002/IP-N00796/2019-20/12560
9. Address and e-mail of the interim resolution professional, as registered with the Board	Shanti Niketan, Tibra Road, Street No-4, Modinagar - 201204, Distt. Ghaziabad Email ID: deepakgarg07@rediffmail.com
10. Address and e-mail to be used for correspondence with the interim resolution professional	411 Essel House, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi - 110002 Email: hp.buildwell@gmail.com
11. Last date for submission of claims	03-03-2022 (Order received on 17.02.2022 from Hon'ble Adjudicating Authority, hence 14 days calculated from receipt of order) The Class of creditors could not be ascertained at this stage. Therefore, as per the business nature of Corporate debtor, one class of creditor allottees / home buyers, being considered
12. Classes of creditors, if any, under clause (b) of sub-section (6A) of section 21, ascertained by the interim resolution professional	1. Mr. Prabhakar Kumar, Regn. No.: IBBI/IPA-002/IP-N00774/2018-19/12373 Email: prabhakar_acs@rediffmail.com 2. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Ray, Regn. No.: IBBI/IPA-002/IP-N01100/2021-22/13648, Email: pkrayip@gmail.com 3. Mr. Yogesh Kumar Tyagi, Regn. No.: IBBI/IPA-002/IP-N00297/2017-18/10856 Email: yogeshktyagi@rediffmail.com
14. (a) Relevant Forms and (b) Details of authorized representatives are available at:	a. https://ibbi.gov.in/home/downloads b. 411 Essel House, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi-110002

Notices are hereby given that the National Company Law Tribunal, New Delhi has ordered the commencement of a corporate insolvency resolution process of H L Buildwell Private Limited vide its order dt. 15.02.2022.


The creditors of H L Buildwell Private Limited, are hereby called upon to submit their claims with proof on or before 03-03-2022 to the interim resolution professional at the address mentioned against their order dt. 15.02.2022.

The financial creditors shall submit their claims with proof by electronic means only. And other creditors may submit the claims with proof in person, by post or by electronic means.

A financial creditor belonging to a class, as listed against the entry No. 12, shall indicate its choice of authorised representative from among the three insolvency professionals listed against entry No. 13 to act as authorised representative of the class in Form CA.

Submission of false or misleading proofs of claim shall attract penalties.

Sd/-
Date : 19.02.2022 Deepak Kumar Garg
Place : New Delhi Interim Resolution Professional
Regn. No-IBBI/IPA-002/IP-N00796/2019-20/12560

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005
Whereas
 The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
 As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Deepak Jain/ Rajibala Jain/ LBDEL00004947064	Property No-231-232, Block-C Pkt-5 Sector-06 Third Floor With Roof Rights Rohini Delhi/ February 18, 2022	June 19, 2021 Rs. 18,51,903/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Devender Kumar Panwar/ Dinesh Kumar Archana/ LBDEL00002377774	Flat No 37, 4th Floor Sector 34, Pocket 3 Block E 1 Rohini Delhi/ February 18, 2022	June 19, 2021 Rs. 9,41,081/-	Delhi/ NCR
3.	Manish Kumar/ Vinod Kumar/ LBDEL00002378225	Flat No.13, Third Floor Dda Lig Flat, Block A1, Pocket 2 Sector G-2 Narela Delhi/ February 18, 2022	July 06, 2021 Rs. 10,56,838/-	Delhi/ NCR
4.	Narmada Devi/ Vinod Meena/ LBDEL00002382316	Flat No.15, 3rd Floor Pocket 3 Block C7 Sector 34 Rohini Delhi/ February 18, 2022	June 19, 2021 Rs.10,96,171/-	Delhi/ NCR
5.	Santpal Singh/ Rajesh Singh/ LBDEL00001987766	Plot No.-123, Pocket-d-1 2nd Floor With Roof Sector-16 Rohini Delhi / February 18, 2022	July 06, 2021 Rs.10,00,465/-	Delhi/ NCR
6.	Sohaib Khan/ Afsana Begam/ LBDEL00002356912	Flat No.28, First Floor Dda Lig Flat Block D7 Pocket 03 Sector 34 Rohini Delhi/ February 18, 2022	July 06, 2021 Rs. 11,72,208/-	Delhi/ NCR
7.	Usha Devi/ Ramnayan Yadav/ LBDEL00002368843	Lig Flat No.60, 4th Floor Sec 34 Pocket 3 Block A 3 Rohini Delhi/ February 18, 2022	July 06, 2021 Rs.10,90,760/-	Delhi/ NCR
8.	Debashish Malik/ Mandira Mallick/ Pankaj/ LBDEL00002406345	Flat No-10, 2nd Floor Dda Sector G-B Pocket 3 Block B4 Narela Delhi/ February 18, 2022	June 19, 2021 Rs. 11,81,081/-	Delhi/ NCR
9.	Virendra Singh/ Bangali Babu/ LBDEL00002357724	Flat No-10, Lig 2nd Floor Block D2 Pocket 3 Sector-G 8 Narela Delhi / February 18, 2022	July 06, 2021 Rs.10,91,579/-	Delhi/ NCR
10.	Yogender Singh Singh/ Mohan Lal/ LBDEL00002380026	Flat No-6, 1st Floor, Block G7, Pocket 3 Lig Sector-G8, Narela, Delhi/ February 18, 2022	June 19, 2021 Rs.10,62,946/-	Delhi/ NCR

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : February 19, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Vishwas gets 'Y' category...

From Page 1

Recently, Vishwas had accused Kejriwal of supporting separatists during the high-voltage electioneering for the Assembly polls in Punjab that concluded on Friday.

AAP chief, however, has dismissed the allegations, saying, "They (BJP and Congress) have all ganged up against me and called me a terrorist. If that is the case, why doesn't Modi arrest me. It is a comedy, a laughing matter... I must be the sweetest terrorist, a terrorist who provides schools, hospitals, electricity, roads and water."



UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT (PHE) KASHMIR
NEW ENGINEERING COMPLEX, SILK FACTORY ROAD RAJ BAGH, SRINAGAR
TELE: 0194-2311832. TELE FAX: 0194-2311835, E-Mail: kmrphed@gmail.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
e-NIT No. 128 OF 2021-22 Dated:- 17-02-2022

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of J&K, Chief Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Kashmir etenders in two cover system are invited on Percentage Rate Basis from Registered/reputed Soil Investigation Bidders having sufficient relevant experience for the work mentioned below:
 The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre-Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions and Cover 2nd shall consist of Financial Bid on percentage rate basis, in the prescribed BOQ format.
Sr No 1 Particular of the work :- "Conducting soil tests at different locations of Kashmir Valley, by making 01 No's bore hole up to 10 meters depth or up to refusal whichever comes first and collecting undisturbed/disturbed soil samples for various laboratory examinations viz
A. Consistency Tests B. Gradation (Sieve Analysis) C. Shear Parameters. D. Density & Moisture Content test & framing of detailed report".
Estimate Cost (Lacs) :- 0.25 per bore, Tender fee (In Rs):- 1000/- , Earnest money Deposit :- Bid security declaration, Bid Validity :- 90 days,
Position of funds: Approved Under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)
 The tender inviting and awarding authority is Chief Engineer, Kashmir Jal Shakti (PHE) Department.

Critical Dates:

i. Publish Date :- 17-02-2022
ii. Document Download/sale start Date :- 17-02-2022
iii. Bid submission start date :- 18-02-2022
iv. Bid submission end date :- 28-02-2022
v. Date and time of Bid opening :- 01.03.2022
 1. Bid documents can be accessed and downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in
 2. The whole bidding process shall be completed online on tender portal www.jktenders.gov.in. The intending bidders can download the bid document from the tender portal and can submit their bids by uploading them on the tender portal.
 3. The valid bids received shall be opened online in the office of the **Chief Engineer, Kashmir, Jal Shakti (PHE) Department Srinagar.**
 4. Bids must be accompanied by cost of Tender Document as specified in column 4 of the table and shall be payable at Srinagar.
 5. Bid Security declaration : Bidder to sign bid security declaration (on Affidavit duly attested as per appendix (FORM "III")
 A. The cost of tender documents should be in form of DD /TR/e challan in favour of **FA/CAO, Kashmir, Jal Shakti (PHE) Department.**
 6. The hard copies of cost of tender document in shape of DD/TR/e-challan and other relevant documents shall be obtained from the bidder who is declared as successful after opening of financial cover.
 7. The bid shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the last date of submission of bids. If any bidder/Bidder withdraws his bid/tender before the said period or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid, the said earnest money shall stand forfeited and the bid shall be declared non-responsive.
 8. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the website www.jktenders.gov.in.
 9. Queries by email if any, should be made at kmrphed@gmail.com.
No. DIPK-18296/21 Dated:- 17-02-2022
Sd/- Chief Engineer

Rohit to lead Test also

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rohit Sharma was on Saturday appointed the new Test captain of the Indian team as selectors initiated the transition phase by dropping struggling veterans Ajinkya Rahane, Cheteshwar Pujara, Wriddhiman Saha and Ishant Sharma for the Sri Lanka series. The PTI had earlier reported that team management has decided to move on from Saha and 100-Test plus Ishant and chances were dim for both Pujara and Rahane to retain their places.

On Saturday, chairman of selectors Chetan Sharma made it clear that "Rohit was the unanimous choice" and will be the bridge between the new and old in the current set-up as they groom three potential captaincy materials in KL Rahul, Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant.

All three have led or been deputy at some point. The Sri Lanka Tests series, starting March 4, will also mark comeback of all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who has recovered from a knee injury. Shubman Gill too has recovered from shin stress fracture.

Washington Sundar and KL Rahul are nursing their hamstrings before start of Indian Premier League.

Kuldeep Yadav, who was dumped by Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri, has been brought back from the cold as he made his return into Test team.

Sanju Samson's start-stop international career got a lifeline in the T20s



against Sri Lanka. Pant along with Virat Kohli has been rested while rookie left-arm spinner from Uttar Pradesh Saurabh Kumar made his maiden entry into Test side. While it was known long back after Kohli tendered his resignation from Tests, Rohit's emergence as Test captain is a remarkable story of grit and determination. Once considered someone who would have a great Test career, opening the innings changed the

course of his career. After the England Test tour, there was no looking back. "Rohit Sharma is number one cricketer of our country and the most important thing is that he is playing all the three formats," Sharma made it clear that he was the "unanimous choice" and there was no discussion about any other names. He made it clear that even Rohit will get his breaks periodically as the body needs rest and that's something

they will manage. "The most important thing is how we manage Rohit. All the cricketers are professionals. They know their body and they manage their body and Rohit is absolutely (fit), there is no problem at all," he added. Under Rohit, the aim is to groom new captains and it became clear that KL Rahul after a poor show in South Africa is no longer the automatic heir

apparent. "...And if such a big cricketer comes forward, if such an experienced player becomes a captain, then automatically, the things that we as a selection committee want, grooming captain under Rohit, will be tremendous thing for us," Sharma outlined his committee's vision.

He did take three names who have either led or been deputy in the past few months, saying the trio of Bumrah, Pant and Rahul will be groomed by Rohit. "We made KL the captain in South Africa. Bumrah was the deputy in South Africa and again for Sri Lanka series. In West Indies T20s, we had Rishabh as vice-captain. These are potential leaders to be groomed under Rohit. "Yes, it is difficult to say who will be next captain but we are sure a name will emerge," the former fast bowler said. Sharma tried to soften the blow about exclusion of Pujara, Rahane, Saha and Ishant but if one looks at Indian team's Test calendar for the year 2022, there is hardly any chance for these four of making a comeback.

There are two Tests versus Sri Lanka, one in England and two against Bangladesh in 2022 and early 2023, India hosts Australia at home for four Tests. As it has been this committee's policy, they will give Hanuma Vihari (replacement of Pujara) and Shubman Gill (replacement of Rahane) full chance to settle in middle-order. After these two in pecking order comes Shreyas Iyer.



BCCI gives Kohli break from bio-bubble before third T20I against WI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI has given senior batter Virat Kohli a 10-day break from the Indian team's bio-bubble as he left for home before the third T20 International against the West Indies scheduled in Kolkata on Sunday.

As reported by PTI on Friday, Kohli will not be playing in the three-match T20 series against Sri Lanka beginning on February 24 in Lucknow followed by two more games at Dharamsala on February 26 and 27.

"Yes, Kohli has left home on Saturday morning as India have already won the series. As it has been decided by BCCI, it will be a policy to give all the regular all format players periodic breaks from the bubble to ensure that their workload management and mental health is taken care of," a senior BCCI official privy to the development told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

The Indian team for the Sri Lanka series will be picked later in the day.

INDIA LOOK TO TEST BENCH STRENGTH

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The series in their bag, India will have the liberty to experiment in the third and final T20I against the West Indies here on Sunday.

With Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant given a 10-day break, the home team is set to finally include the gifted Shreyas Iyer and Ruturaj Gaikwad in the playing XI.

Under Rohit Sharma's captaincy, India secured their third successive series win with an eight-run win over the West Indies in the second T20I here on Friday.

With the T20 World Cup scheduled in less than eight months time in Australia, Rohit would look to try out new options, beginning with finding a reserve opener.

In the absence of KL Rahul, Ishan Kishan has failed to impress at the top of the order



and his place could be given to the talented Gaikwad, who has been warming the bench until now.

Playing the series just after he became the most expensive buy of the IPL 2022 mega auction -- he was bought back by Mumbai Indians for a staggering Rs 15.25 crore -- the Jharkhand left-hander has struggled to get going.

After his anxious 42-ball 35 in the first match, Ishan could manage just two runs from 10 balls in the second game.

It remains to be seen if Rohit gives one more chance to his Mumbai Indians teammate or bring in Gaikwad.

With the Sri Lanka T20I series up next, it may not be a bad idea to give Ishan a longer run. In the middle-order, Shreyas will replace Kohli, who has been given a much-needed break ahead of his landmark 100th Test.

The former India captain will miss the T20I series against Sri Lanka and return for the Tests against the islanders.

Shreyas, who was the third biggest buy at the IPL auction but could not fit into India's T20 combination for the first two matches against the West Indies, will be the obvious choice. Recently appointed as Kolkata Knight Riders skipper, Shreyas had played a match-winning knock during the ODI in Ahmedabad, and he would look to grab the opportunity of playing at the Eden Gardens - his new "home ground".

Deepak Hooda also impressed after making his debut in the preceding ODI series and it remains to be seen if the big-hitting all-rounder is tried out in the T20Is.

In the absence of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, India have so far fielded the pace duo of

Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Harshal Patel.

Both Bhuvneshwar and Patel have so far delivered the goods, especially in the second match when the former bowled a game-changing penultimate over before the rookie seamer defended 25 runs in the final over to secure a series-clinching win. It remains to be seen whether Rohit would look to alter his bowling combination by bringing in Mohammed Siraj. The uncapped Avesh Khan, too, gives him an option.

Khan recently became the most expensive uncapped Indian player in the history of the IPL auction after being picked by Lucknow Supergiants for 10 crore.

The pacer has been in good form in the last 12 months, bagging 14 wickets in 16 matches at an impressive economy rate of 7.37 in IPL 2021.



Sania-Hradecka lose in semifinals

PTI ■ DUBAI

Trailblazing Indian tennis star Sania Mirza and her Czech partner Lucie Hradecka fritted away a great opportunity to lose the Dubai Tennis Championships doubles semifinal here. After dominating the first set, Sania and Hradecka lost 6-2 2-6 7-10 to Lyudmyla Kichenok of Ukraine and Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko on Friday night. The Indo-Czech duo, which had received a wild card for the tournament, saved 11 break points while convert-

ing two of the three in the first set to take a 1-0 lead in the WTA 500 tournament. However, the two were unable to keep the momentum going as Kichenok and Ostapenko levelled the proceedings in the second set and then eventually sealed the match in their favour. The veteran Indian had won the doubles title here in 2013 with USA's Bethanie Mattek-Sands. The 35-year-old, who is India's most accomplished woman tennis player had earlier announced that 2022 would be her last season.

RANJI TROPHY UPDATES

Punjab in command vs Himachal Pradesh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Punjab bowlers complemented superb show by batters to put their team in the driver's seat against Himachal Pradesh in their group F Ranji Trophy fixture at the Kotla Stadium here on Saturday.

Mayank Markande grabbed 2/51, while Baltej Singh and Arshdeep Singh bagged one each to reduce Himachal Pradesh to 151/5 in their second essay, still needing 21 runs to overcome their first innings deficit.

Earlier, resuming on 394/3, Punjab put up a strong show lower down the order to notch 526 in their first innings.

Overnight 62, Mandeep Singh stitched a fine 71-run stand with Sanvir Singh (48) for the sixth wicket before getting out for 84.

Punjab also got significant contributions from Ashwini Kumar (22 not out from 38 balls) and lastman Arshdeep Singh (26 from 27 balls) to go past the 500-run mark and extend their lead to 172 runs.

Skipper Abhimanyu keeps Bengal in hunt with unbeaten fifty.

Talented India A batter Abhimanyu Easwaran led from the front with an unbeaten 79 as Bengal fought back in their second essay to keep their hopes alive in their Ranji Trophy group B match against Baroda at Barabati Stadium here on Saturday.

Chasing a challenging 349 to win, Bengal were 146 for 2 on the penultimate day with Abhimanyu (79 from 114 balls; 4x4) batting alongside Anustup Majumdar on 22 (51 balls; 2x4) as the match is heading for a thrilling finish.

Bengal require 203 on the final day, while Baroda need eight wickets to seal the issue. Having put up a sloppy bat-



ting display and failed to even bat out one session to be dismissed for 88 in the first innings, Bengal bounced back strongly in their second essay with an 89-run opening stand between Sudip Gharami and Abhimanyu.

But Baroda dealt a twin blow dismissing Gharami (27) and Wriddick Chatterjee (0) with addition of just one run to have Bengal at 90 for 2 inside 25 overs.

Gujarat take first innings lead

Gujarat took a 57-run first innings lead in the Elite A group Ranji Trophy game against Madhya Pradesh here on Saturday, but the central team fought back in their second essay.

Having shot out Madhya Pradesh for 274 in their first essay, Gujarat managed to post 331, courtesy a vital 54 by Karan Patel, who hit 10 boundaries and equally important 32 by Roosh Kalaria.

Gujarat was trailing by just 30 runs when they resumed their innings, and it was Karan Patel, who added 14 runs to his

overnight score. Kalaria also frustrated the MP bowlers, hammering six boundaries and when he fell Gujarat had already gone past MP's first innings total.

Andhra slips to 100 for 4 in pursuit of 368 for win against Rajasthan

Identical scores of 79 by skipper Ashok Menaria and Mahipal Lomror enabled Rajasthan set Andhra a stiff target of 368 in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group E match here on Saturday.

Andhra lost four wickets including that of captain K S Bharat to be 100 for 4 at stumps on the third day.

Resuming at 97 for 2 on the third day, Rajasthan batters Lomror and Garhwal (38) could add only 18 runs before the latter fell to Manish. Menaria who came in at the fall of Rajesh Bishnoi (0) put on 41 runs with Lomror.

Menaria hit six fours and three sixes as he kept the scoreboard ticking and helped swell the Rajasthan lead. He was dismissed by Y Sandep to leave the team at 272 for 8.

We plan to try out as many options as possible: Pant

PTI ■ KOLKATA

India wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant says the team is looking at exploring as many options as possible in the build-up to the T20 World Cup, which is to take place in eight month's time.

Pant, who was appointed vice-captain in the absence of KL Rahul for the ongoing T20 series against the West Indies, smashed a brisk half-century in the team's win in the second game here on Friday night.

Among other questions, he was also asked about the plans for the T20 World Cup in Australia.

"There's still time for the World Cup, so the plan is to try out as many options as possible," the 24-year-old said at the post-match media interaction.

"We are trying to find out which positions suit whom



and how they can benefit the team. So we're trying out several options, whatever seems right for the team eventually will be final."

In the absence of the rested pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, seamer Harshal Patel held his nerves to help India emerge winner after West Indies big hitter

Rovman Powell threatened to take the game away with back-to-back sixes in the final over.

Pant said the plan was to keep the ball outside off stump.

"After getting hit for two sixes, the talk was to try bowling outside off, but then he ultimately backed himself.

"There's obviously pressure in the game, but as indi-

Maharashtra Sports Commissioner seeks action against Hangargekar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra State Sports Commissioner Omprakash Bakoria has written to the BCCI seeking "strict action" against India U-19 World Cup-winning member Rajvardhan Hangargekar for age fraud.

In a letter dated February 8, Bakoria wrote to BCCI secretary Jay Shah that the pacer had altered his birth date from January 10, 2001 to November 10, 2002 and was thus over-age when he competed in the recently-concluded U-19 World Cup. "The conduct of Mr Rajvardhan Hangargekar is against the sports integrity and ethics. It deprives fair play and results into damages to the reputation of the nation. Therefore, you are requested to take strict action in accordance with the law," Bakoria wrote.

The letter has also been marked to secretary of Maharashtra Cricket Association Riyaz Bagban.

You need to ask Hardik why he is not playing Ranji Trophy: Chetan Sharma

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Chairman of selection Committee Chetan Sharma on Saturday made it crystal clear that all-rounder Hardik Pandya would be considered only when he is 100 percent fit and but is also unaware as to why colourful Baroda man is skipping Ranji Trohy which could have tested his fitness.

The Baroda player Hardik had decided to skip the Ranji Trophy, which began on February 17, to focus on his India comeback in white-ball cricket.

Asked about why Pandya was skipping Ranji Trophy, Sharma said, "If somebody does not want to play, the selection committee does not interfere, in the state matters."

"You can ask Hardik



why he is not playing Ranji Trophy? We are seeing those who are playing Ranji Trophy and those who are performing. We are happy to see players playing Ranji Trophy and performing."

Sharma was blunt in his response.

He agreed that till the time Hardik played, he was an important member of the team.

"Look, definitely Hardik was a very important part of the Indian team," Sharma said when asked about Pandya's availability.

Sharma made it clear till the time clear report emerges on his bowling fitness status, he won't be considered.

"(But) after the injuries, we will now say that if he is 100 percent fit, ready to go and also if he is bowling and match fitness and all, we will consider him immediately," Sharma said at the virtual post-selection press conference when asked about Hardik Pandya.

Pandya has remained

on the sidelines ever since the T20 World Cup last year, making himself unavailable for national selection due to back injury and further rehabilitation.

The 28-year-old, who received a lot of flak for not bowling during India's dismal T20 World Cup campaign, hasn't played red ball cricket since December 2018 and has often admitted that injuries have put a spanner on his prospects in the longest format of the game.

Sharma was livid when a journalist rather than asking a question made a comment that selectors will now pick him when he declares himself fit and available during start of IPL where he is leading Gujarat Titans and why he is not making his fitness status clear.

'CAST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR'



What kind of responses are you receiving for Yeh Kaali Kaali Aankhein?

I am so thankful and grateful to Siddharth sir who gave me this show in 2019. He showed so much trust and belief in my capabilities. We had a lot of discussions related to the project and at the end, he was happy with the cast. Also, we are looking forward to starting the casting of season 2. Responses are very overwhelming and I am so grateful for the compliment I am getting for the casting and for the performance the actors have done. I was get-

ting pleasant messages from the people all over the world who know me.

■ **With content being the king, how challenging and important the casting process has become in recent years?**

Cast selection process is such that the producers hire the cast and then we sit and discuss the project. They narrate the story and their vision and the specifics they require in the characters they want. After hearing the briefings we sit with our team and research for the actors fit for the character briefs. We ask actors to send in their introductions and details and then we check if there's any resonance between them and the character brief and then we test them. This process goes on all over India to find the perfect actor for a particular part which we try to do with the director's vision to put it on the big screen.

■ **Tell us something about Asur season 2.**

Asur season 2 is going to be much more bigger and exciting than season 1. It was very challenging in terms of casting because I wanted to create an ensemble of good actors and cast newcomers as well.

Also, we have been doing the auditions online which has been quite challenging for us but we explored this medium as well. Obviously, taking tests in the studio one to one is a different thing. There are many previous actors as well. The show is about to wrap and I am really looking forward to it.

■ **Has casting for a multi-starrer become challenging over the years in general, considering now scripts are character-driven and more than just a hero or heroine?**

The process of digitalisation and more weightage given to story than the actors also helped casting directors get away from a few stereotypes. Most common accusation being that of favouritism and nepotism. But frankly that's not even possible anymore with the kind of stories that are coming up. So things have become better and easier because you cast according to the script so weightage is given to each and every actor.

■ **How do you stay true to the ethnicity of the characters belonging from a particular part of India?**

I can't stress enough on how every part of our country is gifted with great acting talent. People in general have become more aware and more sensitive towards every possible situation around, and actors especially since they feel and emote more strongly about everything. Hence, the task is to reach the right set of actors for the right story at the right time, and the job is just the easiest. This emergence of stories rooted in reality, and getting the right cast has also essentially done away with the star system. The audiences no longer want to watch a particular film or a series, because of the presence of big superstars.

Das says, "The film attempts to make visible what's hidden in plain sight. And for this, the cast and crew has serendipitously come together. One day, Kapil Sharma popped up on my screen! I hadn't seen his show, but I could see him wholly representing the 'common man', despite not being one anymore! I am certain he will surprise everyone, including himself, with his natural candidness. I am looking forward to working again with Shahana, an amazing actor and person. And in Sameer (Nair), I have found a true producing partner." Kapil Sharma says, "I am very excited about this project, not because I am doing a film, but because I am doing Nandita Das' film."



TO BUILD A POLITICAL BRAND



India is in the throes of state elections & the buzz is gathering momentum. With the high interest to consume news and views on this subject, it is very important to get the marketing and branding aspects right, writes JAYSHREE M SUNDAR

As we witness (and many of us participate) in the ongoing assembly elections being held in some states of the country, there is an interesting drama that is being played out in terms of image projection. After all, elections in many ways is the new entertainment. Unlike the earlier days where it was a pursuit of political purists, today everyone is involved and participative. What do the elections not have? Protagonists and antagonists, incumbents and anti-incumbents, victory and failure, mystery, suspense, heroics, and results. It's an exciting, thrilling roller coaster ride unfolding right before you. It's the best of spectator sport. Why would the reader or viewer not engage?

Building a powerful political brand is a huge challenge — one that takes years and sometimes gets destroyed in one fell swoop. And there are many challenges to contouring the brand values and core brand messages as this does not belong to the usual world of Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), Consumer durables, services and so on.

Let me enumerate the differences as I see them with examples so that the points, I make above get clearer:

EVERY VOTER IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT

There is no difference between rich, poor, urban, rural, men, women, old, young. Every vote carries equal value. In regular brand marketing the 80:20 rule tends to kick in wherein you focus on heavy users who form 20% of your consumer base but give you 80% returns in revenue. But in the political world every vote is equal.

Paradoxically, the urban consumer goes to vote in lesser numbers than the rural counterpart. Research and data prove this.

THERE IS JUST ONE ACTION DAY

And that is the voting day. Unlike regular brands where you can build up advertising and hope the consumer takes action to understand check out and buy the product, in an election it's just one day that counts. If the consumer does not "buy" you that day the story is over.

SLOGAN IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE

The catchphrase is what can connect you to your audience like nothing else. It embodies the culmination of your strategy into a few pithy words which should ring true. Which should be liked and used by one and all in daily parlance.

Like Barack Obama's 2008 infectious and

optimistic campaign slogan "Yes we can" which embodied-challenge, possibility, ability, permission and opportunity in political terms.

Or perhaps the most catchy of them all. Margaret Thatcher's 1978 campaign "Labour isn't working" done by Saatchi and Saatchi or closer home in India Lal Bahadur Shastri's "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan" hailing soldiers and farmers or Atal Bihari Vajpayee's "Ab ki bari Atal Bihari"

Perhaps the best version of two powerful slogans was the 2004 general elections in India. Where the BJP had "India Shinning" as its slogan and the Congress "Aam aadmi ko kya mila"? One thing that is common to all these is the emotional connect. National pride. Individual security and a matched ideology.

EVERY MEDIUM IS IMPORTANT

For fast moving goods like soaps and shampoos its very important to be on television to remind the consumer of your brand. High ticket items or high-tech items require rational mediums and therefore print media. Radio Outdoor and below the line collaterals are usually considered secondary or support media.

Not in the Political world. If you target the rural consumer who works in the field or uses his black cycle to work then his primary media are radio, wall paintings stickers banners and posters also the rural women who may work in the agrarian economy or her kitchen.

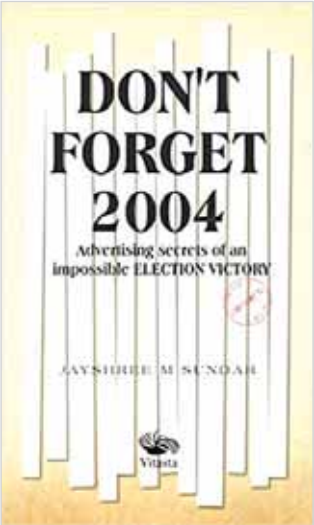
SOCIAL MEDIA HAS CHANGED THE GAME

If you look at social media handles you will find some political leaders have the highest following. If they are inspirational and enjoy mass popularity people tend to want to know what they are saying or believing.

Its interesting to note that while the BJP has 17.6 million followers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has 75.4 million followers on Twitter. Congress has 8.4 million followers on Twitter as compared to Rahul Gandhi's 19.6 million followers. So, people can be bigger than their companies in the political game.

While Facebook and Twitter are the social media of choice for their generalist profiles, more and more politicians are moving to Instagram too. This would help them to cover millennials. What about Generation Z? In the recent US elections, it is said Tik Tok and snapchat have made it to political media.

YouTube is the world's second largest social media channel — it is currently being used for the UP elections.



BUILDING A POWERFUL POLITICAL BRAND IS A HUGE CHALLENGE — ONE THAT TAKES YEARS AND SOMETIMES GETS DESTROYED IN ONE FELL SWOOP. AND THERE ARE MANY CHALLENGES TO CONTOURING THE BRAND VALUES AND CORE BRAND MESSAGES AS THIS DOES NOT BELONG TO THE USUAL WORLD OF FAST-MOVING CONSUMER GOODS

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC VIA LIVE VIDEO

Depending on the 9 pm prime time is *passé*. Politicians are now empowered to break their own news and engage in conversations with their constituents real-time.

For example, many politicians regularly live stream on Facebook and Instagram as a way to interact with voters and non-voters alike in the US. Rather than just talk *at* voters, live video encourages both meaningful and personable conversations. This is more prevalent in western world — but is likely to enter the India fray in a big way.

ALMOST INVISIBLE LEAD-TIMES

Political parties must keep the conversation going with the voter base. Unlike the usual rule of engaging twice or thrice a week on social media here it is recommended to talk daily. Sometimes there is no choice. There are rebuttals, to counter. There are new ideas. And you must keep churning material till it reaches the customer.

MOBILE IS THE PRIMARY MEDIUM

India's population is young. Approximately 65% is below 35. Coupled this with 700 million smartphones in the country growing at 25 million per quarter, this is the key tool to look at in the current elections and going further. Most young people consume news via online editions, news shorts, twitter, and other social media. More than news they want opinions and views. Creating for the smaller screen is key. Posters, memes, music videos and masala are what get viral and buzz worthy very quickly.

MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IS CRAFTING THE STRATEGY CORRECTLY.

This is not a region or a sub sect. This is the whole country you are dealing with. Or in assembly elections, a full state. Some of our states are equal to many European countries put together. First and foremost, a party must decide its election game plan. What will be the approach? Ideally you would want to target every consumer — What is the language you will reach them in? National Hindi English or vernacular?

THIS WILL LEAD TO THE BRAND PROPOSITION.

Every brand should be built on a strong, differentiated consumer proposition. Through their propositions, brands must have points of parity which are necessary to be in the playing field (for instance, every political brand stands for the Indian voter) and also need to have

compelling points of difference (Party that talks to the youth or party that is secular or party that drives growth). Political brands, usually offer economic development, attractive investments domestic and foreign, creating rapid and massive employment, redressing poverty. These are promises we find every party makes as elections come around the corner. They are universal needs of most voters, and a political brand that does not offer them, therefore, does not stand a chance. Hence, the point of difference has to arise from an entirely different dimension — which could be commitment to growth, the needs of a particular region or group, or a track record of superior performance.

SEGMENTATION

It would be every party's wish to target the full voter base. But is that possible? That means endless budgets to get the voter to see your messages till they register. In media terms, this would mean heavy expenses. So usually, a Target segmentation exercise must be undertaken. Who are you talking to? Who is predisposed to listen to you?

BRAND AMBASSADOR

Regular brands sometimes use a celebrity or a spokesperson to endorse a product to give it impetus. In Political Brands, this is a must. Regular brands can get away with it. In a political scenario this is an absolute must. Because they embody ideologies that the consumer buys into. In the 2021 US elections, the Republicans were represented by the incumbent President Donald Trump. To fight his popularity the democrats needed to field the right candidate. For a long time, there were no announcements. The party seemed rudderless. Once Joe Biden became the face the Political Brand wars began. As I said in the beginning — when brands are at war the consumer enjoys himself the most. They keep a keen watch on the issues, the repartee, and the salvos. All eyes are on the leadership and in India it's important for the leader to connect across age groups. But particularly the youth.

India is in the throes of state elections and the buzz is at its peak. This will all lead up to the general elections in 2024. With the high interest to consume news and views on this subject its very important to get the marketing and branding aspects right.

The writer is a former advertising professional and now teaches marketing courses at B schools; Her latest book Don't Forget 2004: Advertising secrets of an impossible election victory has been published by Vitasta

Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

Canada's Freedom Convoy against pandemic curbs

Canada's Freedom Convoy (CFC) began at the end of January in Ottawa, the country's capital city, as an objection to a vaccine mandate that requires the truckers entering Canada to be either fully vaccinated or face testing and undergo quarantine restrictions.

Coincidentally, other protesters joined in to raise their objections against the mask mandate, lockdowns, restrictions on gatherings and other Covid-19 preventive measures.

However these demonstrations are less a reaction to Covid-19 mandates and more a clear reflection of the pandemic-related reactions imposed by the Canadian Government for over two years now. The reality is that some new restrictions have been brought in and others lifted in ways which have not always made convenient for the ordinary Canadians.

The protest has strongly highlighted genuine concerns and apprehensions about how the Covid-19 has upended lives with conspiracy theories and probably racist extremism in some parts.

Many Canadians believe that this movement is partly financed from abroad.

Many of the demonstrators displayed the banners of former US President Donald Trump and the historic Confederate Flag. This Flag is sometimes believed to have represented "white supremacy, pro-racism, slavery and hatred".

This concept of the Confederate Flag, as depicted on the first Confederate Flag (1862-63), was to show the secession of the 11 Southern States from the Union and the Northern States of America. But later on two more States joined which forced to change the design of the flag to be a blue cross or the X with 13 white stars in 1863-65. This final act of rebellion is what led to the American Civil War from 1861-65 during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln.

Why should the Justin Trudeau Government consider the truckers' demands seriously? Simply, the protesters are not just mirroring a single catalogue of grievance though it may seem so. What is shocking for the whole world is that only a few dozen truckers and a few hundred protesters brought the country's capital city to a standstill. Besides, the chaos has literally closed down some of the critical border crossings with the neighbouring US. This has finally throttled the auto industry that solely depends on the constant transport communication between



Supporters wave flags on an overpass in Kanata, Ontario, as a trucker convoy making its way to Parliament Hill in Ottawa to participate in a cross-country truck convoy protesting measures taken by authorities to curb the spread of Covid-19 and vaccine mandates passes

America and Canada.

Why is the stir spreading globally? It is inspiring many to protest in some countries around the world. It has already started in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and New Zealand, etc. Last week, central Paris witnessed demonstrators blocking the traffic, but the city police dispersed them with tear gas all around the capital city.

However, the authorities in Paris and Brussels announced a ban on such freedom convoys. Meanwhile, the French Government has deployed around 7,200 police officers and gendarmes (the French Military Police). New Zealand and Australia are also experiencing Canada style Freedom Convoy's.

Wellington, the capital city of New Zealand, has witnessed hundreds of motorists and other protesters taking part in the demonstrations. Many of them are camping outside the Parliament building demanding immediate end to the restrictions imposed in regard to Covid-19. Meanwhile thousands turned to "Convoy to Canberra" rally outside Australia's Parliament building.

As per the estimate of the Australian police, around 10,000 gathered as part of the

"Convoy to Canberra" rally wherein the large sections of them are shouting against the recent Covid-19 mandates in the country.

Many people are gradually joining the Canberra Convoy as they feel they have lost more than they can tolerate by now. The California truckers tired of Covid-19 mandates are expected to join a Freedom Convoy to Washington DC next week. The organisers say the American truckers' movement dubbed as "The People's Convoy" will highlight almost the same kind of issues like the Canadian truckers and citizens. The truckers headed towards the capital city are demanding an end to the Emergency Powers Act, concerning the pandemic and to restore the nation's constitution.

The organisers of the Convoy wrote on the Facebook, "It is about our rights, as well as the freedom of future generations. It is not about political parties, but more so about a government that has forgotten its place and has no regard for our founding father's instructions."

Also the group believes that the elected representatives lack the authority to deprive people of their fundamental rights by implementing

Covid-19 restrictions.

What do Trudeau's national emergency measures indicate or mean? Now to finally put an end to the truckers' strike, the Trudeau Government has invoked the infamous National Emergencies Act. He declared the rare Emergencies Act to quell the protests by the truckers and other Opposition groups across Canada.

The Federal Government of Canada has never before invoked this obscure piece of disaster and emergency law. This act provides additional tools to the Central Government to handle crisis-related activities. For example, this will allow the Ottawa to manage situations as they unfold, take extra-ordinary actions that are time-bound, and finally can deploy calculated use of out-of-the ordinary vast governmental powers.

Clearly speaking, he has made all arrangements to push the protesters to the fringes at any cost. And the world has now come to know that Trudeau will not compromise on anything to safeguard the national security of the country. Thus, while addressing the nation, he said, "This is about keeping Canadians safe, protecting people's jobs and restoring confidence in our institu-

tions."

In fact, he asked the protesters to go home without addressing their issues. He said, "The blockades are harming our economy and endangering public safety. We can't and will not allow illegal and dangerous activities to continue."

This indeed indicated what was there in his mind and what he intended to do with the protesting truckers and other demonstrators.

The Government is also using the Emergencies Act to track those who are currently supporting the protesters. Indeed the Government is also giving enough powers to the financial institutions like the banks to suspend or freeze personal or corporate accounts that are used for funding these illegal protests. The Canadian authorities have already made it public that half the funding is sourced from neighbouring US. To Trudeau, this Act will strengthen the police's ability to impose fines and even imprisonment for protesters who blockade borders. Further this will also grant them the power to tow vehicles.

After the invoking of the Emergencies Act, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association says the Government had not met

the standards for invoking the Emergencies Act which is intended to deal with threats to "sovereignty, security and territorial integrity".

When Trudeau held meetings with his Liberal Caucus and the Premiers of the provinces this week, he did not get favourable responses from all of them. Following the meeting, the Premiers of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec and Saskatchewan loudly spoke out against the Emergencies Act.

It is to be noted here that the Emergencies Act of 1988 is a part of the Revised Statutes of Canada. This kind of laws is reserved for use under rare occasions. In more than 30 years, no Canadian Government has determined that any disaster whether natural or man-made has created such emergency to invoke this Act. So many are criticising Trudeau for his hidden dictatorial move. In 1970, Trudeau's father and then Prime Minister Pierre invoked the War Measures Act and brought the military into the street to counter terrorist attacks. But decision was considered as one of the most controversial one in his 15-year long career as a PM.

It is good that by this time,

the Canadian authorities have cleared the Ambassador Bridge between the US and Canada, the busiest land crossing in North America which had been blocked by the demonstrators for several days. But the downtown Ottawa has been under siege for more than a fortnight now.

The copycat protests in the lines of Ottawa reflect growing anger of some sections of society against their governments. And many political analysts feel that many governments may find it really difficult to put off such disparate demonstrations though their grievances are different from one another except the Covid-related issues.

The literal gridlock that has gripped the nation's capital may lead to the resignation of Trudeau. The Conservatives have already latched onto a freedom-oriented approach to unite all against the Prime Minister. Secondly, they are trying to hit hard at his much-vaunted ego. Third, the Conservative politicians finally wanted to bring an end to the punitive, worthless and unwarranted vaccine segregation mandates and emergency directives.

Trudeau's Liberal Canada is telegraphing to the world that it will not tolerate any disruption of public life by the truckers. Thus, he has imposed the emergency order. However, with this movement Canada is moving fast towards an unwelcome global spotlight. Surely, it would be too difficult for Trudeau, his Liberal Party and other sections of the Canadian political class to shrug off just as an ordinary upheaval.

Of course, the demonstrators are a tiny section of its population as the country has already vaccinated more than 80 per cent of its people. Looking at the current impasse, an immediate rapprochement between the Trudeau Government and the Freedom Convoy seems impossible. Canada's usually sleepy capital is facing the worst of the crisis in recent years. How Trudeau's calm, reassuring and trademark delivery style would help him come out of the Freedom Convoy is going to be worth watching.

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an international research journal)

To put an end to truckers' strike, the Trudeau Government has invoked the infamous National Emergencies Act. But the protest against governments' strict Covid curbs is inspiring many to protest in some countries around the world. It has already started in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and New Zealand, etc. Last week, central Paris witnessed demonstrators blocking the traffic, but the city police dispersed them with tear gas all around the capital city



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Making India world's top economy

Although China's high saving rate, better infrastructure and their manufacturing are way ahead of India, these cannot match the prowess of India's services-driven industry and its institutional stability, deeply interwoven in pluralism and democracy

The recent economic data projection on India's GDP growth rate for FY 21-22 to be 9.2 per cent is a good indicator of its economic prowess. The IMF has indicated India's growth about 9.5 per cent which augurs well for its further economic prospects. Renowned strategic affairs expert K Subrahmanyam said security does not only mean protection of a country from internal and external threat but ensuring that the country is industrialised rapidly and has a cohesive egalitarian and technological society. The role of trust creation and a process of good governance in a multicultural society like India provide the vital bond that can create miracle. India has that bond very well intact.

However, all this has come about due to incredible amount of hard work and zeal which the leadership has shown despite the spike in Covid-19 pandemic. Even as major

economies of the world witnessed slowdown, economic growth has remained resilient in India. However, the major challenge before the Indian Government remains the need to create more employment since the number of the unemployed and the underemployed has increased over the years. Rapid globalisation has brought forward a new syndrome of "perform or perish".

Surely the syndrome is affecting public sector enterprises and businesses the world around. Although the abundance of cheap labour and the initiative towards FDI (foreign direct investment) have made certain economies with a promising prospects, the strong foundation and tremendous trust generated by Indian banking, public and private sector units provided a much needed impetus during the worst spikes of pandemic.

Although initially India was not very aggressive in its

economic reforms, it gradually started creating inner web of confidence building measures to provide not only economic growth but also ensure the development of each section of society, thus, coming out with a framework of socio-economic justice that helped in building trust.

Also, catching on export-oriented special economic zones, the country soon started enhancing world trade, which was in the beginning hardly 0.7 per cent. The process of strengthening medium-term export strategy proved to be a strategic effort for India during 2002-2007. Besides, the resolution in 1991 gave another boost to the Indian economy. Although FDI is considerably higher in certain east Asian tigers and China, the investment returns are far greater in India due to its superior corporate pattern of clean governance and the high quality of commercially driven compa-

nies. Numerous Indian business experts and investors have carved a niche for themselves overseas particularly in the field of information technology, biotech, pharmaceuticals and health-care where even advanced countries need to still catch up.

Besides, India's indigenous entrepreneurs and industries certainly give it a huge advantage over higher level of FDI of other leading economies of the world. For example, the Chinese export-led manufacturing progress is mainly based on FDI, which is hardly a substitute for home-grown entrepreneurship. India's strength lies in creating its internal markets as it already has a fast growing middle class. Financial dealings are not as simple as they appear to be and require constant monitoring by competent authorities. The malfunctioning of the financial system in Japan during the last couple of years or so turned out

to be pernicious for the country. This problem can be compounded by the lack of matured markets which are at times depressed and sometimes buoyant for no apparent reasons. Besides, India has brought forward all necessary requisites required for good, business friendly environment for investors across the globe.

Undoubtedly, China's high saving rate, good infrastructure and their manufacturing is way ahead of India, but this cannot be compared with India's services-driven industry prowess and its institutional stability, deeply interwoven in pluralism and democracy. Recently, there has been a revolution in the process of opening up of start-ups as they have crossed the landmark of more than ten thousand providing a huge impetus to employment generation during the last five years alone. According to a recent report of NASSCOM, the robust strategy of start-ups

have created more than one lakh both direct and indirect jobs. The strategy to enhance its operational and support network, ranging from rural to urban areas, India ensured a much higher rate of return on assets. India also made magnificent strides in a number of areas, including knowledge and skill-based intensive services such as telecommunication, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, professional services of doctors, teachers and management professionals, etc.

India is also emerging as the first choice for foreign investors who are gradually pumping in a huge amount, more than \$60 billion in the Indian stock markets with about 260 new foreign investors having registered with the stock market regulating body (SEBI) during the last two decades or so. In addition to this, as many as 600 new investors were granted permission to trade on the Indian

stock exchanges consequently leading to 125 per cent growth in the Sensex and 148 per cent rise in Bombay Stock Exchange.

The stupendous progress of India in the IT industry has opened a new era of Indian companies aggressively capturing overseas markets. The ambit of compliance and regulatory authorities also provide economic security as nothing gets undetected. Foreign investor sentiments can further be enhanced by creating permissible ease in the tax rates and the existing protocols without compromising on security. Doing this would not only save paperwork, taxes and time for the typical investor, but also further ease their decision in settling for India for business destination as a first choice.

(The writer, a recipient of Bharat Gaurav Award, is a professor and expert on strategic affairs)



SUDHIR HINDWAN



PUT YOUR HEART, MIND,
AND SOUL INTO EVEN YOUR
SMALLEST ACTS. THIS IS
THE SECRET OF SUCCESS
— SWAMI SIVANANDA

New Delhi, February 20, 2022

tarot 12



YOUR
WEEK
AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week you will prove the best of your capabilities and genius and creativity will be your forte. You will have the ability to manage multiple tasks at a time. You are versatile and your expertise will be acknowledged by others. Workwise, this week you will be quite busy. There will be a time when you must take important decisions related to your professional and personal life. This decision will activate you and you be able to handle many issues. In midweek, a new job opportunity will come your way. You will have a tempting job offer with a higher salary and rewards. On the personal front, you will be high on emotions, and hence, making you a home bird. It is recommended to spend time in artistic pursuits.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Sunday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week the focus shall be on ways to increase wealth. Doors will open to new financial opportunities and money inflow will be good. Amidst financial gain, innovative ideas to make the best use of finances will take place. Investing the money in buying/selling property is indicated. A new spiritual spark or guidance will boost your confidence. Work and business will keep you busy. Meditation and re-evaluation of life's goal is also on the cards. You will be choosy and calculative. It is important to restrict the finances and spend wisely. Investment, getting a loan are all looking positive if you start the process this week. Emotions take a back seat. You will be tough at heart and dedicated to work.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Tuesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week your search for a mentor in life comes to end. This person will provide you with the comfort and help, you require. You are likely to experience mental grief or agony. On the career front, trust yourself and follow the rules and regulations of the company. The dreams of the past will sink in and new ones will arise. Stay calm and quiet and allow things to take their own course without intervention or control. Those related to the transport business will have reasons to smile. On the personal front, you will put your family in focus than usual and conditions all around will not be at their best. Some help from a male friend or relative is indicated. You will experience high energy and vitality in your daily life.

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour Navy Blue
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week you will be in a state of confusion. You will have a tough time finding a solution to the problem which arrived unexpectedly. Your mind will be ruled by two most powerful emotions — apprehension and fear and this will not allow you to sleep at night. This is a challenging situation for everyone in the family. Work load will keep you stressed. Your professional life will invoke the fiery side of your personality. Take time off from the busy schedule and have fun out with friends and family. Delegate your duties and try to balance between works & emotions. As the week comes to an end, you will gain enough confidence to control over situations that were making you agitated. Couples may plan for relaxation and better bonding.

Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Wednesday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

A hyperactive nature in communication is not good for you. This week you will keep yourself busy. This may make it difficult for you to spend time with your family. This is the time to take a break from your work and relax. In midweek, a sudden change in the situation may surprise you. Using your wisdom and diplomacy, you will be able to solve the problem. Your knowledge will help you to face the challenging situation. Those who are facing a legal hassle will come out as a winner without any charges. This week you need to keep your emotions in check. Your mind will take charge of your heart to hold back many subtle feelings. You will gain a position of trust and authority. Avoid conflicts.

Lucky number 16
Lucky colour Parrot Green
Lucky day Thursday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week you will enjoy good family life and happiness. The beginning of a happy relationship is on the cards. The children in the family are happiness in disguise. You are likely to have a positive feeling throughout the week. Career-wise, a tough decision in your work area will demand your attention. You are bound to follow the company's system and discipline. By the end of the week, you must balance work and pleasure. Your passion, greed and desires will rise high making you lazy. There are chances of last-minute changes and if you are not caught off guard, you can manage everything. Opportunities to make quick money are indicated. It is likely that you may some misunderstanding with the elders. So, make sure to keep away from conflicts.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Wednesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week all your efforts and challenging work will pay off. You have toiled a lot, now is the time to reap the fruits. You will experience the power and authority in your thoughts and actions. On the work front, promotion or assigning an important designation is on the cards. For those who are in the field of politics, this is the time to act selflessly and speak the truth. Your image as an influential businessperson or as a high-profile officer will make a mark. On the personal front, you will see the results of your previous Karmas or deeds. Due to your misdeeds that will be scrutinised, the possibility of a negative situation arising is likely. So, mind your action and do not do anything for which you might regret later.

Lucky number 8
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Saturday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week finances, personal awareness and self-worth etc. are the core issues that will draw your attention. Good news from a woman or feminine sources are indicated. This week you are likely to be health-conscious and may visit a doctor for medical check-ups. On the work front, innovative ideas will enable you to make better decisions like whether to invest time or money in a new enterprise. You will be financially secure with strong investments. On the relationship front, money will be spent on love and entertainment, and you shall be in a romantic state of mind. Grooming yourself, going to the spa or salon for relaxation is on the card. Stay away from possessiveness and an overly cautious approach to life.

Lucky number 17
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Monday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

The week you will chase your dreams of finances, love, and work. You will enjoy the journey of achieving your dreams and get fruitful results. At the starting of the week, you will have sudden earnings and profits, making you financially stable. A person of the opposite gender will help promote your professional work. The initial days will be dedicated to all your work, and you will meet with success. In the midweek, a marriage proposal or strengthening of bonding with someone you love is indicated. With this, the focus will shift from creative ventures to romantic interests. Love is surely on the rise, but do not flirt with too many, as you may end up in trouble. There are chances of staying near the river or seaside. Overall, the week is favourable.

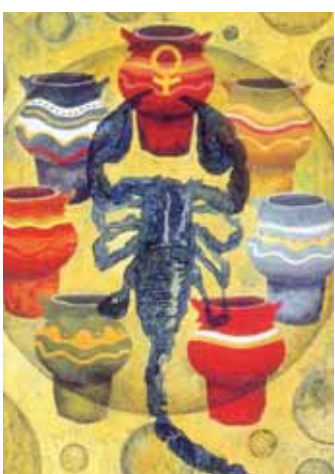
Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Sunday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week you let your sentiments and emotions rule your heart and mind. Initially, mind and thoughts are taking the charge, which is contradicting your personality. Surrender yourself to the higher wisdom, conquer material temptation and giving up something to gain something better is on the card. Workwise, your patience and endurance will be put to test. On the personal front, you are likely to help or make amends with your family. Irrespective of negotiation, one must stay in balance. There will be times when you need to spend time alone to re-evaluate your life and situation, the four-fold process that is experienced on all four levels of consciousness, mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical.

Lucky number 7
Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Friday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week your luck shall favour you in getting good opportunities and you may make more profits than you initially calculated. You are likely to have an abundance of prosperity and growth in your health, wealth, and family happiness. This is the time when all you females will be filled with creativity and be productive. On the career front, your work will be acknowledged and recognised by the authorities. Success is indicated. Chances are there that your company may select you for a course or training. On the personal front, you are likely to feel stability and a sense of security on both mental and physical levels. The knowledge and the experience you possess are invaluable and will be best utilised this week. You are going to support and motivate others.

Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Thursday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week happiness and prosperity is on the cards. Good news awaits you, and you will have reasons to feel good and enjoy life. You will have a sense of contentment in the material and spiritual world which makes you feel enthusiastic about life. You will be full of energy and will enjoy good health. On the work front, you will have a healthy bond. Your colleague or a close friend will need your attention. By the end of the week, you may ponder over your accomplishments and bring some improvement to your schedule. On the personal front, settlement in a property, or support and encouragement from the spouse is indicated on the card. Singles, you need to be clear about what you want from a relationship before moving ahead.

Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Friday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Follow nature's script

Recently someone asked me: "Human beings go through intermittent bouts of pleasure and pain. Is there a way to avoid suffering?" "In this transient world, the dynamics of life is so complex that there remains no scope for having a perfect situation. If, however, you see through nature, and follow its script, it will help you negotiate the callings of life with relative ease and comfort. The entailed message is: Conduct in an orderly way despite all the existing disorderly promptings from within and beyond." I answered.

Science holds the view that there was entropy (disorder) at the primordial-source once, which excited energy streams. Indian Philosophy terms the same event as *Pranava*. Immediately thereafter began harmonisation of creative energies, which progressively evolved into the manifest plural world with all its enormity and diversity. Even in the cosmos, unaccountable number of energy particles are colliding with each other every moment. Amidst all that chaos, energy-balls such as the Sun, Moon and other planetary bodies keep moving in an orderly fashion. They have been respectively traversing their inde-

pendent trajectory. Allowing independent space to each other, they still maintain relativity amongst themselves as if they would be moving as a family, discharging their individual and collective assignment towards running of the universe. That is how the universe has been for so long. If we follow this script, we can ensure a smooth run of life.

As the cause permeates the effect, imprints of both order and disorder are exist in human construct, which keep playing on the mind. Both sides often find reflection in people's conduct. But what proves stronger, varies from person-to-person, according as one's unitary mind is inherently framed, coming as may with the Karmic carryover from the past. At the same time, it needs to be remembered that humans also enjoy the exclusive privilege of guiding their action by choice and discrimination. Applying this prerogative, a being is empowered to look within, identify and acknowledge, one's fault lines. Accordingly, make necessary correction. Also, hone one's talent. Apply your discriminatory abilities to conduct intelligently. The paradox, however, is that discriminatory ability is not available by default. It needs to be con-



sciously invoked before picking up any lead or while reacting or responding to a situation, which calls for being fully alert. Majority, however, seldom remain conscious on this count. They therefore, become subject to pleasure and pain depending on how they move in life.

A fit case to look at is that of someone who exhibits both the trends. He has been performing exceedingly well in his career. During his tenure, he has taken his assignment to new height, earning laurels from his superiors. He is popular in his peer group, and is liked by his juniors and associates. Yet, he suffers from a sense of fear and insecurity about future, and so keeps worrying. He often invites controversy because of his indistinct moves. Every now and then he loses his cool at home.

A look at his astrological pointers will make things clear. Moon over the head makes him a performer of high order. It may offer him the opportunity to come in public glare like a shining moon. 10th lord Mars extending its support to Moon make him spiritedly carry on the task in hand. Exalted Jupiter favourably disposed of to Uranus grants him with leadership ability who will enjoy the support and

patronage of superiors. Venus beneficially aligned to Mercury makes him good at expressions and would be popular. All put together make him a performer of high repute.

Despite all his positives, his flip side often puts him into a difficult situation. Both the luminaries, the Sun and Moon being ill-disposed off to Saturn indicates having sense of fear and insecurity imprinted in mind. Given a small trigger, his negative side comes into play. Mercury placed adverse to Mars and Uranus makes him restless, opinionated, who at times may act impulsively. Mars placed adverse to Jupiter speaks of his inflated ego, which makes him stuck to his beliefs and perceptions, normally not open to look beyond for a reality check. Moon ill-ordained to Venus makes him too much touchy and sensitive, who may get over exercised even on trivial issues, when he temporarily loses his sense of reasons and order. He may then offend others with his ill-timed indiscreet outbursts. The result is there to see.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com