

OPINION 6
A HELPING HAND FOR
OUR NEIGHBOUR LANKA**WORLD 8**
MYANMAR OPPOSITION PROTESTS
MARK GENERAL STRIKE ANNIVERSARY**AVENUES 10**
FUTURE OF HIGHER
EDUCATION

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 23, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



www.dailypioneer.com

WHITE FERNS
CONTINUE
WINNING RUN
12 SPORTLate City Vol. 32 Issue 53
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

CAPSULE

14 DEAD AS VEHICLE FALLS INTO GORGE**Dehradun:** Fourteen people including five women and two children, returning from a wedding died and two others were injured when a vehicle fell into a deep gorge on the Sukhidhang-Dandaminar road in Uttarakhand's Champawat district, police said on Tuesday.**59 CONSTITUENCIES TO VOTE IN UP 4TH PHASE****Lucknow:** Voting for 59 Assembly constituencies spread in nine districts of Uttar Pradesh will take place on Wednesday in the fourth phase of the polls.**RAM RAHIM GETS Z PLUS SECURITY****Chandigarh:** Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has been given Z-plus security cover during his 21-day release on furlough from a Haryana jail where he has been serving a sentence, officials said on Tuesday. "There are reliable inputs, regarding the threat to Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh from pro-Khalistan activists," the official communication added.**NITISH COULD BE PREZ CANDIDATE: NCP****Mumbai:** Maharashtra Minister and NCP spokesperson Nawab Malik on Tuesday said any decision on the Opposition's candidate for the post of the country's next President will be taken collectively by leaders of various parties, and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's name could be considered only if his party JD(U) snaps ties with the BJP.

RUSSIA SET FOR UKRAINE INVASION

Putin 'authorised' for attack; Russia terms rebel-held regions in Ukraine 'independent'; world mulls sanctions

AP ■ MOSCOW/ BRUSSELS

Russian lawmakers gave President Vladimir Putin permission to use military force outside the country on Tuesday — a move that could presage a broader attack on Ukraine after the US said an invasion was already underway there.

Several European leaders said earlier in the day that Russian troops have moved into rebel-held areas in eastern Ukraine after Putin recognised their independence. But it was unclear how large the movements were, and Ukraine and its Western allies have said Russian troops have been fighting in the region since the separatist conflict erupted in 2014. Moscow denies the allegations.

Members of the upper house, the Federation Council, voted unanimously to allow Putin to use military force outside Russia — effectively formalising a Russian military deployment to the rebel regions, where an eight-year conflict has killed nearly 14,000 people.

The White House on Tuesday began referring to Russian troop deployments in eastern Ukraine as an "invasion" after initially hesitating

to use the term — a red line that President Joe Biden has said would result in the US levying severe sanctions against Moscow. "We think this is, yes, the beginning of an invasion, Russia's latest invasion into Ukraine," said Jon Finer, principal deputy national security adviser, said in an interview on CNN. "An invasion is an invasion and that is what is underway."

The White House decided to begin referring to Russia's actions as an "invasion" because of the situation on the ground, according to a US official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

The administration resisted initially calling the deployment of troops because the White House wanted to see what Russia was actually going to do. After assessing Russian troop movements, it became clear it was a new invasion, the official added.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki also alluded to the Russian action as being an invasion in a twitter post commenting on Germany chancellor Olaf Scholz decision to halt the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline in response to Russia's actions.



Protesters hold posters reading: "We will never surrender! Donbass is Ukraine, The empire must die" and a banner "The empire must die" in front of Russian Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Tuesday

AP

The US President "made clear that if Russia invaded Ukraine, we would action would act with Germany to ensure Nord Stream 2 does not move forward," Psaki said.

For weeks, Western powers have been bracing for an invasion as Russia massed an estimated 150,000 troops on three sides of neighboring Ukraine. They warned an attack would cause massive casualties, energy shortages in Europe and economic chaos around the globe — and promised swift and severe sanctions if it materialised. The European Union and Britain announced on

Tuesday that some of those measures were coming.

Western leaders have long warned Moscow would look for cover to invade — and just such a pretext appeared to come Monday, when Putin recognised as independent two separatist regions in eastern Ukraine, where government troops have fought Russia-backed rebels in a conflict that has killed over 14,000 people. The Kremlin then raised the stakes further Tuesday, by saying that recognition extends even to the large parts now held by Ukrainian forces.

Continued on Page 2

Leave Ukraine at once, India urges citizens

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As tension escalated after Russia recognised two separatist regions in Ukraine and decided to send troops there, the Indian Embassy on Tuesday again urged its citizens, including students to leave the country immediately. The Embassy was also organising additional flights to bring out its citizens. "In view of the continued high-level of tensions and uncertainties of the current situation in Ukraine, additional flights are being organised," the Indian Embassy said in an advisory.

The advisory also gave

information about the available flights from Kyiv to New Delhi and the booking procedure. A total of four flights are scheduled to depart between February 25 and March 6.

Scheduled flights of Air Arabia, Fly Dubai and Qatar Airways, besides others, are continuing to operate their routine flights from Ukraine to India.

Incidentally, the advisory on Tuesday asking the Indian citizens to leave Ukraine was the third one in the last one week. There are over 20,000 Indian students studying in various universities in Ukraine.

Continued on Page 2

240 stranded Indians fly back home, more flights lined up

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At least 240 passengers, mostly students stranded in Ukraine were brought back on Tuesday by a special Air India Boeing 787 flight amid the continued tensions there.

This was the first of three evacuation flights to be operated by Air India. It landed at

Terminal 3, Indira Gandhi International Airport on Tuesday night.

Interestingly, Air India has never operated any commercial flights to Ukraine before this. The other two Air India flights to bring back Indians are scheduled for Thursday and Saturday. Meanwhile, the Government has also

announced four additional flights from Kyiv to Delhi to operate on February 25, February 27, and March 6.

According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Air India flight which has 254 seats, is expected to return at the Indira Gandhi International airport late on Tuesday night.

Continued on Page 2

Pegasus row: SC agrees to hear PILs on Wed

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court agreed to hear on Friday, instead of Wednesday, a batch of pleas alleging use of Israeli spyware for surveillance of certain people in India, after taking note of the submissions of the Solicitor General that he would be busy arguing a money laundering case in another court.

As per the cause list uploaded on the website of the SC, a bench was scheduled to hear on Wednesday the pleas on the Pegasus issue for the first time after October 27 last year when it had ordered setting up of a three-member panel of cyber experts to probe the spying allegations.

Khalistani-backed 'Punjab Politics TV' banned for bid to disturb public order

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Based on intelligence inputs, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Tuesday blocked applications, websites, and social media accounts of foreign-based "Punjab Politics TV" linked to the banned Sikhs for Justice (SFJ).

The ban was imposed for allegedly attempting to use an online platform to disturb public order during Assembly elections. The SFJ has been declared unlawful under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 in 2019.

"Relying on intelligence inputs that the channel was attempting to use online media to disturb public order during the ongoing State Assembly Elections, the Ministry used emergency powers under the IT Rules on February 18 to block the digital media resources of "Punjab Politics TV", having close links with SFJ, an organisation that has been declared unlawful under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967", the Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

Continued on Page 2

6 killed in HP factory blast

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Six migrant workers were killed and 14 others sustained burn injuries in an explosion at an illegal fire-cracker factory in Himachal Pradesh's Una district on Tuesday, officials said.

The injured included nine women, they said, adding that 11 who were in serious condition were shifted to the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur directed the Divisional Commissioner to enquire into the incident.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief and announced an aid of ₹2 lakh to each to the kin of the deceased.

Yogi confident of riding on vikas, sushasan, suraksha

VIJAY PRAKASH ■ LUCKNOW

As the sun settles over the horizon on Wednesday, 232 of the 403 Assembly constituencies would have sealed the fate of aspirants in the highly-charged Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

With over 50 per cent voting completed and the political caravans having traversed the western and the cow-belt regions of the State, the high-rhetoric battle is now centred around Awadh and Purvanchal area. Yet, so far, the proverbial "wave" seems missing in the turbulent elections even as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in a candid discussion late on Tuesday evening, stuck to his stance that 80 per cent of the seats polled so far were headed the BJP way.

Turbulence, this time around, is not because of an impending upheaval. But, because the magnitude of Bharatiya Janata Party's return to power would shape the future of the most-populous State and also consolidate the grip of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the 2024 general elections. The



Opposition, therefore, is determined to derail the "double-engine sarkar" in the State. Though, by now, it seems to be running out of steam.

No political party, since the turn of the millennium, has so far regained power in consecutive State elections. But with the BJP's stellar performances in the 2017 State elections, where it won 312 of the 403 seats, and the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls where it stamped its dominance by garnering 71 and 62 seats out of 80 alone, the saffron brigade is

determined to script a unique political feat.

However, unlike previous multi-cornered hustings in the State, this time the contest has been reduced to a, somewhat, bipolar confrontation between the BJP and the Samajwadi Party (SP), with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the grand old party Congress ostensibly failed to gain momentum.

On his part, a confident Yogi reiterated, "Vikas, sushasan aur suraksha (development, good-governance and

security) are a startling change brought about by this Government in UP. Five years ago, nobody dreamt of such a drastic change in the State."

Targeting Akhilesh's SP of having pushed the State into lawlessness and mafia-raj, Yogi said those reacting to his "garmi ular jayegi" remark are those who had pushed UP into anarchy and disrepute. Realistically, the BJP narrative so far in these polls has been pitched around development and social security to corner Akhilesh and his Samajwadi Party.

The SP, which reached its pinnacle under Mulayam Singh Yadav, is now headed by a younger Akhilesh Yadav, reflecting a generation shift in UP's real politik and attempting to wean away the youths.

Taking a cue from West Bengal, Akhilesh has brought a number of smaller parties under the SP umbrella, most prominent being Chaudhary Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), now led by his son Jayant Chaudhary, to set up an effective front against the BJP.

Continued on Page 2

Achieve Life Goals with Security

Dhan Rekha

Plan No.:863 UIN:512N343V01

- Guaranteed Addition**
- +**
- Money Back**
- +**
- Full Payout on Maturity**

(A Non-Linked, Non-Participating, Individual, Savings, Life Insurance Plan)

Also Available Online

Salient Features :

- Age eligibility: 90 days - Max 60 years
- Single Premium or Regular Premium Payment Mode (Limited Premium Paying Term)
- Optional Riders available
- Special Premium Rates for Female Life

Maximum Guaranteed Additions @ ₹60/- per thousand Basic Sum Assured

Call Centre Services (022) 6827 6827

For details, contact your Agent/Nearest LIC Branch/visit [www.licindia.in](#) or SMS YOUR CITY NAME TO 56767474

Follow us : LIC India Forever | IRDAI Regn No.: 512

BEWARE OF SPURIOUS PHONE CALLS AND FICTITIOUS / FRAUDULENT OFFERS. IRDAI is not involved in activities like selling insurance policies, announcing bonus or investment of premiums. Public receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint. For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.

भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

Har Pal Aapke Saath

LIC / PRA / 2021-22/40 / Eng

EC eases Covid-19 curbs, allows road shows, 50% cap on rallies relaxed

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Tuesday further eased Covid-induced restrictions imposed on campaigning in assembly polls by allowing road shows with prior permission of district authorities.

It also allowed political parties and candidates to hold meetings and rallies with the restriction of using only 50 per cent capacity of space being relaxed.

Campaigning is on for the two-phase Manipur assembly elections and phases five, six and seven of the Uttar Pradesh polls. Elections have concluded in Goa, Punjab and Uttarakhand.

Counting in all the five states will take place on March 10.

"The commission has also allowed road shows subject to SDMA regulations and with prior permission of district authorities," a statement said.

Citing the rise in Covid cases, the poll panel had imposed a ban on physical rallies, road shows and paday-



atras when it announced the poll schedule for Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur on January 8.

The commission has been reviewing the pandemic situation periodically and allowing some relaxations.

"Now the commission has allowed the Political parties/candidates to hold their meetings and rallies subject to SDMA regulations. Restriction of using only 50 per cent capacity of space has been relaxed," it said.

The poll panel said it took a periodic review of the status

of Covid situation in the country and specially in the poll-bound states on Tuesday.

According to updated information received from the Union health secretary, Covid cases have declined significantly (3.47 lakh on January 21, 2022, to just 13,405 as on today) and have come to a minimal level in the country, it said.

Even in the reported cases, the maximum number of cases are from non-poll going states, the commission noted.

"Specially in the poll-going states of Uttar Pradesh and Manipur, total number of cases which were more than 16.7 thousand at peak on 22nd January, 2022 have come down to just about 500 cases on 22nd February, 2022," it said.

Considering the fact that the number of Covid cases have become very small in the poll bound states, the commission, taking into account the need of the political parties and candidates, further relaxes the restrictions on campaigning with the immediate effect..." the statement said. **PTI**

Maha logs 1,080 new Covid cases

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after the daily Covid-19 cases went down below 1000 for the first time in nearly 22 months after the break-out of the pandemic in the State, Maharashtra on Tuesday recorded 1080 infections, even as the daily cases in Mumbai went up 96 from 135.

With 1080 fresh infections recorded on Monday, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the state rose from 78,59,237 to 78,60,317.

With 47 fresh deaths, the total number of deaths registered in the state since the outbreak of Covid-19 in the state in March 2020 went up from 1,43,586 to 1,43,633.

With the fresh 96 cases, the total number of cases in Mumbai mounted from 10,55,657 to 10,55,792. While the recovery rate stood static at 98 per cent, the overall growth rate of Covid-19 cases in the metropolis for a period from February 15 and 21 remained static at 0.02 per cent.

As 2,488 Covid-19 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March 2020 increased from 76,97,135 to 76,99,623. The recovery rate in the state rose from 97.94 per cent to 97.96 per cent.

The number of "active cases" in the state dropped from 14,525 to 13,070. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.82 per cent. The active cases in Pune dropped from 4418 to 4,169. The active cases in Mumbai dropped from 1415 to 1314, while the number of active cases in the neighbouring Thane dropped from 994 to 914. The active cases in Ahmednagar dropped from 1464 to 1,132, while the number of active cases in Nagpur came down from 1255 to 1,192. Of the 7,73,83,579 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 78,60,317 have tested positive (10.15 per cent) for COVID-19 until Tuesday.

Currently, 1,74,560 people are in home quarantine while 958 people are in institutional quarantine. Meanwhile, no fresh Omicron case was recorded in Maharashtra on Tuesday, resulting in the total number of the new Covid-19 variant cases remaining at 4,509. Of these cases, 3,994 patients have been discharged after they tested negative in the RT-PCR tests.

Disha's parents ask politicians to close chapter after BJP says it will reveal SSR suicide truth

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After the Maharashtra BJP threatened to come out with "truth" behind the controversial suicide by late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's ex-manager Disha Salian, Disha's parents on Tuesday appealed to politicians not to revive the issue of their daughter's suicide and said that they might have to do "something drastic" if the politicians failed to respond to their appeal.

On a when the BJP's state president Chandrakant Patil told media persons in Kolhapur that the "truth" relating to Disha's death would come out after March 7, 2022 and the party's MLA Nitesh Rane put out tweets raising doubts about the alleged suicide by Sushant's ex-Manager, Disha's parents -- Satish Salian and his wife Vasanti -- made a public appeal that they be left alone.

"Please spare us. We are trying to emerge from the tragedy of our daughter. Don't keep raking it up repeatedly and politicising it. If this doesn't stop, we may be forced to do something drastic. Only the politicians will be responsible for this," Disha's father Satish Salian and mother Vasanti said.

Disha (28), it may be recalled, had reportedly committed by falling from the 14th floor of Galaxy Regent building at Malad in north Mumbai on the intervening night of June 8-9, 2020. She had allegedly ended her life five days before Sushant (34) committed suicide at his rented duplex flat in Bandra in north-west Mumbai on June 14, 2020.

Maintaining that "certain politicians" were

trying to rake up the issue of their daughter Disha's suicide once again, Satish and Vasanti Salian said: "The Mumbai police have examined matters relating to our daughter's death. They know everything. We have no problems (with the probe). She had some problems in a business deal and was very disturbed," her parents said, citing possible reasons for their daughter's suicide.

"We are attempting to put it behind and move ahead in life... But the politicians constantly keep raising her death matter... We are tired of this... Please stop all this and leave us alone," Disha's parents said.

They made it clear that Disha was not the manager of the late actor whom she met only once for some costume trials, yet the politicians are trying to "reopen the case".

"She was a sensitive girl and could not handle the setback in her business matters. Yet the media and some politicians have been conveying misleading information which is defaming the Salian family. Let us live in peace," Disha's parents said.

The fervent appeal by Disha's parent came after State BJP president Chandrakant Patil dismissed the suggestion that his party was trying to "politicise" Disha's death and said: "There is absolutely no politics regarding Disha's death. After March 7 (when the State Assembly elections get over), evidence in the case will come out. Dhooch ka dhooch, paani ka paani hojayege... You will all get to know who were all involved in the death and who will go behind the bars".

Leave...

From Page 1

A 24-hour help control room to help the Indians was set up last week. The latest advisory also said the Indian Embassy was engaged with respective authorities regarding online classes by medical universities there.

"The Embassy of India is receiving a large number of calls asking about the confirmation of online classes by medical universities. In this regard, as informed earlier, the Embassy is engaged with respective authorities for streamlining of the education process for Indian students," it said. "Students are advised, in the interest of their safety, to leave Ukraine temporarily, rather than wait for an official

confirmation from universities," the mission added in a fresh advisory.

Indian citizens were also urged to refrain from visiting Ukraine for the time being in view of "high levels of tension and uncertainties". On Sunday, families of all the Indian Embassy staff were also asked to return to India in view of uncertainty and tension. However, the Embassy continues to function and monitor developments closely, sources said here.

On being asked about the Russia-Ukraine tensions, Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi said, "There is no need to panic. The Government of India has issued an advisory. All Indians, stay in touch with our embassy."

Expressing concern over the fast deteriorating situation

in Ukraine, India, at a UN Security Council meeting following the Russian decision to recognise the two regions, called for de-escalation and resolution of the crisis through diplomatic dialogue.

The Indian envoy to the United Nations, TS Tirumurti, expressed concern over the escalation of tension during an emergency session of the UN Security Council. He called on all parties to exercise "utmost restraint" and to step up diplomatic efforts to find a "mutually amicable solution" to the crisis in Eastern Europe.

The Embassy caution came amid apprehensions by Western leaders that Russia was set to invade Ukraine soon as it deployed over 130,000 soldiers, heavy weapons and fighter jets along the Ukrainian border.

The tensions between Russia and the NATO countries escalated further after Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday recognised the independence of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said India wants a solution through talks, and peace to be established. "I am sure a solution will emerge following talks between Russian President Putin and US President Biden. India is in favour of maintaining international peace," he said.

The Minister made these observations on the sidelines of an election meeting in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh. As per information received, the US President has said they are ready to hold talks with the Russian President.

240 stranded Indians fly back home, more...

From Page 1

The flight AI 1947 took off from the airport here at around 7.30 am and landed at Boryspil International Airport in Kyiv at around 3 pm IST (Indian Standard Time).

Officials said of the 254 passengers, 236 were in economy class and 18 were in business class. There will be two more flights of Air India on Thursday (February 24) and Saturday (February 26). Avoiding the Afghanistan airspace that remains out of

bounds for non-defence aircraft, Air India Boeing 787 (VT-NAA) took just eight hours to reach Boryspil International Airport in Kyiv.

"Air India has never operated any commercial flights to Ukraine before this. But to rescue the Indian citizens in Ukraine, not only Air India has started the flights, but some other Indian operators are expected to start their flight services depending on the demand from Ukraine," the Ministry said.

The Indian Embassy in Kyiv is organising additional flights out of Ukraine in view of the continued tensions between Ukraine and Russia, the Embassy informed on Tuesday. "In view of the continued high level of tensions and uncertainties of the current situation in Ukraine, additional flights are being organised," the Indian Embassy said in an advisory.

As per details shared by the Ministry of External Affairs, PS1395 Kyiv - Delhi on Feb 25 at 7 am; PS393 Kyiv - Delhi Feb 27, timing 7:35-07:50+1; PS1395 Kyiv - Delhi Feb 27, 07:00 am and PS393 Kyiv - Delhi March 06, timing 7:35 pm. Presently, airlines like Air Arabia, Fly Dubai, Qatar Airways, etc are also operating their routine flights from Ukraine to India, the statement read.

Before this, on February 17, the Civil Aviation Ministry asked Indian carriers to look at the possibility of operating flights to Ukraine due to the increase in demand. Besides, the Ministry had removed the curbs on the number of flights that can be operated between India and the eastern European nation under the bilateral air bubble arrangement to facilitate the travel of Indians from that country. It had said Indian airlines have been informed to mount the flights due to an increase in demand.

RUSSIA SET...

From Page 1

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russia has recognised the rebel regions' independence "in borders that existed when they proclaimed" their independence in 2014 - broad territories that extend far beyond the areas now under the rebel control and that include the major Azov Sea port of Mariupol.

Putin's move to recognize the territories' independence opened the door for him to formalize his hold on them and send forces in, though Ukraine and its Western allies have charged Russian troops have been fighting there for years. Moscow denies those allegations.

Condemnation from around the world was quick. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he would consider breaking diplomatic ties with Russia and Kyiv

recalled its ambassador in Moscow.

But confusion over what exactly was happening in eastern Ukraine threatened to hobble a Western response. While the US clearly called it an invasion, some other allies hedged. "Russian troops have entered in Donbas," the name for the area where the two separatist regions are located, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in Paris. "We consider Donbas part of Ukraine." But in a distinction that could complicate a European and Western response, he added: "I wouldn't say that (it is) a fully fledged invasion, but Russian troops are on Ukrainian soil."

Poland's Defense Ministry and British Health Secretary Sajid Javid also said Russian forces had entered Ukraine's east, with Javid telling Sky News that "the invasion of Ukraine has begun."

Not all in Europe saw it that way. Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares noted "if Russia uses force against Ukraine, sanctions will be massive." The Kremlin hasn't confirmed any

troop deployments to the rebel east, saying it will depend on the security situation. Vladislav Brig, a member of the separatist local council in Donetsk, told reporters that the Russian troops already had moved in, but more senior rebel leaders didn't confirm that. Late Monday, convoys of armored vehicles were seen rolling across the separatist-controlled territories. It wasn't immediately clear if they were Russian.

Shocked by Putin's order to deploy troops to separatist regions of eastern Ukraine, world leaders moved quickly on Tuesday to impose as forceful a response as possible in hopes of averting a full-blown war in Europe. Germany made the first big move, taking steps to halt the process of certifying the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia - a lucrative deal long sought by Moscow, but criticised by the US for increasing Europe's reliance on Russian energy supplies.

The rest of the European Union also put some of its cards on the table, saying its sanctions would take aim at several Russian officials, banks

financing the Russian armed forces and include limiting Moscow's access to EU capital and financial markets. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson went as far as naming five Russian banks and three wealthy individuals who were hit with sanctions on Tuesday.

Top EU officials said the bloc was prepared to impose sanctions on several Russian officials and banks financing the Russian armed forces and move to limit Moscow's access to EU capital and financial markets. They gave few details.

EU foreign ministers are meeting later Tuesday to discuss the measures - but they did not appear to include the massive punishment repeatedly promised in case of a full-fledged invasion. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson also said the UK would slap sanctions on five Russian banks and three wealthy individuals.

While he said that Russian tanks have already rolled into eastern Ukraine, he warned a full-scale offensive would bring "further powerful sanctions." The White House has also

moved to respond, issuing an executive order to prohibit US investment and trade in the separatist regions, and additional measures - likely sanctions - were to be announced Tuesday. Those sanctions are independent of what Washington has prepared in the event of a Russian invasion, according to a senior administration official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity.

The Russian moves also pushed Germany to suspend the certification process for Nord Stream 2 pipeline that was to bring natural gas from Russia. The pipeline was built to help Germany meet its energy needs, particularly as it switches off its last three nuclear power plants and phases out the use of coal, and it has resisted calls by the US and others to halt the project.

As world leaders scrambled to decide on their response, legislation that will likely set the stage for a deeper move into Ukrainian territory moved through Russia's parliament. The bills, which sailed quickly through the Kremlin-con-

trolled parliament, envisage military ties between Moscow and the separatist regions, including possible deployment of Russian military bases in the separatist regions.

Even as alarm spread across the globe, Zelenskyy, the Ukrainian President, sought to project calm, telling the country in an address overnight: "We are not afraid of anyone or anything. We don't owe anyone anything. And we won't give anything to anyone."

His foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, will be in Washington on Tuesday to meet with Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the State Department said. Russia has long denied it has any plans to invade Ukraine, instead blaming the US and its allies for the current crisis and describing Ukraine's bid to join NATO as an existential challenge to Russia.

Putin reiterated those accusations in an hourlong televised speech on Monday, when he announced that Russia would recognize the rebels. "Ukraine's membership in NATO poses a direct threat to Russia's security," he said.

Khalistani...

From Page 1

The Ministry noted that the content of the blocked apps, websites and social media accounts has the potential to incite communal disharmony, separatism and were found to be detrimental to the sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the state, and public order.

"It was also observed that the launch of new apps and social media accounts was timed to gain traction during the ongoing elections. The Government of India remains vigilant and committed to secure the overall information environment in India and thwart any actions having the potential to undermine India's sovereignty and integrity," the Ministry said.

In July 2019, the Centre had banned SFJ, a pro-Khalistani separatist group that operates from the US, on grounds of secessionism. Its campaign, called "Referendum 2020", seeks to "liberate Punjab from Indian occupation."

Yogi confident of riding...

From Page 1

Riding on the farmers' unrest, Akhilesh hoped to wean away some Jat-Gujjar-Muslim voters in western UP. Towards eastern UP, Akhilesh has worked around OBC leaders.

But Yogi seemed unfazed. "In the last Lok Sabha elections, what difference did the 'mahagathbandhan' make. After all, all these parties were fighting against the BJP. There has been no dip in vote share," he asserted.

It is here that Yogi

Adityanath, who transcended power in 2017, holds a decisive personal appeal. His no-nonsense approach and, at times, belligerence, impresses youths as that of an achiever. Also, his zeal to lead from the front has catalysed the once casual approach of the State babudom.

From the migrant crisis, accentuated by the state's neighbours, to the COVID-19 pandemic, Yogi exhibited an hands-on approach to deliver.

Keeping the vast, caste-ridden state free from riots in the last five years is another feather in his cap. No wonder on the hijab row singing Karnataka presently, his authoritative statement that "the country will be run by the Constitution and not Shariah" rings forcefully across the state.

Reacting to the Supreme Court order for refunding fine and releasing properties of

those booked for the anti-CAA protests and subsequent vandalism, Yogi is determined not to let the guilty go scot-free. "The Supreme Court has said that we can proceed on the basis of an order from tribunal set up under the new Act and not an administrative order. We will proceed accordingly," he said, promptly clarifying that the state would not bow down to trouble-makers.

The Yogi government's direct action against mafia also has high approval. From 'Baba' in state politics to 'Bulldozer Baba', Yogi has succeeded in drawing new lines in clean governance. It is this headline approach, which now targets the Samajwadi Party and its appeasement policies.

On his part, Yogi clarified that for his government, there was no hard- or soft-line. "There is only one line, and that is to serve the citizens, to

ensure they get the benefits of governance and putting those on the other side of law, behind bars."

In 2017, the BJP had contested the UP elections without naming its chief ministerial candidate, and Yogi Adityanath's selection overtly transformed the state politics. In the past elections in which the BJP reaped success from caste alignments and Mandir-Masjid rhetoric to the one today where development is a poll plank, the narrative has shifted from Roti, KapdaaurMakaan and Bijli, Sadak, Paani to Metro rails, expressways, medical colleges, izzatghars, Direct Bank Transfers (DBT) and piped water supply etc.

Today, the State boasts of the highest Covid vaccination coverage in the country. Free ration, a sequel to the migrant crisis, and a national ration

card have gone a long way in helping the rural poor. Though many political parties see it as a pittance, the government initiative of sustenance, is laudable. From rotten foodgrains through PDS to the finest grains now, the lives of many has changed. So much so, that even middle-class families no longer shy away from lifting their quota from fair price shops.

On the law and order front, Yogi's forte in these elections, I recall a meeting in 2017 after Yogi had just taken over. "In a state where people take pride in flouting traffic rules, I will need time to put things on track," he had said.

Today, I must reveal, that helmets are a thumb rule for two-wheelers while traffic signals are adhered to strictly, something that was unimaginable five years back. Traders and businessmen are willing to

keep shops open late without fear while the fairer sex can venture out freely even after sunset. These speaks volumes of the governance.

Ironically, these are the first elections in the state after decades when the Ayodhya temple issue is not a poll plank. Its foundation is nearly complete. The Kashi temple today is grander and a centre of attraction, sans any bitterness among communities. And, Prime Minister NarendraModi's holy dip in the Ganges recently was certainly more than a photo-op. It soaked the sentiments of masses and found a sync with the party and its leadership.

This is one major strength of the BJP in UP. And saffron-clad Yogi epitomises it. Admitting that two of the five years were consumed in fighting and micro managing Covid pandemic across the state, Yogi

admitted that the double-engine sarkar will reap double benefits in the coming elections.

"The top priority of the state government was to work honestly and instill the rule of law across the state, and provide security to all without discrimination. We have done that successfully," he said.

What remains to be seen is if the direct contest between the SP and the BJP will now culminate in a personality stand-off, which the saffron party excels in dominating. If that happens, Yogi is bound to dwarf his opponents and lead his party to another historic win in the state. As Prime Minister prophesised earlier in his rallies that "Ayenge to Yogi hee", March 10 may well prove that the mandate for development and security has overcome the caste barrier in the state, for once.

Cong slams closure of MDMS

Delhi Govt's decision will affect around 13 lakh children belonging to poor families, says Anil Bhardwaj

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress criticised the decision of the Delhi Government to "close" the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) from February 14, saying that the decision will affect around 13 lakh children belonging to poor families. The Chairman of the Communications Department of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee and former MLA Anil Bhardwaj termed the decision a retrograde step and a gross injustice to around 13 lakh children from poor families, as their main attraction for going to schools was the MDMS. Bhardwaj said that the Congress Government

started the MDMS in 2006, which was brought under the ambit of the Food Security Act in 2013, but the Kejriwal Government has once again shown its anti-poor attitude with its closure. The Congress leader demanded immediate restoration of the scheme as it concerned the future of poor children. He said that the parents of poor school-going children, most of whom have lost their source of livelihood due to the Covid-19 pandemic, are not yet in a position to provide two square meals to their children, and they had been looking forward to the reopening of schools with great expectation as the MDMS was a great



incentive for poor children to attend schools. Bhardwaj said that the Kejriwal Government had stopped giving dry rations to students after the schools were closed due to the pandemic, and even the assurance that money in lieu would be deposited in the bank accounts

of the students, was also not fulfilled. "Instead of giving financial support and creating employment opportunities, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has prepared the blueprint to sack cooks-cum-helpers with the closure of the MDMS," he said.

HC: Unmanned road barricades a nuisance

Court asks police to submit protocol followed for placement of barricades in city

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Unmanned barricades on roads serve no purpose and cause harassment to the public, the Delhi High Court said on Tuesday and asked Delhi Police to submit the protocol followed by it for placing barricades in the city. The High Court took suo motu cognisance of a letter written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi which was in turn sent to the Delhi High Court for taking action against placement of unmanned barricades on several roads in

south Delhi area. "The issue raised by Om Prakash Goel (who wrote the letter) requires consideration since these unmanned barricades on roads prima facie serve no purpose and indeed cause inconvenience and harassment to the public at large. Such barricades also have been used to set up kiosks and for parking vehicles," said a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh. The court issued notices to the Commissioner of Delhi Police, Delhi Government, the Centre, through the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the South Delhi Municipal Corporation through its Commissioner and listed the matter for further hearing on April 13. "The respondents (authorities) shall file their respective status reports before the next date of

hearing. Delhi Police shall place on record the protocol that they follow in relation to setting up of barricades in the city, if any," the Bench said. A PIL was registered by the court while taking cognisance of December 10, 2021 letter by Goel, who claims to be the President of Delhi Pradeshik Aggarwal Sammelan, to the Prime Minister which has in turn, been sent to the court. He raised grievances relating to setting up of unmanned barricades in Kalkaji and CR Park police station areas in south Delhi and circulated several media reports on the issue. His grievance is that these barricades serve no purpose and lead to blockades of free flow of traffic, causing misery and harassment to vehicle owners and general public and leading to long traffic

Man abducted by 3 men posing as cops rescued



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old man was rescued after three men, posing as police officers, kidnapped him, officials said on Tuesday. The three accused -- Sajid (27), Vakil (27) and Taibbhar Ali (49) -- have been arrested, they said, adding that the ransom amount of Rs 1.94,000, two motorcycles and fake police ID cards have been recovered from their possession. To earn a quick buck, the three accused planned to kidnap the victim on Friday and followed him. The accused stopped him and introduced themselves as police officers, Esha Pandey, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) said. "They told the victim that they had received a complaint against him and asked him to come with them to the Janakpuri police station. They then took him to Lohiya Pul in southeast Delhi and asked him to call his aunt to bring the ransom money," she said. The matter came to light when the victim's aunt approached the police on Monday after the victim was kidnapped and a ransom of Rs 2 lakh was demanded, officials said. A case was registered under Section 364 (Kidnapping or abducting in order to murder), 506 (Punishment for criminal intimidation) and 34 (Acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of the Indian Penal Code at Jaitpur police station, officials said. The victim had called his aunt and told her to come to the Lohiya Pul with the ransom amount. Accordingly she was sent to Lohiya Pul in an auto along with the ransom amount. The police team laid a trap near the Lohiya Pul to nab the kidnappers. The police team acted swiftly and apprehended one of the kidnappers after he brought the victim to the Lohiya Pul, officials said. However, the other two accused, who were at a distance, managed to escape but were later apprehended from their residence in Loni. The victim was rescued and all accused persons were arrested following prompt response of the police team, the police officer added.

Kejriwal unleashes attack against 'deplorable' state of governance in UP



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/UTTAR PRADESH

AP National Convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday unleashed an attack against the "deplorable" state of governance in Uttar Pradesh, saying that the AAP built world-class schools and overall infrastructure while the BJP only knows how to build Shamshan Ghats. Addressing two massive Jansabhas in Khalilabad and Rudhauli, Kejriwal appealed to people to vote for the AAP if they want schools and hos-

pitals. "Only the AAP can build world-class hospitals in UP like it has in Delhi. AAP runs a Government whose only religion is honesty; no one can dare to commit corruption under our watch. AAP's schools in Delhi have made sure that the children of judges, officers and labourers all sit together and receive equally good education," he said. The AAP Government will provide 1000 rupees per month to each woman and unemployment allowance to all youths. "We supply 24x7 free electricity in Delhi and the

same will be done in Punjab and UP too," he said. Kejriwal further stated, "AAP has brought about tremendous progress in the state of Delhi. "Everyone must be aware of the numerous schools we developed in the state, while how many schools did Yogi Adityanath build in all of Uttar Pradesh? Not a single one. We have built splendid institutes for government schools in Delhi where students, regardless of background -- whether the child of rich or poor, a judge or a rickshaw driver, an officer or a labourer, all sit together on the same desk and receive the same quality of education." "We have also declared to provide a monthly allowance of Rs 1,000 to every woman above the age of 18 after forming the government in state. Over past 3-4 years in Delhi, I created and provided jobs to 10 lakh young people. Do the unemployed in Uttar Pradesh want such jobs to be created in their state or not? We will ensure employment in UP, and an unemployment allowance until jobs are secured," he added.

BJP misleading city's sanitation workers on regularisation: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A senior leader and MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for misleading sanitation workers by promising to regularise their services. Pathak's reaction came a day after the Delhi unit of the BJP announced that services of over 16,346 sanitation workers would be regularised. The AAP leaders said that the BJP led corporations did nothing to regularise their services in the last 15 years except making false promises. "The BJP promised to give 10 lakh as compensation to Safai Karamcharis who died of Covid19 but did not pay it to even one person. There was an atmosphere of desperation and fear of losing the election. It could be easily observed how worried the mayors and the entire panel were and how blatantly they are lying to the public through the press," he said. Pathak further said, "Sanitation workers informed me that the BJP had made similar declarations in 2013, in 2016, and in

2018, 2019, 2020 but did nothing to implement the same. "The barbaric rule of corruption and bigotry is coming to an end. The AAP and the people of Delhi have united to make sure that your tyranny ends. We will ensure that not only are you kicked out of power but that all your bonds are forfeited in each ward and each booth," he added. Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta, at a joint press conference with mayors of North, South and East Delhi municipal corporations on Monday, said the process of regularisation had already begun. Gupta had said on Monday that all three corporations have decided to regularise 16,346 sanitation workers and they will be handed over appointment letters at a function "in the coming days." Sanitation workers are continuously being "cheated and exploited" by BJP-ruled municipal corporations in national capital, he alleged. The sanitation workers in the three municipal corporations ruled by BJP have been demanding regularisation of their services for a long time.

Cab driver found dead on Southern Peripheral Road

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A 56-year-old cab driver was found dead on the Southern Peripheral Road (SPR), near National Highway-48 with a grievous injury on his head. Police said that they suspect a case of snatching which led to murder. The victim has been identified as Arjun from Mahipalpur in Delhi. He was driving a cab with a travel company and used to ferry airline staff. Arjun's body was found in a pit on Sunday on Southern Peripheral Road (SPR), near the National Highway-48, the police said. "A passerby, Jagdish, informed police about the deceased's body on Sunday following which a police team from SPR police chowki reached spot and took body to mortuary. Ajay, the victim's grandson, said: "His grandfather left home on February 19 around 7.30 am for his daily job routine but did not return home next morning. Later my grandfather's employer informed us to reach SPR police chowki as soon as possible where police informed us about the incident."

G'gram building collapse: Top cop assures extensive investigation

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Gurugram Police Commissioner Kala Ramachandran on Tuesday met the residents of Chintels Paradiso society at Sector 109 and assured the families that the police are investigating the matter keeping all the facts in mind and the investigation of this case will be done according to the scientific and evidence-based policing. "Based on the evidence collected by Gurugram Police and intensive investigation and other evidence being collected, action will be taken as per the provisions of the Act," Ramachandran said. Earlier on February 10, a portion of the sixth floor of a tower had collapsed to the first floor displacing 64 families of Tower D. "We assured the residents that the concrete samples of all the 6 fallen slabs of the building were sent to forensic science laboratory (FSL), Madhuban for an investigation into the matter. Due to the non-availability of testing of concrete slabs in FSL Madhuban, samples of slabs will be sent to NIT Kurukshetra for testing. For which NIT Kurukshetra has been contacted by Gurugram Police. The team of NIT Kurukshetra will come soon to collect the sample," she said. Ramachandran, after talking to the residents of the Chintal Society, nominated Rakesh Hooda, President and Sonam Arora, Secretary of the society, will be in touch with the investigation team during the investigation. Following the request of the residents, the commissioner also assured the residents that concrete samples will be taken in their presence. Two separate FIRs have already been registered in the incident till now. However, the police are yet to make any arrests in the incident. The first FIR was registered on February 10 over a complaint by the husband of one of the victims. The second FIR in the case, naming all the directors of Chintels India Limited; Ashok Solomon, Chairman of Chintels, structure engineer, architect and contractor, was registered on February 13.

Two robbers shoot at G'gram grocery store in-charge

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Two bike-borne robbers shot at a grocery store in-charge in Gurugram's Ireo Grand Arch Society Market and attempted to loot cash on Monday night. However, no valuables or cash was reported stolen, the police said. According to the police, the victim, identified as Anuj Mishra, a resident of Maruti Kunj of Gurugram, was shot in the stomach by unidentified men inside a grocery store around 9 pm. Sapna Sarin, the complainant and owner of store, told police that "the bike-borne assailants were reportedly first asked owner of the store and when victim asked them reason, they showed him a pistol and asked him hand over the cash and when Anuj refused the assailants shoot him in the stomach and fled the spot on motorcycle." Anuj was admitted to a private hospital for further treatment.

Gurugram-Faridabad Metro connectivity review meet held

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A review meeting of the proposed metro connectivity between Gurugram-Faridabad was held on Tuesday. The meeting was chaired by Madhu Azad, Mayor, Municipal Corporation Gurugram (MCG). Officials said that the metro route will be connected from Bata Chowk in Faridabad to Vatika Chowk in Gurugram, which will benefit the commuters travelling in these two major cities of Haryana. The estimated cost of the project is 5,900 crore with eight metro stations. The total length of the line would be 32.14 kilometres of which 27.94 would be elevated and 4.19 will be underground. For this project, the MCG will provide 20 hectares of land for setting up a metro depot in village Balola of Gurugram, the proposal of which will be placed in the next house meeting of MCG's house

meeting scheduled on February 24. According to the civic body officials, a 50-acre area in village Balola comes under the municipal corporation boundaries, which is in the category of uncultivable land and comes under the purview of sections 4 and 5 of the Punjab Land Preservation Act. "Presently this land is under the forest department. In the diversion of the said land of village Balola, the equivalent non-forest land has to be handed over to the Forest Department. The land in the village Nathupur also falls under the category of uncultivable land, which is suitable for diversion. This land can be given to the forest department for plantation activities," said an MCG official. "Gurugram-Faridabad Metro connectivity is a very important project. After its construction, travelling in both the cities will get better transport facility which will save time as well.

Man robbed by 3 bike borne men of over ₹11 lakh in Punjabi Bagh

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A man was robbed by three unidentified bike borne men of over Rs 11 lakh in west Delhi's Punjabi Bagh area on Monday. Police said that they are scanning CCTV cameras in the area to identify the accused and nab them. According to a senior police official, a police control room (PCR) call was received at 2:30 pm on Monday from victim Ratan Shukla Baidya about robbery of Rs 11 lakh committed by three motorcycle borne men at Punjabi Bagh underpass on Rohtak Road, while he was going towards Jakhira. "A police team was dispatched for spot. The victim told police that he works for a mobile recharge dealer based in Rampura, Delhi and had collected cash from different locations in Tilak Nagar, Vikaspuri and Keshopur Mandi," said the senior police official.

Wife, lover held for killing her husband

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a woman and six other people for allegedly killing her husband in Delhi's Rohini area. Police said that they have also recovered two bikes, two country-made pistols along with four live cartridges, one country-made pistol with six live cartridges and mobile phones from possession of accused. The woman had an extra-marital relationship with Gaurav Teotia, one of accused, who offered Rs four lakh each to his five accomplices to kill 35-year-old Pradeep, a milkman by profession. The arrests were made a day after Pradeep's body was found on Heliport Road in Rohini. Pradeep was a resident of Rithala in Rohini and his wife Seema was in a relationship with Teotia for past eight years and wanted to live together, police said. The other accused have been identified as Rinku

Panwar (22), Saurabh Chaudhary (23), Prashant (22), Parvinder (23), Vishan Kumar (18), the police said. According to Pranav Tayal, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Rohini district after receiving information on Monday that a body was lying on Heliport Road, a team reached spot and found Pradeep who had gunshot injuries on his vital parts. "He was taken to Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital where he was declared dead. A case of murder and other relevant section of Arms Act was registered, police said, adding that human intelligence and analysis of call detail records were intensified," said DCP. "Several of his friends and family members were interrogated. The locations of accused were ascertained in Deoli Khanpur, Sultanpuri and Gautam Buddha Nagar, our teams immediately swung into action and apprehended all of them from their hideouts," said DCP.



Specialty-abled people register themselves during the job fair 2022 Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer photo

DU colleges hold classes outdoors to keep Covid at bay

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Many Delhi University colleges are holding classes outdoors and also in batches to ensure physical distancing as a majority of the students have started attending physical lectures after the varsity reopened following a two-year Covid-enforced hiatus. The colleges are also providing regular counselling to students who are facing psychological issues to help them adjust to the new environment. The university reopened last Thursday and the students are turning up in good numbers. In fact, colleges are expecting more students to arrive in the days to come. However, the return of a large number of students poses problems in ensuring adherence to

the Covid protocols. Moreover, cases of physiological issues have risen among students, according to college principals. With this, the colleges are scrambling to ensure that quality education is provided to the students and at the same time their health is not compromised. "We are trying to follow all Covid protocols. As students are coming in large numbers, it is difficult to maintain social distancing. There is also a problem of overcrowding. Social distancing is impossible but we have strict compliance of wearing of masks and other protocols," Hindu College Principal Anju Shrivastava said. Ramjas College principal Manoj Khanna noted that the anxiety level is very high among students. "Suddenly

psychological issues among students have risen. The anxiety level in students is very high. We refer them to counsellors," he said. The colleges have said they are ensuring that proper counselling is provided to the students. Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College principal Jaswinder Singh said, "We have trained counsellors. We are providing counselling to students. The counsellor comes twice every week. But if there are urgent cases, we provide telephone details of the counsellor to the students." To avoid overcrowding, some teachers are also taking classes outdoors. Miranda House principal Bijayalaxmi Nanda said the priority is to provide students a complete college experience keeping in

mind that their health is not affected. "We are suggesting that the teachers have classes in the open ground as transmission is less when they are out in the open. If they are in classrooms we are asking them to open doors and windows. We are seeing to it that they are wearing masks," she said. The principal also informed that the college is starting a new welfare scheme to provide monetary support to students facing financial hardships. "We are also working on providing support to students like providing them living expenses. By next week, we are creating a list of students who required welfare support and will be providing it to them as living expense in the city may have gone up," she said.

Man assaults neighbour for getting engaged, commits suicide

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A man physically assaulted a 22 year-old woman in northeast Delhi before committing suicide. Police said that man was upset over his neighbour getting engaged to someone else. The woman sustained severe head injuries and is undergoing treatment in a private hospital here. Police said that both lived in same locality in Loni, Ghaziabad and man wanted to marry woman. According to a senior police official, he attacked her at around 7.30 AM on Monday in Delhi's Meet Nagar while she was on her way to work. "He then returned home and ended his life by hanging himself from a ceiling fan. No suicide note was found." A case of attempt to murder under section 307 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered at Jyoti Nagar police station and investigation was taken up," said senior police official. "However, we got to know later that the accused had committed suicide in his home which comes under the jurisdiction of Loni police station in Ghaziabad," he said. The woman's father told police she had recently got engaged to man named Deepak but their neighbour was annoyed with this and allegedly attacked her, he said. The woman was taken to Guru Tegh Bahadur Hospital, but later referred to Max hospital in Patparganj, he added.

‘China’s Indo-Pacific hostility threat to all’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

As China has adopted an aggressive stance in the Indo-Pacific region posing a threat to all countries, India on Tuesday said greater power and stronger capabilities should lead to responsibility and restraint and result in economics free of coercion and politics devoid of the threat of use of force.

Making this assertion without naming China, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the challenges being faced in the region could extend to Europe as “distance is no insulation”.

He made these observations in an address at the European Union(EU) Ministerial Forum on Indo-Pacific in Paris and outlined the challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

Jaishankar said the hosting of the forum at a time when Europe is grappling with a serious crisis (in Ukraine) reflected the importance the European Union attaches to its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

"The Indo-Pacific is at the heart of the multi-polarity and rebalancing that characterises contemporary changes," he said in the presence of top leadership of the European Union as well as his counterparts from several countries.

Delving into the importance of the Indo-Pacific, the minister said it is essential that "greater power and stronger capabilities" lead to "responsibility and restraint.

"This means, above all, respect for international law, territorial integrity and sovereignty. It means economics free of coercion and politics free from the threat of the use of force. It means observing global norms and practices and refraining from making claims on the global commons," he said.

"Today, we see challenges from that score with the clarity that proximity brings. And believe me, distance is no insulation. The issues we confront in the Indo-Pacific will extend beyond even to Europe. We, therefore, welcome the EU's commitment to contribute to the security of the region," Jaishankar said. "This remains

a maritime century and the tides of the Indo-Pacific region will certainly help shape its future," he added.

Jaishankar arrived in Paris on Sunday on a three-day trip after paying a two-day visit to Germany. The EU Ministerial Forum on Indo-Pacific was organised by France in its capacity as chair of the council of the European Union.

The evolving situation in the Indo-Pacific region in the wake of China's increasing military assertiveness has become a major talking point among leading global powers.

In September last year, the European Union unveiled a new strategy to step up its strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific and contribute to the region's stability, security and prosperity.

The strategy focused on the EU stepping up the implementation of its connectivity partnerships with India and Japan, supporting partners in establishing a regulatory environment and facilitating the mobilisation of the necessary funding to improve connectivity between Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

Varun Gandhi lashes out at privatisation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Constantly critical of this own party, BJP MP Varun Gandhi in a fresh attack on Tuesday lashed-out at privatization that, he said would cut-down lakhs of government jobs meant for the country's youth.

The BJP parliamentarian from the poll-bound UP said "privatisation of banks and railways" would mean huge loss of jobs.

"Just the privatisation of banks and railways will leave 5 lakh people jobless. With every job that's lost, the hope for lakhs of families diminishes.

"A Government that works for people's welfare cannot encourage inequality by promoting capitalism," Varun tweeted in Hindi.

The 41-year-old MP from Pilibhit Lok Sabha constituency has been attacking the government over various issues that the opposition has also been latching on to and getting



back at the Modi-Government.

Previously, he tweeted one of the biggest financial fraud cases the country has seen — the ABG shipyard case saying while common man is unable to pay their small debts and even committing suicide, scamesters are going scot-free after swindling banks of thousands crores of rupees.

In the middle of elections in UP, the BJP has, thus far, not reacted officially to his criticism of the Government and its policies.

India dispatches first tranche of wheat to Afghanistan

Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla flagged off the trucks in the presence of Afghanistan's Ambassador to India, Farid Mamundzay at the international border in Punjab

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday dispatched the first tranche of wheat as a humanitarian gesture to strife torn Afghanistan by land route through Pakistan. Nearly 50 trucks carried more than 10,000 metric tons of wheat till Attari- Wagah border in Punjab. The consignment was then ferried by Afghan trucks.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla flagged off the trucks in the presence of Afghanistan's Ambassador to India, Farid Mamundzay at the international border in Punjab.

He said this consignment will go from Attari to Jalalabad via Pakistan. Many such con-

signments will be sent to fulfil humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in the next two to three months, Shringla said.

Given its abiding interest in that country, India had committed to send more than 50,000 tons of food grain through land route nearly five months back. A proposal in this regard was sent to Pakistan which agreed to do so after dilly dalling for several weeks.

It signaled a marked diplomatic development with India and Pakistan joining hands to help the people of Afghanistan. The Taliban took control of the country in mid August last year and India has not recognized the present regime there.

India is sending wheat following an agreement with the World Food Programme, signed earlier this month to supply foodgrain to Afghanistan as a humanitarian gesture.

India had sent a proposal to Pakistan on October 7 last year for transit facility to send 50,000 metric tonnes of wheat and life-saving medicines to Afghanistan via Pakistani soil, and received a response from Islamabad on November 24,

2021. Reports indicated more than 1,200 trucks are required for ferrying 50,000 metric tons of wheat. Indian trucks will unload the consignment to be loaded again into Afghan trucks, at the Zero Point on Wagah-Attari border.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan had told the visiting Taliban delegation in Islamabad in November last year it would "favourably consider" the request by "Afghan brothers" for transportation of wheat offered by India through Pakistan "on exceptional basis" for "humanitarian purposes, and as per modalities to be worked out".

This was conveyed by Imran Khan to Taliban Foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, who was accompanied by the Taliban's Finance and Commerce and Industry ministers and senior members of the delegation. At present, Pakistan only permits export of Afghan goods to India through the land route.

India has so far sent five batches of medical assistance consisting of about 9 tons of essential life-saving medicines to Afghanistan.

SC to hear plea seeking offline Board exams' cancellation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Tuesday said it would hear tomorrow a plea seeking cancellation of offline board examinations for classes 10 and 12 to be conducted by the CBSE and several other boards this year.

"Without completing the course, how can examination be conducted," a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar orally observed after the counsel appearing for the petitioner said that although the COVID-19 situation has improved, classes have not been completed.

The bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C T Ravikumar, granted liberty to the counsel appearing for the petitioner to serve the advance copy of the plea to the standing counsel for concerned respondents, including the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

"We will list it tomorrow," the bench said.

The plea, filed by activist Anubha Shrivastava Sahai and

others, was mentioned before the apex court for urgent listing.

The counsel, appearing for the petitioners, told the bench that the apex court had passed orders in 2020 and 2021 regarding class 10 and 12 board exams and this year also, the same problem is there.

"Last year, there was a scheme after your lordships intervention.

This year also, we require some sort of solution otherwise this is going to drag," he said, adding that this will affect further admissions and future of students will be in peril.

The bench asked the counsel whether the examinations have commenced or are yet to commence. The counsel said that examination of the Madhya Pradesh board has commenced.

"Even though the corona situation has improved, the classes have not completed... Unless the course is completed, you should not conduct the examination. This is going to delay further. CBSE has not proposed any scheme," he said.

SC directs Maha Govt to put ‘hands on hold’ in probe against former Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Tuesday directed the Maharashtra government to put "hands on hold" in the investigation against former police commissioner Param Bir Singh over the allegations of misconduct and corruption.

A bench of Justices S K Kaul and M M Sundresh said the "messy state of affairs" has an unfortunate scenario.

"We have had occasion to say earlier that it is messy state of affairs. This is an unfortunate situation.

"It has the propensity of unnecessarily shaking confidence of people in police system." When the counsel for Maharashtra asked the apex court not to record its direction to put "hands on hold" the in order, the bench recorded his assurance in the matter.

"We have now put down the matter for final hearing, investigation being completed can pose problems. Mr Darius Khambata, senior advocate, has assured to put their hands on hold. We take the assurance on record," the bench said.

The apex court asked the parties to file written synopsis and posted the matter for hearing on March 9.



The court expressed concern over the "messy state of affairs" in the state and said this is an unfortunate scenario.

"We have had occasion to say earlier that it is messy state of affairs. This is an unfortunate situation.

"It has the propensity of unnecessarily shaking confidence of people in police system. Process of law must be carried in a manner," the bench observed.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, submitted that it is in the interest of things that all cases herein be investigated by the central probe agency.

"Once you proceed with an

investigation and record it then its not fair to stop midway. State should not do anything that makes the process difficult," Mehta said.

The apex court had earlier allowed Mumbai Police to carry on the investigation against Singh but restrained it from filing charge sheets on the FIRs against him over the allegations of misconduct and corruption. The state police had earlier told the apex court that Singh cannot be considered a "whistleblower" under the law as he chose to speak out against alleged corruption involving former home minister Anil Deshmukh only after his transfer.

Shared concern of UAE and India on terrorism reshaping cooperation: Speaker

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Condemning the recent terrorist attack in UAE, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday addressed the country's Federal National Council (FNC) and said all nations should unite to fight the challenges of terrorism for global security and sustainable development.

Underlining that India and UAE have a long history of friendship and partnership, he said the similarity of views of the two countries on bilateral and multilateral issues has deepened this relationship.

Addressing the extraordinary session of the council during the 6th plenary session of the FNC, Birla said, "I strongly and unequivocally condemn the recent terrorist attack in UAE. The shared concern of UAE and India on terrorism is reshaping our cooperation in the current regional and global scenario."

Emphasising on the need for unity among nations in the



fight against terrorism, he said that for global security, stability and sustainable development, "it is necessary that all the nations of the world come together to fight the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism".

The Lok Sabha Secretariat quoted Birla in an official statement as saying economic cooperation between the two countries can become an effective vehicle for regional and global prosperity. He said the common interests of India and UAE need to be further strengthened on the pillars of

3Es — energy, economy and emigrant.

Appealing to investors from UAE to invest in India, Birla said the country is today the world's leading investment destination.

UAE companies can take advantage of the new opportunities arising in the fields of digital economy, human resources and smart urbanisation in India, he said.

Birla is the first speaker of the Lok Sabha who addressed members of Federal National Council (Parliament) of United Arab Emirates.

J&K delimitation panel’s term extended

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday extended the term of the Jammu & Kashmir Delimitation Commission, headed by Justice (Retd) Ranjana Desai, by two months to complete its task. The term of the panel was coming to an end on March 5, 2022.

Formed in March, 2020, the panel was granted a one year extension last year. The Commission has received objections/suggestions from its five associate members and is expected to put the draft working paper on delimitation of Jammu and Kashmir in the coming days.

"In exercise of powers conferred by section 3 of the delimitation act 2002 (33 of 2002) the central government hereby makes the further amendment of two months in

the notification of government of India in the ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative department no So-1015(e) dated 6th March 2020. In the notification in paragraph two for the words 'two years' the words 'two years and two months' shall be substituted," said a notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice on Tuesday.

The Delimitation Commission was set up in 2020 to redraw the electoral constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir and four northeastern states — Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. However, the one-year extension has only been ordered for Jammu and Kashmir and now two months further extension has been given by the Union ministry of law and justice.

In its draft report shared

with its five associated members — all Lok Sabha members from Jammu and Kashmir — the delimitation panel has proposed an overhaul of assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies in the Union territory.

In its 14-page reply to the Commission, the NC maintained that there were question marks over the Constitutional propriety of the panel especially when the party along with several others had approached the Supreme Court challenging the Centre's August 5, 2019 action of revoking the special status and bifurcating the erstwhile State in two Union Territories — Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir. The NC was of the view that five Lok Sabha seats as they existed earlier should be restored.

Meanwhile, the BJP in its

suggestion to the Commission has demanded inclusion of South Kashmir's Shopian segment also in this seat. The BJP is of the view that while travelling from Poonch to South Kashmir via Mughal Road, Shopian comes first followed by Anantnag. Therefore, it demanded that the seat will be complete only after Shopian is included in the rechristened Anantnag-Rajouri-Poonch Parliamentary constituency.

According to sources, the commission has divided 20 districts of J&K into three categories — 'A' with predominantly hill and difficult areas 'B' with hill and flat areas, and 'C' with predominantly flat areas — giving margin of minus or plus-10% of average population per assembly constituency (1,36,304), while proposing allocation of constituencies.

Myiasis, Filariasis affecting women even in urban areas

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Usually reported from rural areas among poverty-stricken people, bugs Myiasis (human botflies) and Filariasis from the category of neglected tropical diseases have been found to afflict even those from the urban settings.

Dr Neha Panda, Consultant Infectious Diseases, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram, said, "This 29-year-old woman came to us with a lump in one of her breasts. After a detailed investigation and ultrasound, we found filariasis worms in the lump in her breast. This is one of the rare cases I have investigated recently as preliminary reports have stated that she had no history of visiting any rural setting where such parasites usually exist."

She has been given requi-

site medical treatment and is on followup, said Dr Panda. Most cases of Lymphatic filariasis have no symptoms. However if not detected early can leave a patient with debilitating disability.

In another case, a 32-year-old US woman was successfully diagnosed and treated for a case of Myiasis (human botflies) at Fortis Hospital, Vasant Kunj. The patient complained of swelling in the right upper eyelid along with redness and tenderness. She had consulted doctors in the United States but the myiasis (botfly) could not be removed and the doctors discharged her on a few symptomatic relief medications.

Had the Myiasis not been removed, it could have caused considerable destruction of tissues, resulting in complications such as extensive erosion of nose, face, and orbit. This

Myiasis (human botflies) and Filariasis from the category of neglected tropical diseases have been found to afflict even those from the urban settings

could have led to rare meningitis and death, said Dr Mohammad Nadeem, Consultant and Head Emergency Fortis Hospital, ER physician Dr Dheeraj and Dr. Narola Yangar (surgery department) who treated her.

Myiasis burrows into delicate membranes and feeds on underlying structures. Such cases have been reported earlier too from tropical and sub-tropical areas like Central and South America and Africa. In India, such cases have been

reported mostly from rural areas particularly in children where the botflies have entered through either nasal opening or musculoskeletal skin lesions.

The US national had a history of visiting the Amazon jungle two months back. She might have got infected with a Botfly there. Three live human botflies almost 2 cm in size—one from the right upper eyelid, second one from the back of her neck and third from her right forearm were removed during the surgery.

Health workers neglected during Covid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

From infections to musculoskeletal disorders; from injuries to workplace violence; from discrimination and harassment to burnout and allergies from the poor working environment: the Covid-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on health workers and demonstrated a dangerous neglect of their health, safety and well being.

In a new report released on Tuesday, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) said that the Covid just exposed "systematic lack of safeguard killing about 1,15,500 health workers in the first 18 months of the

pandemic.

It stated that even before the pandemic more than one-in-three health facilities lack hygiene, while fewer than one-in-six countries had in place a national policy on a healthy and safe working environment in the health sector.

Though the report did not specifically point out the number of health workers fatalities in India, the Indian Medical Association put the figure at 1,700 doctors alone who died due to infection from deadly virus.

Last November, Bharati Pawar, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, had told MPs that 1,509 health workers had received compensation. However, she did not disclose how many health

workers had died during the pandemic or provide details about their occupations.

The actual number of deceased health workers is estimated to be much higher, said Dr Manish Jhangra, Founder of Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) Doctors Association.

The WHO report on the status of the health workers during pandemics like emergencies speaks volume of the poor health infrastructure and human resources in most of the countries.

"Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, the health sector was among the most hazardous sectors to work in," said Dr Maria Neira, Director, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health,

WHO.

"Sickness, absence and exhaustion exacerbated pre-existing shortages of health workers and undermined the capacities of health systems to respond to the increased demand for care and prevention during the crisis," added said James Campbell, Director, WHO Health Workforce Department.

In the report, the UN health and labour agencies made a joint call for action and implementing stronger occupational health and safety programmes for health workers, as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to exert great pressure on them.

Such programmes should cover all occupational hazards -- infectious, ergonomic, phys-

ical, chemical, and psychosocial. The new guidelines also outline the roles that governments, employers, workers and occupational health services should play in promoting and protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of health workers. It emphasises that continuous investment, training, monitoring and collaboration are essential for sustaining progress in implementing the programmes.

Health workers, like all other workers, should enjoy their right to decent work, safe and healthy working environments and social protection for healthcare, sickness absence and occupational diseases and injuries," said Alette van Leur, Director, ILO Sectoral Policies Department.

Active Covid caseload stands at 200 in paramilitary forces

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

In a sign of improving Covid-19 situation in the paramilitary ranks, the total active case load stood at just 200, including 21 security personnel who contracted the disease in the last 24 hours as against a peak of nearly 9,000 cases last month.

As on Monday, 67 active cases were reported in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) followed by 46 cases in the Border Security Force (BSF), 73 cases in the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), seven in Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), six in Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and one case in the National

Security Guard (NSG).

While a total of 356 paramilitary personnel have died due to the Covid-19 disease, as many as 1,10,237 patients have recovered from the coronavirus infection out of the total 1,10,793 personnel who contracted the deadly disease.

As on January 18, Covid-19 active cases had swelled over 58 times in just three weeks in the paramilitary ranks, from a meager 148 cases on December 28 to 8,671 cases. During that period, two deaths were recorded, taking the toll due to Covid-19 to 350 in the forces' ranks.

The combined tally of Covid-19 cases in the paramilitary ranks has crossed the

one lakh mark with a tally of 1,00,210 cases as on January 18.

The CISF topped the list with 2,764 active Covid-19 cases followed by 2,747 cases in the CRPF and 1,330 cases in the Border Security Force (BSF).

The SSB had 1,018 active cases followed by 586 cases in ITBP, 149 cases in NDRF and 77 cases in NSG.

The CRPF tops the list of Covid-related casualties with 136 deaths till now followed by 91 fatalities in BSF and 83 loss of lives in CISF. While the SSB lost 24 personnel due to Covid-19, the ITBP suffered 19 casualties followed by two deaths in NDRF and one casualty in NSG.

6 arrested for Bajrang Dal activist's murder in K'taka

Shivamogga: Six people have been arrested in connection with Bajrang Dal activist Harsha murder case here while some are at large, a senior police officer said on Tuesday, as stray incidents of arson and violence were reported in the city this morning.

The 28 year-old Harsha was stabbed to death on Sunday night here leading to clamping of prohibitory order even as the city witnessed arson, violence and stone pelt-

ing. "We have arrested Mohammed Kashif, Syed Nadeem, Ashifullah Khan, Rehan Khan, Nehal and Abdul Afnan in connection with the case. All are aged between 20 to 22 years, except Kashif who is 32. They are all residents of Shivamogga," Superintendent of Police B M Lakshmi Prasad told reporters.

He said these people were earlier staying together but were now living separately. Kashif has some criminal cases against him.

According to Prasad, a few more are involved in the case and a manhunt has been launched to track them.

The police officer said 12 more people were detained and questioned but their role did not come to light.

Following Harsha's killing,

the city witnessed violence, arson, stone-pelting and damage to the properties during the funeral procession on Monday that left at least three persons, including a photo journalist and a policewoman, injured. Several two-wheelers were either damaged or torched.

Police personnel have been deployed at every nook and corner of the city. The district authorities have appealed to the people to maintain peace and calm.

Additional Director General of Police C Pratap Reddy said a few vehicles were burnt in Tunganagar on Tuesday morning, despite prohibitory orders which have been clamped under section 144 of the CrPC.

"Following the murder of Harsha, there was a very tense situation in the city and certain surrounding areas. Additional forces were rushed to Shivamogga and lot of arrangements were made by the deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police to ensure that the fallout of the murder does not spread further," Reddy said.

The official said 14 different incidents of arson and violence took place in the city (after the murder), which would require filing of FIRs.

In three cases FIRs have

been registered, he said, adding, the police were trying to trace those who lost their motorbikes and properties in the arson and violence

Earlier, a few BJP leaders including Karnataka Minister K S Eshwarappa and Union Minister of state Shobha Karandlaje claimed a conspiracy behind Harsha's murder, and demanded NIA probe into it.

Eshwarappa, who is from the district, alleged "Musalman goondas" were behind the activist's murder.

BJP National General Secretary (Organisation) B L Santosh alleged Harsha was killed by jihadi fundamentalists for his opposition to Hijab at educational institutions.

Karnataka Revenue Minister R Ashoka said the murder has a link with the ongoing Hijab row in the State.

"This murder happened when the Hijab controversy started. It is evident that there is a link between this murder and the Hijab row," Ashoka said.

A few Muslim girls from Udupi had approached the Karnataka High Court when they were allegedly denied entry to the classes with their Hijabs or the Islamic headscarves on. *PTI*

Didi writes to Modi seeking funds to stop Ganga erosion

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urgently asking for funds to reinforce the banks of the Ganga, particularly in three districts of Malda, Murshidabad and Nadia where about 400 square kilometres of land have been lost to "perpetual river erosion."

"As per the latest assessment, 37 locations along the river Ganga-Padma for a length of 28.8 km are vulnerable and require immediate attention.

The concomitant expenditure for the river bank protection would be to the tune of ₹571 crore," the Chief Minister's has said adding her Government has spent ₹168.47 crore in the pastfour years as "part of its commitment to protect thousands of flood victims in Malda, Murshidabad and Nadia districts."

This is in addition to the ₹80.97 crore project, undertaken in 2021 to fortify a 9.9 km bank of Ganga-Padma during the rainy season, the letter says.

Asking the Prime Minister to urgently look into the matter so that "flood management and restoration schemes can be carried out" at the earliest the Chief Minister in her three-page letter has held the construction of Farakka barrage



and the 1996 Indo-Bangladesh water sharing treaty (with Bangladesh) primarily responsible for the present problem. According to her the barrage has led to "siltation of the river bed and frequent shifting of river course."

The letter says "the severity of the problem of erosion along this river system in West Bengal can be appreciated from the fact that almost 2,800 hectare of fertile land has been engulfed by the river and there has been damage to public and private properties to the tune of ₹1,000 crore during last 15 years."

Accusing the Farakka Barrage Project Authority (FBPA), she has said that the clumsy handling of the issue by the said Authority has only

"aggravated the land loss due to river erosion over 400 square kilometre of 15 blocks of Malda, Murshidabad and Nadia districts in West Bengal." FBPA works under the Jal Shakti Ministry.

Banerjee has also requested Modi to "reconsider the decision of withdrawal of the extended jurisdiction of FBPA, so as to fulfill the earlier commitment of the Central Government and arrange for taking upurgent bank protection schemes in the entire stretch of the extended jurisdiction by the FBPA in consultation with the State Government,"as it had become extremely difficult for the State Government to manage the funds to stem river erosion and rehabilitation.

Protest held over student leader's murder in Bengal

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Left-backed students' movement protesting the alleged murder of a students' leader Anis Khan saw parts of Kolkata erupting on Tuesday. The police and the State Government however acted cautiously considering the "community-sensitive" nature of the case, sources in the administration said adding the police scrupulously desisted from using coercive measures to stop the students.

Thousands of students from Aliya University marched down the streets of North Kolkata defying the police orders in their bid to gherao the Writers' Buildings. They were however stopped in the final hour when a large posse of police force acted swiftly arresting a dozen of the men chasing them away. The arrested students were later released. Nota single blow of lathi was however rained. Students of Jadavpur University too staged protests calling a bandh of the University campus.

While students protested at the campus and on the streets of Kolkata often jostling with the police the father of the

deceased leader refused to give statements to the Special Investigation Team ---constituted by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee --- led by ADG CID Gyanwant Singh saying he and his family had no faith in the State police.

Khan a popular students' leader was reportedly murdered on Saturday night at his residence by some alleged police men who had ventured into his house. He was thrown off the second floor of his house, at Amta locality of Howrah.

His family and villagers saw a Trinamool Congress-Police hand in his murdered. Incidentally Khan had earlier written to the Police chief, State Government seeking security cover which was however denied.

While Anis Khan death threatened to produce far reaching political ramifications for the ruling Trinamool Congress that primarily thrives on the minority votes the Left Front leadership on Tuesday said that the movement would get more steam in the coming days if the police failed to arrest the culprits and order judicial inquiry.



Sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik creates a sculpture dedicated to peace with the message 'No War But Peace', amid the ongoing Ukraine crisis, in Puri on Tuesday

J&K Govt to provide 'smart cards' to transhumance tribals

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Union Territory administration in Jammu & Kashmir has decided to provide 'smart cards' to transhumance tribal families to ensure their hassle free movement during migration and access to various other services.

To begin with, a pilot project of 10,000 Smart Cards will be rolled out in March 2022 to be followed by steps for coverage of nearly one lakh migratory families. Aadhar linkage is also being enabled for benefits of various schemes.

J&K has more than 18 lakh tribal population. Out of this 6.12 lakh population is Transhumant as per the recent survey. The modalities to finalise the design and contents of the Smart Cards was chaired by Secretary to Government, Tribal Affairs Department Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary here

in Jammu on Tuesday.

The Tribal Affairs Department in coordination with J&K Police, Forest Department and Census Operations Department have come together to implement this ambitious project.

The objective behind designing these Smart Cards is to replace the multiple permissions regime and offer a unified central database to all the organisations and agencies for smooth and hassle-free movement of Transhumant families during the biannual vertical migration.

According to a statement issued by the Department of Information and Public relations, Smart cards will have an embedded chip containing the demographic details, transit routes, originating place, destination and other vital statistics. These cards will also be utilised for various govern-



ment services rolled out of the migratory population and will be issued based on the survey conducted by the department last year.

Chief Conservator of Forests, Samuel Chankija discussed that in view of implementing The Scheduled Tribes and OTFD (Recognition of Rights) Act the forest department is endeavouring for a hassle free process and suggested

multiple card issuance points. Access will also be provided to forest deptt for monitoring the process and also surveys related to management of range-lands.

The suggestion made by the Police department for mapping of respective police stations was also included in the process. Access will also be provided to all the police stations enabling real-time updation

of demographic details whenever required by the family. Android devices and card readers will be provided to all nakas and posts of both police and forest Department for smooth movement of families.

Director, Census Operations J&K, G Prasanna Ramaswamy, discussed coordination with the Tribal Affairs Department for coverage of all the Dhoks (highland pastures) in the Census to avoid missing any families or members. The 1st Survey of Transhumant Population conducted by the Tribal Affairs Department will also be referred as a source for planning the census Operations.

The Tribal Research Institute, established as an autonomous body in the Tribal Affairs Department, has been entrusted with the task of coordinating the preparedness of various plans in this regard.

Opp can support Nitish for Prez if he severs ties with BJP: NCP

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid efforts by the Opposition parties to cobble a formidable front to take on the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) said here on Tuesday that the Opposition might consider Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's candidature for the Presidential poll, if he severed his party's links with the BJP.

Talking to media persons here, NCP's national spokesperson and Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik said: "Nitish Kumar should first sever his links with the BJP, then we will decide what is to be done next".

Malik was responding to a query by a journalist who said

that there were reports that Nitish Kumar's name was being considered for the Presidential polls as an Opposition candidate and wanted to know if the reports were true.

The NCP spokesperson said that there could not be any discussion on the issue unless and until "he (Nitish Kumar) breaks ties with the BJP". "Once that happens, leaders of all opposition parties will then sit together and think about it (Nitish Kumar's candidature for the Presidential polls)," Malik said. Alluding to a possible outcome in the Assembly polls in five states, Malik said that the BJP would suffer a severe debacle in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa.

"After 30 years, history will be repeated in Uttar Pradesh

where the BJP will win less than 150 seats. In 1993, the people in UP had rejected BJP after it triggered communal violence there. People there are now fed up with the BJP's policies," Malik said.

Malik said that the process of launching a joint Opposition front to fight the ruling BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha had started. "The anti-BJP front will take a proper shape before the 2024 polls," he said

He hastened to add: "However, no such front can be formed without the Congress. The issue of leadership will be taken up later at an appropriate time"

Malik's comment should be seen in the context of the fact that Andhra Pradesh chief minister K C Chandrababekhar Rao had met NCP chief Sharad

Pawar's at the latter's south Mumbai residence "Silver Oak" and discussed issues relating to the formation of an Opposition front to take on the ruling BJP at the Centre in 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Prior to his meeting with Pawar, KCR, – as the Telangana chief minister is known in political circles – had a luncheon meeting with Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray of the Shiv Sena. After the meeting, both Uddhav and KCR had said "there is need for parivartan (change) in the country" and that they had made a "new" and "good beginning" at their meeting. Both of them had indicated that a joint Opposition front would be floated to fight the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Right to wear hijab does not fall under Article 25 of Constitution, K'taka Govt tells High Court

Bengaluru: The Karnataka Government on Tuesday told the High Court that there is no restriction on wearing Hijab in India with reasonable restrictions subject to institutional discipline and dismissed the charge that denial to wear the headscarf was a violation of Article 15 of the Constitution, which prohibits discrimination of every sort.

Countering the petitioner Muslim girls from Udupi district, who challenged the restriction on Hijab inside the educational institutions,

Karnataka Advocate General Prabhuling Navadgi said the right to wear the headscarf falls under the category of 19(1)(A) and not Article 25 as has been argued by the petitioners.

"The right to wear Hijab falls under Article 19(1)(A) and not Article 25. If one wishes to wear Hijab, then there is no restriction 'subject to the institutional discipline'. The rights claimed under Article 19(1)(A) is related to Article 19(2) where the government places a reasonable restriction subjected to institutional restriction," Navadgi told the full bench of the Karnataka High Court.

The full bench of Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, Justice J M Khazi and Justice Krishna M Dixit is hearing a batch of petitions seeking permission to wear Hijab inside the classroom.

Navadgi further said the institutional restriction in the

present case is only inside the educational institutions and not anywhere else.

Arguing further, he said the independent claim of 19(1)(A) cannot go together with Article 25.

"The consequence of the demand to declare Hijab as an essential religious practice is huge because there is an element of compulsion or else you will be expelled from the community," Navadgi told the court.

Article 19(1)(A) is related to the freedom of expression of the Indian constitution.

Article 19(2) says that nothing in sub clause (a) of clause (1) shall affect the operation of any existing law, or prevent the State from making any

law, in so far as such law imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub clause in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

Article 25 deals with freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion and says that subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion. *PTI*

Cong, GFP oppose BJP Govt's police recruitment plan as poll results awaited in coastal State

Panaji: The Congress and the Goa Forward Party(GFP) on Tuesday demanded that the Election Commission halt the police recruitment drive planned by the Pramod Sawant Government in the coastal State, which had seen Assembly polls on February 14.

Results are set to be declared on March 10 along with that of polls in four others States, including Uttar Pradesh.

The demand was made by Goa Congress chief Girish Chodankar, who wrote to the chief electoral officer (CEO), and GFP general secretary Durgadas Kamat, both of whom claimed such a recruitment process would violate the model code of conduct in place here.

"We are reasonably given to understand that the police department is in the process of commencing the very controversial recruitment process by seeking permission from the Election Commission of India," Chodankar said in his letter.

"It is a known fact the state police department is always under the pressure of and working under dictates of the Home Minister and the Chief Minister of Goa," he added.

He said the EC should not give permission for the recruitment process, which should ideally start only after a new government is in place. *PTI*

Kashmiri artisan weaves silk carpet for Salman Khan

Srinagar: A 50-year-old carpet weaver from Srinagar city's Fateh Kadal area has made a silk wall hanging carpet of his idol and Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, and wants to present his artwork to "Bhaijaan".

Mohammad Hussain took six months to make the 900mm x 750mm artwork, which comprises 576 knots per square inch, in pure silk and carries the actor's portrait on both sides.

"Since there was not much work during the lockdown, I thought of paying my tributes to Bhaijaan. With my savings, I created this piece of work and I want to gift it to him," Hussain told PTI.

Asked about the cost incurred in making the wall hanging,

Hussain said one cannot put a price to such things. "I made this out of love for him. It cannot be measured in money," he said.

Hussain said he used 10 natural dyes just to make the silk yarn for the hair strands. "It commands a lot of time....From the perfect combination of dyes in order to get the right tone and shade to getting the design right at the end of the weaving process."

"This piece has 576 knots per square inch which gives the clarity of the design," Hussain explained.

He wants to gift this wall hanging carpet to the actor and hopes that the Bollywood star accepts it. *PTI*



Tourists ride a speed boat at Ana Sagar Lake, in Ajmer on Tuesday

Free Taj entry for tourists on Shah Jahan's Urs

Agra: On the occasion of the 367 'Urs' of the fifth Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, tourists will get free entry to Taj Mahal from February 27 to March 1.

This exemption is given every year to commemorate the death anniversary of the Mughal emperor.

Raj Kumar Patel, Superintending Archeologist of ASI, Agra Circle, told PTI, "There will be free entry for the tourists at the Taj Mahal from February 27 to March 1 on the occasion of the annual Urs."

On 27 and 28th February, the tourists will be allowed from 2 pm till sunset and on March 1, the free entry will be from sunrise to sunset, Patel said.

"We will follow the COVID-19 protocols on all three days," he added. *PTI*

FIRST COLUMN

MOBILISING THE ECONOMY WITH A DIFFERENCE

Proper utilisation of human resources will be key to the success of the startup concept



Startups can be the driving force behind the country's economic growth as they have ability to create job opportunities and fulfill India's dream to reach a \$5 trillion economy. India has become one of the fastest growing unicorn startups with over 81 unicorn startups till now. Most of the unicorn companies are software based, depend on higher technology to reach maximum number of people and create a deep impression on their daily life activities. These are all privately owned. The idea of startup is not easy to develop. It is still a new concept and people are not sure about its prospects. Gradually, the idea is catching up fast. The startups have a great impact on every sector of the society. It has touched all spheres from cooking to entertainment, education to healthcare. A large scope of employment opportunities has been generated which helped the



Government to deal with the unemployment situation far more easily to some extent. Startups have created an opportunity for the entrepreneurs to be their own boss and subsequently be a part of the development of the country both socially and economically. Startups have made our lives safe and secure in the pandemic period. People can remain indoors and yet take care of their daily necessities, from groceries to banking to medical supplies and consultations, do their jobs and take care of their children's educational needs. The farmers are now getting reasonable price for their products once they tie up with the startups related to groceries and vegetables. The weavers are also enjoying some benefits once they come under the startups dealing with clothes and garments.

We must remember one thing that an idea or concept needs support for its growth and development. Not only from people but also support from the government of the country is needed for the growth of the startups concept. The Indian Government has shown its faith and announced the Startup India initiative. January 16th was celebrated as Startup Day. The prime minister announced that within the next 100 years the innovators of India will make India proud across the world. The startups are dynamic and versatile in nature. The Indian Government has faith in the young generation. It has designed schemes to encourage the entrepreneurs to set up more startups and enhance quality. Policies are being reformed and fund support is being given to startups. India is a vast country with a large number of people living in the rural areas, ignorant to ideas like startups will be an uphill task to make this section of people aware about the concept. The government should take the necessary steps to make this section of people aware about the importance and possibilities of startups. Proper utilization of the human resource of India will be a key to the success of the new concept of startup. Initiative should be taken at the grassroots level, proper training and education should be imparted. TV show like Shark Tank India can be a great help in spreading the concept of startups as young entrepreneurs from various fields come to the show to showcase their business models and thereby attract investors to invest in their business and help them to grow. As soon as it becomes popular it will attract more entrepreneurs and investors too. Startup supports Indian Government's objective of achieving Sustainable Development Goals such as generating job opportunities, connecting rural areas to the urban areas by setting up roads. Moreover, the Government is encouraging women entrepreneurs and providing support for business development to achieve gender equality which is a part of SDGs.

(The writer teaches at Jaipuria Institute of Management, Lucknow. The views expressed are personal.)

Talk of a Federal Front minus the Congress

Whether Congress has a role in this Front will depend on how it performs in these States

Will too many cooks spoil the Opposition broth? Many players in the national opposition camp are trying to come together ahead of the 2024 polls against the BJP. You have Congress President Sonia Gandhi attempting to form a united opposition coalition. You have West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee trying to develop a non-Congress, non-BJP coalition with the help of Nationalist Congress Party leader Sharad Pawar. Then you have Telangana's K. Chandrasekhar Rao and his federal front without Congress. Tamil Nadu chief minister M.K. Stalin is the new entrant to this effort.

Talk of a federal front of regional parties without Congress to take on the BJP in



(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

Election freebies: But at whose cost?

Only the SC can put a stop to this vicious practice and save the precious national resources from the clutches of the amoral political class

In Indian mythology, there is a divine tree called Kalpataruthat grants every wish of anyone seeking its help. In election times, all political parties become Kalpatarus and promises of all kinds of freebies start raining copiously on gullible voters, with each party trying to outcompete the others without any concern for resources. In the process, every election becomes a theatre of absurdity.

Just look at the promises made by parties for the upcoming elections in UP and Punjab. In UP, SP has promised 300 units of free electricity to households, free power for irrigation, pension of ₹1500 to poor and elderly women, which will cost ₹25500 crore. The AAP has promised waiver of farm loans amounting to ₹30000 crore, unemployment allowance of ₹5000 a month for 25 lakh youth, ₹1000 allowance per month to every woman voter (18+ age), besides 300 units of free domestic power - all of which will cost the exchequer ₹55780 crore. BJP, battered by the farmers' agitation, has promised free electricity for irrigation,

two crore smartphones and tablets for students and two free cylinders to Ujjwala beneficiaries for Holi and Diwali every year. Only ₹26000 crore will be needed for all these.

Congress has promised smartphones and e-scooters to girls passing class 12, monthly pension to 25 lakh elderly women and increased honorarium to Asha workers, which will cost ₹817 crore, a miniscule amount compared to others, perhaps in keeping with its prospect for winning. As per 2021-22 BE, UP had a fiscal deficit of ₹90130 crore and outstanding liabilities of ₹6.53 lakh crore or 34 percent of GSDP. It paid ₹41430 crore as interest during the last fiscal. The cost of these promises will have to be financed by borrowing, whose fiscal consequences would severely limit the state's development and economic growth.

Punjab is one of the most heavily indebted states of India with debt: GSDP ratio exceeding 53 percent - its economy had contracted by 1.85 percent in the last fiscal. With fiscal deficit of over ₹24000 crore in 2021-22 (BE) and outstanding liability of ₹2.83 lakh crore - its annual interest burden alone is over ₹20000 crore - it is fiscally sliding down a slippery slope. But AAP has still promised 300 units of free electricity which will take the state's power subsidy bill, already at ₹10668 crore, past ₹25000 crore, the ripple effect of which will be felt every where. The power tariff structure already leaves a gap of uncovered revenue; with these freebies, Discoms will not be able to pay their dues to the Gencos which in turn won't pay to the banks whose NPAs will continue to rise.

AAP has also promised ₹1000 per month to every woman voter. BJP has promised farm loan waivers, besides



THE WORDING OF THE GUIDELINES THUS LEAVES THE FIELD WIDE OPEN FOR POLITICAL PARTIES TO MAKE ANY PROMISES WHICH GO AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF THE COURT RULING. THE EC FORGOT THAT IN A MATURE DEMOCRACY, A POLITICAL PARTY ONLY OWES GOOD AND CORRUPTION-FREE GOVERNANCE AND NOTHING ELSE TO THE VOTERS

(The author is former Director General of the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India and a Professor at the Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management. The views expressed are personal.)



300 units free electricity. Not to be outdone, Congress has promised a ₹3 cut in power rates, free electricity for farmers, ₹2000 per month to every homemaker besides 8 free gas cylinders, and ₹15000 to every girl child passing Class 10. The Punjab voters must rejoice, their state is about to sink neck deep into debt. The freebies will hurt in other ways too - like depleting groundwater and messing up farm economies.

Unfortunately, Tamil Nadu which has honed freebies to a fine art, is not having any election, otherwise some innovative ideas about freebies would have enlightened us. In 2011 election, AIDMK had promised and delivered goats, gold as well as colour TV, blenders and fans - despite some recipients not having electricity connections. Disgusted with the promises of freebies worth ₹1 lakh crore, many times more than the state's total expenditure on education and health, a lawyer named S Subramaniam Balaji filed a PIL with the Supreme Court (SC), seeking countering of elections vitiated by announcement of freebies that amounted to "bribery" under the Section 123 of the Representation of People's Act (RPA). The political parties argued that they, being committed to the Constitutional goal of a welfare state, were within their rights to frame their election manifestos highlighting the way they would serve the voters if voted to power, and hence the promises were neither meant to act as bribes nor to influence the

voters unduly.

In its 2013 verdict, the SC while observing that "distribution of freebies of any kind undoubtedly influences all people. It shakes the root of free and fair elections to a large degree" and that "the promise of such freebies at Government cost disturbs the level playing field and vitiates the electoral process", disagreed that it was a "corrupt practice" under the RPA. It directed the Election Commission (EC) to frame appropriate guidelines. Since Article 324 of the Constitution gives the EC unfettered powers to superintend, direct and control the election process, it was for the EC to bite the bullet, but apparently succumbing to the pressure of political parties, it rather legitimized the practice by stating in the guideline: "There can be no bar on the state adopting welfare measures. But political parties must refrain from making promises that undermine the purity of the election process or aim to exert undue influence on the voters"; and that "There must be transparency with respect to the promises and how the parties aim to implement their promises. The promises must also be credible.

Wherever freebies are offered, parties must broadly state how they plan to gather the funds and finances to fulfil such promises." The wording of the guidelines thus leaves the field wide open for political parties to make any promises which goes against the spirit of the Court ruling. The EC forgot that in a mature democracy, a political party only owes good

and corruption-free governance and nothing else to the voters. While delivering good governance is difficult, fulfilling promises on freebies is simple. It also undermines the fact that relief offered by freebies is only temporary and ignores larger problem of scarcity, input costs and capacity, which need to be addressed over a longer time-period using the same resources.

Now another PIL has been filed before the SC by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeking direction to the Centre to enact a law in this regard, as the trend of political parties to influence voters by offering freebies is not only "the greatest threat to the survival of democratic values but also injures the spirit of the Constitution", which undoubtedly it does.

The petition sought a direction to the EC to ensure that allocation of electoral symbol to a party would be conditional upon its assurance of no promises for irrational freebies from public fund. A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Ramana observed in January, "This is no doubt a serious issue. Budget for freebies is going above the regular budget. As the Supreme Court said before, this disturbs the level playing field."

The political class will stubbornly resist any interference and the EC seems to have acquiesced. Only the SC can put a stop to this vicious practice and save the precious national resources from the clutches of our amoral political class.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I AM VERY DISTURBED BY THE MURDER OF A BAJRANG DAL ACTIVIST. WE WILL NOT ALLOW GOONDAISM.
—KARNATAKA MINISTER
KS ESHWARAPPA



HE HAS ALREADY VIOLATED THE INDIAN FLAG CODE. A CASE MUST BE REGISTERED..HE SHOULD BE SACKED.
—KARNATAKA CONGRESS CHIEF
DK SHIVAKUMAR

2024 elections has gained ground in the last few weeks.

By leading a national party, Congress gets the prime place to unite the Opposition. Without Congress, however weak it is today, any opposition front will not succeed. Sonia Gandhi held a meeting last August 19 of 19 political parties but did not take it further. She then appealed to the Opposition to come together, focusing on defeating the BJP in 2024. Congress party is waiting for the current five state Assembly election results on March 10 to take further steps.

Therefore, there is an inherent contradiction in the splintered opposition camp-regional satraps, with a stronghold on their respective fiefdoms, dream of succeeding Modi. The precedents of Deve Gowda, I. K.



Gujral, and Chandrasekhar give them this hope.

If it retains Punjab, succeeds in Goa, and snatches Uttarakhand in the current Assembly polls, the Congress party has a chance of uniting the Opposition. In 2017, though Congress emerged as the single largest party in Goa and Manipur, the BJP formed the Government in both states, luring defections. Moreover, while opposition leaders like Sharad Pawar, Mamata Banerjee, and others might agree to work under Sonia Gandhi, they do not accept

Rahul Gandhi as their leader.

Mamata proposes calling a non-BJP chief minister's conference in Delhi, where KCR, Stalin, Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray, will participate in the emerging federal Front. Stalin's recent statement that a convention of non-NDA CMs will be organized in Delhi confirms it. Efforts are to mobilize as many non-BJP CMs as possible, including BJD, YSR Congress, and CPI-M (Kerala).

The CPI-M mouthpiece 'People's democracy' said in its latest editorial, "Talk of a federal front by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao or Mamata Banerjee's attempt to project herself as heading an alternative alliance are political matters, which should not be mixed up with

the task of bringing all chief ministers of non-BJP State Governments together."

The second reason is the souring of Centre-state relations on various issues - from expanding role of investigative agencies to GST, IAS cadre rules, and sharing of PDS data. CMs in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kerala, etc., have also been complaining that their respective governors are infringing on the rights of the elected government. Mamata Banerjee claims they try to "protect the country's federal structure from getting bulldozed".

Thirdly, some regional leaders like Mamata Banerjee, K. Chandrasekhar Rao and Arvind Kejriwal have won the state continuously in the past decade. These egoistic leaders

believe that the time for moving to the Centre has come now. In other words, regionalism is raising its head.

India has seen such an alternate Front before. This coalition includes the Janata Party in 1977, the National Front in 1989, United front in 1996 but all of them had a brief rule. National parties like The National Front (supported by BJP) and the United Front (supported by Congress) came later.

There are two problems for these alternate fronts to survive. The first is that they lack programmatic coherence, and the second is who will lead this Front.

There are pros and cons of such a ragtag coalition of regional parties. As former prime minister Vajpayee or

Manmohan Singh experienced, they keep the coalition leader under check. Like Telugu Desam chief Chandrababu Naidu, they could bargain funds for their respective states or, like Jayalalitha, demand cabinet berths of their choice. But all these are at the cost of a stable Government. Except for UPA and NDA, other coalition Governments did not last long.

Indeed, the contours of the federal Front are likely to emerge after March 10, when the results of five assembly elections are out. Whether Congress has a role in this Front will depend on how it performs in these states. The Opposition needs glue for various regional players to stay together; merely anti-BJP is not enough.

Leaders allege Russia sending troops to Ukraine

AP ■ MOSCOW

Western leaders said on Tuesday that Russian troops have moved into rebel-held areas in eastern Ukraine after President Vladimir Putin's recognised their independence, but some indicated it was not yet the long-feared full-fledged invasion as confusion reigned in the region.

For weeks, Western powers have been bracing for an invasion as Russia massed an estimated 150,000 troops on three sides of neighbouring Ukraine. They warned an attack would cause massive casualties, energy shortages in Europe and economic chaos around the globe - and promised swift and severe sanctions if it materialized.

They have also warned Moscow would look for cover to invade - and just such a pre-text appeared to come Monday, when Putin recognised as independent two separatist regions in eastern Ukraine, where government troops have long fought Russia-backed rebels. The Kremlin then raised the stakes further Tuesday, by saying that recognition extends even to parts held by Ukrainian forces. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russia has recognised the rebel regions' independence "in borders that existed when they proclaimed" their independence in 2014 - broad territories that extend far beyond the areas now under the rebel control - and that include the major Black Sea port of Mariupol. Ukrainian forces later reclaimed control of large part of both regions early in the nearly eight-year separatist

conflict that has killed over 14,000 people. The recognition move opened the door for Putin to formalise his hold on the regions and send forces in, though Ukraine and its Western allies have long charged Russian troops have been fighting there for years. Moscow has denied those allegations. Condemnation of Russia's moves from around the world was quick.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he would consider breaking diplomatic ties with Russia and Kyiv recalled its ambassador in Moscow.

But confusion over what exactly was happening on the border threatened to hobble a Western response. "Russian troops have entered in Donbas," the name for the area where the two separatist regions are located, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in Paris on Tuesday. "We consider Donbas part of Ukraine."

But in a distinction that is sure to complicate a European and Western response, he added: "I wouldn't say that (it is) a fully fledged invasion, but Russian troops are on Ukrainian soil."

He said the European Union would make a decision on sanctions on Tuesday. Poland's Defence Ministry and British Health Secretary Sajid Javid also said Russian forces had entered Ukraine's east. Javid went further, telling Sky News that "the invasion of Ukraine has begun". He added: "We are waking up to a very dark day in Europe and it's clear from what we have already seen and found out today that the Russians, President Putin, has decided to

attack the sovereignty of Ukraine and its territorial integrity." The Russian moves already elicited a response from Germany, which took steps to suspend the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that was to bring natural gas from Russia. That's a move Berlin has long put off. The pipeline was built to help Germany meet its energy needs, particularly as it switches off its last three nuclear power plants and phases out the use of coal.

Russian officials haven't yet acknowledged any troop deployments to the rebel east, but Vladislav Brig, a member of the separatist local council in Donetsk, told reporters that the Russian troops already had moved in, taking up positions in the region's north and west. Late Monday, convoys of armoured vehicles were seen rolling across the separatist-controlled territories. It wasn't immediately clear if they were Russian.

As European leaders scrambled to decide on their response, legislation that will likely set the stage for a deeper move into Ukrainian territory moved through Russia's parliament.

The bills, which sailed quickly through the Kremlin-controlled parliament, envisage military ties between Moscow and the separatist regions, including possible deployment of Russian military bases in the separatist regions.

Even as alarm spread across the globe, Zelenskyy, the Ukrainian president, sought to project calm, telling the country in an address overnight: "We are not afraid of anyone or anything. We don't owe anyone anything. And we

won't give anything to anyone". His foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, will be in Washington on Tuesday to meet with Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the State Department said.

"The Kremlin recognized its own aggression against Ukraine," Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov said on Twitter, describing Moscow's move as a "New Berlin Wall" and urging the West to quickly slap Russia with sanctions.

The White House has already responded, issuing an executive order to prohibit US investment and trade in the separatist regions, and additional measures - likely sanctions - were to be announced Tuesday.

Those sanctions are independent of what Washington has prepared in the event of a Russian invasion, according to a senior administration official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity. Other Western allies also said they were planning to announce sanctions, including the EU.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the UK will introduce "immediate" economic sanctions against Russia, and warned that Putin is bent on "a full-scale invasion of Ukraine...That would be absolutely catastrophic".

Johnson said Putin had "completely torn up international law" and British sanctions would target not just the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk but "Russian economic interests as hard as we can." He later said in a tweet that Russia has sent troops to Ukraine.

Ukraine crisis jolts Europe to push for secure energy supply

AP ■ MADRID

Surging energy prices and fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine are making European leaders think hard about energy security - particularly their decades-old reliance on Moscow for natural gas.

The crisis shows Europe's vulnerability after years of limited progress in completing an "energy union" - a 2015 vision to allow affordable gas and electricity to flow across borders while diversifying suppliers and reaching climate goals.

As renewables like solar and wind are slowly built up and coal and other fossil fuels are phased out, Europe still needs natural gas, and it's dependent on Russia to get it.

That came into sharp relief as Europe's gas supply dropped and prices soared partly because Russia sold less gas than normal, squeezing households and businesses with rising costs.

With gas reserves low and concerns a war could interrupt pipeline flows from Russia, the European Union is focused on getting liquefied natural gas or LNG, by ship from United States, Qatar, Algeria and elsewhere until renewables catch up. Environmentalists fear making that even a short-term priority could set back Europe's goals to move away from fossil fuels.

Myanmar Opposition protests mark general strike anniversary

AP ■ BANGKOK

Opponents of military rule gathered on Tuesday for protests in Myanmar's cities, defying threats by authorities to arrest anyone joining demonstrations against army's takeover a year ago.

The protests on Tuesday marked the anniversary of last year's "Five-Twos Revolution", a massive nationwide general strike against army rule just weeks after military seized power. Activists often call for actions - usually dubbed strikes - on significant occasions or anniversaries, and opposition activists had designated Tuesday's protest "222222" or "Six-Twos," derived from the digits in the date.

Photos and video on social media showed scattered small groups of people marching in Yangon, the country's biggest city, and elsewhere. Because of risks of arrest or injury, urban street protests are usually carried out by flash mobs, which can dissolve before the security forces crack down.

Protesters in Yangon held banners with written slogans such as "Gathering together again for Six-Twos Revolution" and "Revolt in countryside, defiance in cities", referring to armed resistance carried on against odds in rural areas, and marches and other actions in urban areas. They also shouted anti-military chants and raised three-finger salute of their movement, adopted from "The Hunger Games" movie series.

UN expert criticises China, Russia for arms sales to Myanmar

AP ■ GENEVA

An independent human rights expert working with the United Nations is criticising China and Russia for allegedly supplying weapons used by Myanmar's military against civilians since it seized power last year.

Tom Andrews, a special rapporteur working with the UN human rights office, urged countries to halt such sales. He also called on the UN Security Council, where China and Russia are permanent members, to hold an emergency meeting to discuss a possible ban on sales of arms used by Myanmar's military against civilians.

"The people of Myanmar are imploring the UN to act," Andrews said in a statement Tuesday. "They deserve an up-or-down vote on a Security Council resolution that will stop the sale of weapons being used to kill them." The findings come in a new report from Andrews on the types and amounts of weapons used by the military as early as 2018, when it led a bloody crackdown on Muslim Rohingya minority that caused hundreds of thousands to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh.

Pak PM Khan says he would like to have TV debate with PM Modi to resolve differences

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Tuesday that he would like to have a TV debate with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi to resolve differences between the two neighbouring countries.

Khan made the remarks during an interview with Russia's state-run television network RT on the eve of his maiden two-day visit to Moscow-the first by a Pakistani premier in over two decades - during which he will hold talks with President Vladimir Putin and review exchange views on major regional and international issues.

"I would love to debate with Narendra Modi on TV," Khan said in response to a question. He added that it would be so good for over a billion people of subcontinent if differences between Pakistan and India could be resolved through a debate. Responding to a question, Khan said when his party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf came into power in 2018 he immediately reached out to India and asked Indian leadership to sit down at table and resolve Kashmir issue.

He, however, regretted that India did not respond positively to his overtures. Ties between India and Pakistan nose-dived after a terror attack on the Pathankot Air Force base in 2016 by terror groups based in the neighbouring country. Subsequent attacks, including one on an Indian Army camp in Uri, further deteriorated relationship.

Notice Inviting RFP

No.SSA/Equity/Career Guidance (Aptitude Test)/02/2022/8993 Date: 18/02/2022

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission (Samagra Shiksha), Kahilipara, Guwahati- 19, Assam invites RFP through e-Tendering process from reputed firm/ organization/Institution for Implementation of Aptitude Test for the Students of Secondary and Providing Coaching Materials to them.

To participate in the tender process through e-procurement bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the RFP/tender schedules containing the RFP/tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their RFP/tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable bid processing fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/Scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The RFP/tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

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

Notice Inviting e-Tender

No.SSA/Pre-Primary/Vikramshila/390/2021/9047 Date : 21.02.2022

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission (Samagra Shiksha), Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed offset printing presses having colour Offset Machine for printing and supply of Activity Calendar in Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, English and Hindi medium.

To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

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

Janasanyog/CF/3451/21

Poverty, fear drive exodus from Syria's one-time IS Capital

AP ■ RAQQA

In a square that a few years ago was a grim stage for the Islamic State group's brutal rule in the Syrian city of Raqqa, Mahmoud Dander sat deep in thought. He wants to leave Syria, but has a problem: The 75-year-old has no money. He recalled the old days before protests and was led to his country's collapse and national currency crash: Syria wasn't thriving back then, but he had work, his children had university degrees and decent futures, and food was always on the table. That's all gone now. "We have fallen, just like our currency," he said. Raqqa, the former de facto capital of the self-proclaimed IS caliphate and home to about 300,000 people, is now free, but many of its residents try to leave. Those with property are trying to sell it to save up for the journey to Turkey.

Those without money struggle to get by. At least 3,000 people left Raqqa for Turkey in 2021, according to the city's civil council co-chair Mohammed Nour. Their reasons span the spectrum of post-war life in Syria, one of the world's most complex conflict zones. They include economic collapse and widespread unemployment following one of the worst years of drought, as well as fears of an IS comeback and a proliferation of criminal gangs. And there is the looming specter of conflict between rival powers that control various parts of northern Syria, including

Hong Kong orders mandatory COVID-19 tests for all residents

AP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong will test its entire population of 7.5 million people for COVID-19 in March, the city's leader said Tuesday, as it grapples with its worst outbreak driven by the omicron variant. The population will be tested three times in March, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam said. She said testing capacity will be boosted to 1 million a day or more. "Since we have a population of some 7 million people, testing will take about seven days," she said. Hong Kong has reported about 5,000 new daily infections since Feb 15.

Queen cancels virtual events due to cold-like COVID symptoms

PTI ■ LONDON

Queen Elizabeth II cancelled her scheduled online engagements on Tuesday as she recovers from "mild cold-like symptoms" of COVID-19, Buckingham Palace said. The 95-year-old monarch will carry on with "light duties" at her Windsor Castle residence and any further engagements for coming days will be decided at a later date. "As Her Majesty is still experiencing mild cold-like symptoms, she has decided not to undertake her planned virtual engagements today, but will continue with light duties," Buckingham Palace said.

Canada lawmakers extend emergency powers for truck stir

AP ■ TORONTO

Canadian lawmakers voted Monday night to extend emergency powers that police can invoke to quell any potential restart of blockades by those opposed to COVID-19 restrictions. Lawmakers in House of Commons voted 185 to 151 to affirm powers. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said earlier that powers were still needed despite police ending occupation of nation's capital by truckers over the weekend and police ending border blockades before that. Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair said protesters were going for "lifeblood of this nation, which is trade with United States."

Saudi Arabia: 16 hurt in airport drone attack from Yemen

AP ■ RIYADH

Saudi Arabia's state-run news agency said 16 people of different nationalities were wounded Monday at an airport in the south as a result of the interception and destruction of a drone carrying explosives launched from Yemen. The Saudi-led coalition that's battling Yemen's Houthi rebels was quoted as saying that the bomb-laden drone was targeting King Abdullah Airport in the Saudi city of Jizan, near the border with Yemen. Saudi defense forces allege the drone was launched from Sanaa's airport in the Yemeni capital. Saudi state TV reported three travelers were in critical condition. It aired a short video clip

of the aftermath that showed glass shattered across the floor inside the airport near a Baskin-Robbins ice cream store. The state-run Ekhbariya news channel later showed travelers moving about within Jizan's airport and reported that flights were back to operating normally. Saudi Arabia has been involved in Yemen's civil war since 2015, fighting against the Iranian-backed Houthis who overran the capital of Sanaa and ousted the internationally recognised government from power. Despite seven years of fighting and war, the Houthis remain in control of Sanaa and much of northern Yemen. The attack against Jizan, a region near Saudi Arabia's border with Yemen.

EU vows to help prevent possible breakup of Bosnia

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union is ready to limit financial assistance and possibly impose sanctions in Bosnia to help prevent possible breakup of ethnically divided Balkan country as the peace agreement brokered over 25 years ago unravels, the EU's top diplomat vowed Monday. "There is no place in Europe for a divided Bosnia and Herzegovina. And those who work in this direction are strongly wrong," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said after chairing a meeting of bloc's foreign ministers. The United States last month announced new sanctions against Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik.

Sri Lanka imposes power cuts as cash crisis deepens

AP ■ COLOMBO

Authorities in Sri Lanka are imposing rolling power cuts across the island nation as its deepening financial crisis leads to shortages of fuel and handicaps its power grid. Sri Lanka's Public Utilities Commission said it will shut off the country's grid for two hours on Tuesday, after a similar cut the day before. Electricity will be switched off on a rotating basis between regions between 4:30 pm and 10:30 pm, according to officials. The regulatory body said the state-owned Ceylon Electricity Board had requested permission for the cuts as fuel shortages had caused the loss of 541 MW to the national grid.

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. | Dhiraj Kumar/ M/s Air Guru Travel Solutions Pvt Ltd/ Shilpa Shrivatsava/ Madhusudan Prasad Srivatsava/ LBDEL00005057084 | Flat No- 101 First Floor, Tower- D, Plot No- 3, Sector- 23, Dawarka , Delhi/ February 19, 2022 | June 23,2021 Rs. 1,55,42,193/- | Delhi/ NCR |
| 2. | M/s Universal Journeys India Private Limited/ Geetanjali Alamshah/ Journeys & Destinations India Private Limited/ Stephen Alamshah/ LBDEL00002082106 | Office Space No- DPT 534 Parking No- PB 1001, 5th Floor Block- F, Prime Tower, Plot No. 79 and 80 Okhla Industrial Area Ph- 1, Delhi, Delhi/ February 19, 2022 | June 19,2021 Rs. 63,41,264/- | Delhi/ NCR |
| 3. | Mahender Kumar Gupta/ Monika Gupta/ LBDEL00004563271 | Plot No. 75, First Floor Chitra Vihar Delhi/ February 19, 2022 | July 06,2021 Rs.8,18,564/- | 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 23, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Imran Khan's step-son among 3 booked on charges of possession of liquor

PTI ■ LAHORE

Prime Minister Imran Khan's step-son was among the three booked on charges of possession of liquor, only to be released after orders from "higher authorities," police said on Tuesday. According to the FIR, Musa Maneka, the First Lady Bushra Bibi's son from her previous marriage, and two of his friends were arrested near Gaddafi Stadium on Monday after police found alcohol in the car they were travelling in. "The three youths, including First Lady's son, were released same day after orders from top. Some legal formalities like personal guarantee from families of suspects were met," a police official told PTI on Tuesday. He added that when Maneka was picked up for possessing liquor, he threat-

ened security officials with dire consequences as he was the son of Pakistan's First Lady, the official said. "The Punjab police chief started receiving calls from the top soon after a case was registered against them. However, the police made no further legal action and released them after a few hours in custody," he added. The sale and consumption of alcohol is illegal in Pakistan, a Muslim-majority country. Last week, reports began to circulate on social media about differences between Prime Minister Khan and his wife. Farah Khan, a close friend of Bibi took to Twitter to announce that First Lady was living with her husband at Bani Gala residence. "Fake propaganda was being spread through Whatsapp messages about first couple," she said.

Sri Lankan court orders release of 21 Indian fishermen

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The 21 Indian fishermen who were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy last month for allegedly poaching in the country's territorial waters were released on the instructions from a magistrate court, officials said on Tuesday.

The Sri Lankan authorities will hand over the fishermen to the Indian Consulate after which they will be repatriated to India after completing all the necessary COVID-19 protocols. On January 31, local Sri Lankan fishermen alerted the coastguard after two Indian boats were located off the coast of Point Pedro within the Sri Lankan side of the international waters. The Sri Lankan Navy confiscated their boats

and remanded them in custody till February 21. According to the Sri Lankan Navy, these arrests are part of their patrols to cut illegal fishing in the country's waters to minimise the impact from poaching on the local fishermen and sustainability of fishery resources in Sri Lanka.

On Monday, the Point Pedro Magistrate Court ordered the release of the 21 Indian fishermen. "They were given 3-year jail terms suspended for 10 years while their two boats were ordered to be confiscated," Fisheries official J. Sudakaran told PTI. Last month, a Sri Lankan court ordered the release of 56 Indian fishermen who were detained for allegedly fishing in the island nation's territorial

waters. The issue of fishermen remains contentious in the bilateral ties between India and Sri Lanka. This issue had figured prominently in the talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Sri Lankan counterpart GL Peiris in New Delhi earlier this month.

"Exchanged views on the fishermen issue and agreed that bilateral mechanisms should meet early. Recognised the importance of greater tourism for economic recovery. Also noted the importance of P2P linkages through greater connectivity," Jaishankar had said. There have been several alleged incidents of Sri Lankan Navy personnel even firing at Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait and seizing their boats.

Exports up 26.40% to \$25 bn in Feb

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's merchandise exports rose by 26.4 per cent to USD 25.33 billion this month till February 21 on account of healthy performance by sectors including gems and jewellery, engineering, textiles and chemicals, according to the commerce ministry data.

The exports during February 1-21 last year stood at USD 20.04 billion. The outbound shipments during February 15-21 grew by 26.87 per cent to USD 9.02 billion as compared to USD 7.11 billion in February 15-21 last year, the preliminary data showed.

Cumulatively, exports during April-January 2021-22 rose by 46.53 per cent to USD 335.44 billion as against USD 228.9 billion in the same period last year. The ministry is hopeful that the exports would cross the USD 400 billion target by the end of this fiscal.

Sensex, Nifty tumble for 5th straight day

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex plummeted by nearly 383 points in a volatile trade on Tuesday due to losses in index heavyweights TCS, Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank amid a massive selloffs in global markets triggered by deepening geopolitical tensions.

After sinking about 1,300 points in early deals, the 30-share barometer finally closed lower by 382.91 points or 0.66 per cent at 57,300.68 points.

The broader NSE Nifty too reclaimed part of its early losses before closing 114.45 points or 0.67 per cent lower at 17,092.20.

On the Sensex chart, Tata Steel fell the most by 3.64 per cent, followed by TCS (3.59 per cent), and SBI (2.67 per cent).

Dr Reddy's dropped 2 per cent, ITC by 1.44 per cent, Bharti Airtel by 1.39 per cent, and IndusInd Bank by 1.39 per cent. Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, HCL Tech, Wipro, HUL, LT and UltraTech were among the losers.

Of the 30 Sensex constituents, 20 closed in the red. "Escalations in Ukraine tensions with Russia recognising two pro-Russian rebel regions have aggravated the crisis. The economic consequences are already visible in



higher crude and gold prices," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

The biggest macro headwind for India is crude racing to USD 97 a barrel, he said, adding that the inflationary consequence of this will force the RBI to abandon its dovish monetary stance.

Continuing their selling spree, foreign institutional investors sold shares worth Rs 2,261.90 crore in the Indian capital market on Monday, exchange data showed.

In a sign of aggravating geopolitical crisis in the eastern Europe, Russian President Vladimir Putin has recognised the independence of separatist regions in eastern Ukraine.

Putin's announcement comes after a meeting of the presidential Security Council and paves the way for Russia to openly send troops and

weapons to the long-running conflict pitting Ukrainian forces against Moscow-backed rebels.

Meanwhile, India has also expressed deep concerns over the escalation of tension along the Russia-Ukraine border and said the developments have the potential to undermine peace and security of the region.

Sectorally, BSE realty index tumbled over 3 per cent, followed by industrials, metal and teck. Of the 19 sectoral indices, 17 closed in the red.

Broader smallcap, midcap and largecap indices dropped as much as 1.62 per cent.

S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP securities said, "The Trend is your Friend and the street keeps reminding investors and traders just how tough it is to focus on the famous quote of Peter Lynch when you have a confluence of

factors swaying you away from your investee companies.

"Just when the global economy is beginning to recover and normalise from the impact of the pandemic, Russia has recognised the independence of separatist regions in Ukraine thereby inviting the possibility of severe sanctions being imposed by the US & EU."

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said escalation in Russia-Ukraine issue and a sharp surge in oil prices forced global markets to plunge sharply.

Indian equities opened with heavy losses tracking overnight fall in the global market and its adverse spill over to commodity prices.

"However, the domestic market managed to trim down its losses during the late session. Continued offload by FIIs has increased volatility while DILs are adding position", Nair said.

Other Asian bourses on Tuesday followed Wall Street rout and massive selloffs in European equities triggered by the Russia-Ukraine standoff.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 declined 1.7 per cent while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong closed lower by 2.7 per cent. South Korea's Kospi lost 1.4 per cent and the Shanghai Composite index fell 1 per cent.

India to have 1 billion smartphone users by 2026, says Deloitte study

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will have 1 billion smartphone users by 2026 with rural areas driving the sale of internet-enabled phones, a Deloitte study said on Tuesday.

India had 1.2 billion mobile subscribers in 2021, of which about 750 million are smartphone users. It is poised to be the second-largest smartphone manufacturer in the next five years.

"The smartphone market is expected to reach 1 billion smartphone users by 2026," according to Deloitte's 2022 Global TMT (Technology, Media and Entertainment, Telecom) predictions.

This growth is likely to be propelled by the rural sector at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6 per cent, compared with the urban sector growing at a CAGR of 2.5 per cent from 2021 to 2026.

"Higher internet adoption is expected to fuel demand for smartphones; this increased demand will be propelled by the need to adopt fintech, e-health, and e-learning," it said.

Internet-enabled devices in the rural market will also get a push with the government's plan to fiberize all villages by 2025 under the BharatNet programme.

Deloitte said 95 per cent replacements in the urban market in 2026 will be toward new smartphones, while only 5 per cent will be toward pre-owned phones compared with 75 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, in 2021.

The rural population is expected to demonstrate a similar trend where the average lifespan of a phone is four years. About 80 per cent replacements are likely to be for new devices, while 20 per cent for pre-owned ones in 2026. Correspondingly, the replacement of feature phones with smartphones is expected to gradually decrease due to a rise in the number of smartphone users.

Feature phone replacements will reach 60 million in 2026 from 72 million in 2021 for the urban sector. These replacements will drop to 60 million in 2021 for the rural sector.

According to Deloitte's analysis, demand for smartphones in India is expected to increase at a CAGR of 6 per cent, to reach about 400 million smartphones in 2026 from 300 million in 2021.

This high demand is like-

ly to be primarily created after the launch of 5G, which will alone contribute 80 per cent of the devices (about 310 million units) by 2026.

5G is believed to become the fastest-adopted mobile technology due its diverse applications, such as high-speed gaming and remote healthcare.

After the launch of 5G, additional shipments of smartphones are expected to be 135 million (cumulative) by 2026.

"The total cumulative shipments of smartphones in the country are expected to reach 1.7 billion over 2022-2026, creating a market of about USD 250 billion, of which, nearly 840 million 5G devices are expected to be sold in a span of five years," it said.

From 2022, 5G uptake will see year-on-year growth, leading to an increase in 5G smartphone sales in India. It will phase out the 3G mobile network given the evolution of the digital ecosystem and the industry's efforts to launch affordable 5G handsets.

The recently announced incentive package of USD 10 billion to boost semiconductor manufacturing in India will drive handset manufacturing.

Start-up firms growing in India with 10pc being added every year: Official

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The number of start-ups in the country is increasing significantly with 10 per cent being added every year, an official said on Tuesday.

Nasscom Centre of Excellence for internet of things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI) CEO Sanjeev Malhotra said most of the start-ups are on the application side, while a lot of work has also been done in the field of software-aided services.

"The number of start-ups is growing significantly in the country with 10 per cent being added every year. There has been significant growth in the number of companies and funding organisations which are attributing to this cause," he said.

But there is a need to build start-ups in areas of core research, Malhotra said.

The centre of excellence is the largest technology and innovation ecosystem in the country, comprising start-ups, innovators, enterprises and the government.

India has the third-largest

ecosystem for start-ups in the world, he said.

The Economic Survey 2021-22 had also mentioned that the number of such firms has grown remarkably over the last six years.

"The number of new recognised start-ups has increased to over 14,000 in 2021-22 from only 733 in 2016-17. As a result, India has become the third-largest start-up ecosystem in the world after the US and China," it said.

More unicorns are in the making in the country, Malhotra said, adding that the "funding pattern is getting healthier".

In business terms, a unicorn is a privately held start-up company valued at over USD1 billion.

Further, a record 44 Indian start-ups have achieved unicorn status in 2021, taking the overall tally of such firms in the country to 83, and most of these are in the services sector, the survey said.

The National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) has been providing the necessary ecosystem for nurturing start-ups, he added.

Rupee drops 29 paise, ends 5-day winning run as crude oil spikes nearly 4%

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated by 29 paise to close at 74.84 against the US currency on Tuesday, ending its five-day winning run as crude oil spiked nearly 4 per cent and equities dived after Russia recognised two separatist regions in eastern Ukraine and decided to send soldiers.

Forex traders said sustained foreign fund outflows, a lacklustre trend in domestic equities and elevated crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiment. At the inter-bank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 74.71 against the American dollar but later dropped to a low of 74.99 against the greenback. The local unit was quoted at 74.84 at close, down 29 paise from the previous close.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.04 per cent lower at 96.03.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has recognised the independence of separatist regions in eastern Ukraine - a move that will severely ratchet up tensions with the West amid fears that his country could invade Ukraine at any moment and use skirmishes as a pretext for an attack.

World leaders condemned the Russian President and prepared on Tuesday to hit his administration with sanctions, fueling fears of disruption to oil and gas supplies.

India Ratings revises upwards outlook on microfinance sector to 'neutral' for FY23

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India Ratings has revised upwards its outlook on the microfinance sector to 'neutral' from 'negative' next fiscal, on the back of a revival in growth that could clip at 30 per cent.

The agency expects the sector to grow 20-30 per cent in both FY22 and FY23 in comparison to the below 10 per cent AUM growth in the previous two years. Given the yield limitations, mid- and small-MFIs have not seen comparable growth.

India's first-ever gold powered card launched

New Delhi: Rupeek, asset-backed digital lending platform, has launched India's first-ever gold-powered card to allow millions of consumers to fulfil their highly-recurring credit requirements using the power of their idle gold. Currently, this card has gone live in 14 cities. "The launch of our first-of-its-kind Gold-powered card is one such tech-led offering that is built for the masses, giving them access to uninterrupted credit, at their fingertips," said Sumit Maniyar, founder & CEO, Rupeek.

New entity in gold loan business

Mumbai: Capri Global Capital Ltd, a non-deposit-taking and systemically important NBFC, plans to enter the gold loan business in the first half of 2022-23. The company aims to build a gold loan book size of ₹ 8,000 crore and expand its network with 1500 branch locations over the next five years. The company has appointed Ravish Gupta to head the business vertical. "This is in line with our long-term expansion strategy," said Rajesh Sharma, Capri Global Capital Ltd MD.

PUBLIC- NOTICE
My client Smt. Madhu Sharma W/o Shri Anil Sharma, R/o M.3/22, Third Floor, Model Town-III, Delhi-110009, wish to inform the General Public that my client has lost/misplaced the Original Title/Sale Deed and other related documents of property No.79, SaiLok Enclave, Phase-II, GMS Road, Dehradun. If anybody finds the original documents, then please return at the aforesaid address of my client.
Raghav Sharma (Advocate), Chamber No.407, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that MS. ANITA KUMARI D/o Balwant Singh R/o Flat No.B-402, 4TH Floor, Fakhruddin Memorial C.G.H.S. LTD., Plot No.18, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075, had died on 08-12-2020 and left behind an unregistered WILL dated 27-08-2020 appointed her cousin brother MR. HARISH MALHOTRA S/o Late Roshan Lal Malhotra R/o Flat No.B-402, 4TH Floor, Fakhruddin Memorial C.G.H.S. LTD., Plot No.18, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 as the beneficiary of her properties and assets i.e. (1) Flat No.B-402, 4TH Floor, Fakhruddin Memorial C.G.H.S. LTD., Plot No.18, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 (2) Flat No.B-601, 6TH Floor, Vesave Mangela Machhimaar Samaj Sarvodaya Group Housing Society, Juhu Versova Link Road, Andher West, Mumbai-400053 (3) Settlement and recovery of loan of Rs.15,00,000/- (Fifteen Lakh) From Mr. Ajit Singh S/o Shri Prem Singh (4) To appear in all competent court of law for recovery of amount and properties and to settlement thereof.
On behalf of the client MR. HARISH MALHOTRA S/o LATE ROSHAN LAL MALHOTRA, the undersigned advocate hereby invites claims or objections from other heirs/ or claimant/s or objector/s for the transfer of the said properties / powers / assets and interest of the deceased (ANITA KUMARI) in favour of the client (HARISH MALHOTRA) within a period of 14 days from the publication of this notice, with copies of proofs to support the claim/objection at below mentioned address. If no claims/ objections are received within the period prescribed above, the client (HARISH MALHOTRA) shall be at the liberty to get executed and registered the said WILL from the office of Registrar / Sub-Registrar and get transferred / mutated the properties and assets of the deceased in the manner provided under the bye laws.

PREM PRAKASH (ADVOCATE)
207, PLOT No.1, MLU Sector-10, DWAKRA, NEW DELHI-75 (PH.: +91 9871268399)

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
SHIVNATH CIRCLE DURG (CHHATTISGARH)
e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
eProcurement Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>
(1st CALL)
System Tender No.: 91923/NIT No.: 29/SC/2021 -22, Bemetara, Dated : 21.02.2022
Online Tenders are invited for the following works up to 14.03.2022 at 17.30 Hour
Name of work:- construction of bhojpara bank protection work on surhi river in SAJA BLOCK OF BEMETARA DISTRICT.
Probable Amount of Contract- **Rs. 135.54 Lakhs**
The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Chhattisgarh Integrated e-Procurement Portal (**<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>**) from Date **28.02.2022**, at **17.31 Hours (IST) onwards.**
NOTE:- All eligible/intrested contractors/bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the Integrated e-procurement portal (**<https://enroc.cgstate.gov.in>**) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under Centralized Contractor/Supplier Registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.
Sd/-
(Executive Engineer)
Water Resources Division,
Bemetara (C.G.)
R.O. No.- 68047/9 For, Superintending Engineer Shivrath Circle,
Dated:- 23/02/2022 Durg C.G.)

The Nawanshahr Cooperative Sugar Mills Ltd; Nawanshahr
(Dietl, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar)
Ph.: 01823-222021, E-mail : dcsm_nsr@yahoo.com/dcsmnsr@gmail.com
Website : www.nawanshahrsugar.com GSTIN No. 03AAAFD5602K22V
ONLINE E-TENDER NOTICE
E-tender are invited from registered nominal members of the mills for the sale of 210000 qtls. Molasses of season 2021-22 lying with various cooperative Sugar mills in the state of Punjab. Tender can be submitted upto **10.03.2022 upto 11:00 AM** & the same will be opened on **10.03.2022 at 02:00 PM.** The Earnest money is @Rs. 50.00 per qtls. For participating in the above E-tendering process, Bidders shall have to get themselves registered with **<http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>** and get user ID, Password, digital signature which is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering process. For any clarification regarding e-tendering process flow, please contact us on **9463284703, 8146556014, 0172-2791226.** The undersigned reserve the right to reject any or all tender, without assigning any reason. DNIT, terms & conditions and molasses sale policy can be downloaded from website **<http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>**. In this regard any corrigendum will be uploaded on the above said website only.
General Manager

Aro granite industries Ltd.
(CIN L74899DL1988PLC031510)
Regd. Office: 1001, 10th Floor, DLF Tower A, Jasola, New Delhi 110025
Phone: 91-11-41686169 Fax: 91-11-26941984
E mail: investorgrievance@arogranite.com Website: www.arogranite.com
NOTICE FOR LOSS OF SHARE CERTIFICATES
Notice is hereby given that the following Share Certificate(s) issued by the Company are reported to have lost / misplaced/ stolen and the Registered Holder(s) thereof/ Claimants have applied to the Company for issue of duplicate Share Certificate(s):

| Sl.No | Name | Folio No | Certificate No | Distinctive No | Shares |
|-------|--------------------|----------|----------------|---|--------|
| 1 | Rakesh Kumar Kamra | 1198 | 55142 | 1922301-1922400 1922401-1922500 5317551-5317650 7452565-7452714 11115987-11116211 | 675 |

Any person(s) who has/ have claim(s) in respect of above mentioned Share(s) should lodge such claim(s) in writing supported by valid documents with Registrar & Transfer Agent, M/s Alankit Assignments Ltd., Alankit Heights, 1E/13, Jhandewalan Extn., New Delhi 110055, Tel.- 23541234, 42541234; Fax: 41543474 within 10 days of publication of this Notice. Thereafter no claims will be entertained and the RTA will proceed for issuing duplicate Share Certificate(s) in lieu of Original Share Certificate(s).
For and on behalf of
Aro granite industries limited
Sabyasachi Panigrahi
Company Secretary
DATED: 22.02.2022
PLACE : NEW DELHI

PUBLIC NOTICE
We Rohit Jainendra Jain & Monika Jain both are resident of H.No. 965, Sector-15, Faridabad, Haryana 121007 is intending to Purchase a Plot No. 966 Sec-15 Faridabad -121007 (hereinafter called the said property) from Mr. Ravi Uppal S/o Late Shri Surinder Mohal Uppal, R/o Flat No. 102, Tower-6, Emaar Palm Terraces Select, Golf Course Extension Road, Sector-66, South City-II, Gurgaon-122018 who claims to be owner/successor and in Possession of the Said property by virtue of the registered will deed of Late Smt. Janki Devi Uppal bearing will No. 395 dated 3rd November 2005. Late Smt. Janki Devi Uppal w/o Late Mr. Sardari Lal Uppal was the owner of the said property by virtue of the Conveyance Deed Dated 28th day of April 1997 Doc No 1664 and had executed a will dated 03.11.2005 Doc No. 395 in favour of Ravi Uppal and Smt. Janki Devi has died intestate leaving Behind Mr. Ravi Uppal as the only Legal Heirs.
Any Person having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of inheritance, sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, Trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to the undersigned with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice.
Rohit Jainendra Jain
H No 965, Sec 15 Faridabad
Contact No. 99998 94837

SALE NOTICE
The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"** and **"AS IS WHAT IS BASIS"** for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-

| Case Details | Asset Details |
|---|--|
| ICICI BANK LTD VS DHARMENDER, CS (COMM) No. 52/20 | Vehicle No- HR38T5502, Make & Model- TATA MOTORS LTD. WINGER, Manu Year-2019, |
| ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. Rajesh Kumar Tiwari, CS (COMM) No. 945/20 | Vehicle No- UP16AS1600, Make & Model- AUDI A6 2.0 TDI, Manu. Year- 2013, |
| ICICI BANK LTD VS MEHAK GOYAL, CS (COMM) No. 3020-21 | Vehicle No- DL10CJ6730, Make & Model- HONDA AMAZE 1.2 S MT, Manu Year-2017, |
| ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. MOHD. GULSHAB, CS (COMM) No. 3234/18 | Vehicle No- DL10ST6474, Make & Model- Yamaha Motors Pvt. Ltd SZ- RR, Manu Year- 2017 |
| ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. PUJA THAKUR, CS (COMM) No. 4615/21 | Vehicle No- DL10CJ7587, Make & Model - TATA MOTORS LTD TIGOR XE 1.0SD, Manu. Year- 2017, |
| ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. KAILASH CHAND, Ex. No. 703/21 | Vehicle No- HR38T0435, Make & Model - TATAACE, Manu. Year- 2013 |
| ICICI BANK LTD Vs NEHA KAUSHIK, CS(COMM) No. 67/19 | Vehicle No- UP16BU3237, Make & Model- HYUNDAI EON MAGNA PLUS, Manu. Year-2017 |

Auction Date: 4-March-2022 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Place of Auction:- Godara Yard, Khewat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chowk, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec - 17, Sukhrali, Gurugram - 122022
Contact Person - Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)
And

| Case Details | Asset Details |
|---|---|
| ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. PINTU TYAGI, Suit No. CS (COMM)/1052/20 | Vehicle No- UP14JT0615, Make & Model - TATA MOTORS LTD ULTRA 1518, Manu. Year-2019, |

Auction Date: 4- March-2022 From 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm.
Place of Auction: Shriram Automall, Vill- Manmupur, Plo Maniyari Road Narela, Delhi-110040
Contact Person - Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)
Terms of Sale
The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself / themselves/ itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. All bidders are required to come at auction sitewith original KYC documents to participate in the auction. .
Successfully bidder shall have to deposit sale amount within 5 days from the auction date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. The intending bidders may visit at ICICI Bank Ltd, 1st Floor, SD Tower, Community Center, Plot No-7, Rohini Sector-8 New Delhi - 110085for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicles.

SC AGROTECH LIMITED
(FORMERLY KNOWN AS SHEEL INTERNATIONAL LIMITED)
CIN: L01122DL1990PLC042207
Regd Address: RZ-1484/28, Ground Floor, Tughlakabad Ext. New Delhi-110019
Email: sheel102@gmail.com, Web: www.scagrotech.com Ph: 9654056648

Extract from the standalone unaudited financial result for the Quarter and Nine Months ended 31-12-2021 (Rs. in Lakhs)

| S. No. | Particulars | Quarter Ended 31.12.2021 | For the Half Year Ended 31.12.2021 | Corresponding 3 Months Ended 31.12.2020 |
|--------|---|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Total Income From operation | 13.14 | 37.71 | 18.48 |
| 2 | Total Expenses | 13.54 | 40.44 | 17.08 |
| 3 | Net profit/(loss) for the period (before tax, Exceptional and /or Extraordinary items | -0.40 | -2.73 | 1.40 |
| 4 | Net profit/(loss) for the period (before tax, after Exceptional and /or Extraordinary items | -0.40 | -2.73 | 1.40 |
| 5 | Net profit/(loss) for the period after tax and Exceptional and /or Extraordinary items | -0.40 | -2.73 | 1.40 |
| 6 | Total comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising profit/loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive (after tax) | -0.40 | -2.73 | 1.40 |
| 7 | Paid up equity Share capital(face value of Rs 10/- each) | 599.50 | 599.50 | 599.50 |
| 8 | Earning per share (of Rs 10/-Each) | | | |
| | BASIC and Diluted Earning per share (in Rs) | | | |

1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly financial results filed with Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI LODR 2015, the full format of the Financial result are available on the Stock Exchange website(www.bseindia.com) and on the Company website (www.scagrotech.com)
2. The result of the Quarter ended on 31st December 2021 were reviewed by the audit committee and approved by the Board
By Order of The Board FOR SC AGROTECH LTD. Sd/-
Rahul Gupta
Executive Director

Place: New Delhi
Date : 18.02.2022

Even though metaverse has been in existence for decades, it is now gaining heavy traction. Data science and cybersecurity are in trends and have also captured the attention of the IT world, says SACHIN GUPTA

FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



Higher education is evolving continuously with the new age of digital exploration. Even though metaverse has been in existence for decades, it is now gaining heavy traction. Along with that, data science and cybersecurity are in trends and have also captured the attention of the IT world.

Cybersecurity, data science and the metaverse are exponential markets, where the global market size of cybersecurity is estimated to reach around \$370 billion by 2028 growing at a CAGR of 12 per cent from \$153.16 billion in 2020, while the global data science market is expected to value a little over \$80 billion by 2027 with a CAGR of 11.1 per cent and the global metaverse market is predicted to expand at a CAGR of 41.7 per cent from 2021 to 2030.

With these next big technologies and fast-growing lucrative market, it is essential to reinvent the higher education of tomorrow to shape and future proof it with the advancing technologies like data science, cybersecurity and the metaverse.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is a practice that aims to protect networks, systems and programmes from harmful digital attacks. These attacks usually access, change or destroy information that is sensitive and use it to extort money or use it to disrupt the

flow of business if any. Cybersecurity in higher education will play a crucial role as the data of the students as well as teachers are sensitive in nature and need to be protected when all the data is stored online. Since over the years attackers have developed many innovative ideas, it causes tension in the higher education system.

Data science

Data Science is a field that uses scientific methods and processes using algorithms and systems. It attracts the insights, knowledge from structured and unstructured data. Data science applies the knowledge and insights acquired from this data to take action against a broad range of application domains. The techniques used by data science vary from the field of statistics, computer science, domain knowledge, etc. The implementation of data science in higher education will benefit the education system greatly. The future of data scientists, easy checking of plagiarism, implementation in research work are some ways data science will enhance the future world.

Metaverse

Metaverse is a network of 3D virtual worlds which focuses on social connection. In the previous years, metaverse has been popular in the fiction world and now has gained its popularity in various



Sachin Gupta
Chancellor Sanskriti University

THESE NEXT BIG TECHNOLOGIES AND FAST-GROWING LUCRATIVE MARKET, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO REINVENT THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF TOMORROW TO SHAPE AND FUTURE PROOF IT WITH THE ADVANCING TECHNOLOGIES

virtual platforms. Metaverse includes technologies of virtual reality and augmented reality which aims to combine the physical and digital world. Metaverse has created its own space that even higher education has engaged in building technologies in the education system. Due to technological advancement and education classes being in a hybrid mode, metaverse will help the education system greatly by using virtual and augmented reality.

Emerging technologies and higher education

The future of higher education is more about hyper personalisation, with data science, metaverse and cybersecurity solutions. In the growing ecosystem of digital spaces, networks, metaverse are even deeper and would influence our daily activities and interactions in both physical and virtual worlds. This already has implications for higher education because of the ways in which it can be accessed by learners, ways in which information is created and ways the learners will interact and connect with one another.

Data Science add benefit semi structured and unstructured data: -

Data science on the other hand adds to the benefit of making more informed decisions about every individual student and analysing the

data to improve outcomes. It requires skills of maths, computer science and a lot more to understand what would drive a student's behaviour. Higher education is most likely to benefit with continuous real-time recommendations with semi structured and unstructured data to learn from the metaverse and aid in predicting the future outcomes.

Cybersecurity is integral part of digital world: -

Cybersecurity will aid in securing the metaverse to protect the metaverse and the data from vulnerability. A decade from now cybersecurity would become an integral part in higher education. As hackers will be lurking behind every window screen, technology giants would take over higher education's cybersecurity. This would leverage campus technologies, computing power with the collaboration of higher education.

Technologies are under continues upgradation: -

These technologies are still being developed, still being transformed to enable cybersecurity, data science and the metaverse to achieve new heights. As these technologies come with a huge learning curve for higher education, these technologies are the future and organisations need to prepare enough to make sense of this new technological world.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

When you educate one person you can change a life, when you educate many you can change the world

— Shai Reshef

PGDM AT IMS GHAZIABAD

The Institute of Management Studies (IMS), Ghaziabad is inviting applications for Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) 33rd Batch 2022-24.

IMS Ghaziabad is one of the trusted Business Schools in India offering PGDM programme approved by AICTE and accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and equivalent to MBA by Association of Indian Universities (AIU). The institute is also accredited globally by AACSB (USA) and ASIC (UK).

How to Apply: Online application form.

Link to apply: <https://admission.ims-ghaziabad.ac.in/>

All eligible candidates will have to undergo an Entrance Exam at the institute, comprising of a Written Aptitude Test, Group Case Discussion/Extempore and Personal Interview.

Admission is based on the marks obtained in the qualifying examination and the performance in entrance exam.

A valid CAT/MAT/CMAT/ATMA/GMAT/NMAT/XAT Test score is required.



MSC BIOENGINEERING

The University of Sheffield, UK is inviting applications for MSc Bioengineering course starting in September 2022. The MSc is designed to provide students with all of the necessary technical knowledge, expertise and transferable skills to succeed in one of the fastest growing engineering disciplines. Bioengineering is a multidisciplinary field that combines biology and engineering, and which allows them to apply engineering principles to medicine and healthcare.

Duration: 1 year full-time **Fee:** Overseas (2022 annual fee) is £26, 200

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/courses/2022/bioengineering-msc>

Summit X-Grad 2022

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Xebia Academy, the education arm of the US-headquartered IT consultancy firm, Xebia Global, recently hosted the higher education summit, X-Grad 2022. Many education veterans participated in the virtual summit with Dr Anil Sahastrabudhe, Chairman AICTE being the chief guest of the event.

The summit revolved around hybrid learning model, role of assessment and evaluation in improving the educational experience and job-readiness of students and reimagining of the education system with the collaboration of industries in academia.

Blended learning aspects involve a modern-day solution combining both face-to-face and virtual activities, as well as the type of education that allows students to include self-paced study, alongside classroom learning.

However the rate at which pedagogy has evolved has resulted in a progressive transitioning to experiential learning with hybrid education model, as evident by its incorporation in education vocabulary.

The Summit hosted three panels. Each panel included Chancellors and Vice chancellors of eminent universities like Jagannath, North Cap, Jain University, Lovely professional university, Chandigarh University.

Being multi-skilled is the new success mantra

One simply needs to upskill to enhance their resume, and show corporations that they can deliver a little more than they already know, says GIRISH SINGHANIA

People dreaded the pandemic. It has resulted in economic inflation, layoffs, and everything associated with a presumed downfall of a robust economy. There is so much effort made at staging the flip-side, that the bright side is ambushed.

What seems to be working against us, in retrospect, is a positive digital transition that has resulted from the ongoing technological revolution.

Myth busted

During times of insurgencies, professionals don't only worry about losing jobs, but also about these profiles going extinct. On the plus side, digitisation only simplified the nuances of the job, propelling these professionals to skill, upskill and reskill. Reskilling can give professionals and learners the impetus to kick-start a side-hustle, enhancing their financial standing.

Most professionals fear getting into the IT space, as deemed that it requires an education in the math and science streams. This fear has successfully paved its way into the urban pockets too. Thankfully, this isn't true, as most learners are oblivious of the vast expanses of the IT space. Information Technology doesn't relegate itself only to the programming languages of Java,



Girish Singhania
CEO, EduBridge Learning

Most professionals fear getting into the IT space, as deemed that it requires an education in the math and science streams. This fear has successfully paved its way into the urban pockets too. Thankfully, this isn't true, as most learners are oblivious of the vast expanses of the IT space



Python, Ruby, and so on. But it also entails exciting courses in Business Intelligence, Data Analytics, User Interface Designer, Web Analytics, Growth Hacker, Tech Support Specialist, and Tech-Recruiter. The above-mentioned roles require basic knowledge of math, research skills, design aesthetics, and communication skills. All these are backed by the ability to think creatively with a liberal dash of analytical and logical

insight to be able to solve a problem. Learning the basics of coding can be just as insightful.

However, with the digital advances, skilling, upskilling, and reskilling are being indoctrinated as an intrinsic part of the work culture.

The impact

A revolution of this sort primarily impacts urban areas, where there is an urgent requirement of skilled professionals on one hand,

and a dearth on the other. The growing gap directly needs to be arrested in lieu of abstaining from a lay-off situation. And this is exactly where an EdTech steps in!

Devising a training programme at such a mammoth scale is indeed a herculean task for most organisations. This is how and why EdTech plays a critical role in arming these professionals with the required skill-set, to get things up and running!

Organisations collaborate with EdTech companies and aid in creating a blueprint for courses that align themselves to the growing needs of the workforce. This in turn helps learners at acquiring a certified update on the course undertaken, and additionally have the opportunity of getting re-recruited into the workforce, with better financial perks.

Co-Created courses allow employees to interact with industry heads, which will enable them to conduct themselves in a more defining manner in the professional environment. In a nutshell, one simply needs to upskill to enhance their resume, and show corporations that they can deliver a little more than they already know! After all, being multi-skilled is the new success mantra.

The writer is CEO, EduBridge Learning

Story of philosophy

Many questions have been put up by humans around life, how to relate to the world around them and understand their inner selves. Various philosophers from Socrates to Bertrand Russell have tried reasoning out the way humans act and have come up with inspiring, yet confusing theories.

Self-help books or motivational books not only offer guidance on life but rather act as a gateway to theories that help one navigate the rocky paths of life.

These motivational books will enable you to delve deeper into the ocean of self-introspection and get insight into mindful perceptions to make your present more constructive.

The Winning Edge —Unleash The Leaders Within by Col. Tarun Kumar (Retd)

Authored by Col. Tarun Kumar (Retd), the book is an attempt to acquaint you with the belief that leaders are made, not necessarily born. Author takes you through the thought process behind leaders and how to discover that within ourselves.

Leadership is all about having the discovery of a new belief system and what's stopping you to unleash the leader within? Go ahead, immerse yourself in the journey of self-discovery with this book and let the world see a new leader emerging — you!

Chanakya In You by Radhakrishnan Pillai

In India spiritual heritage is as significant as its historical heritage. The book *Chanakya in You* is a delight for readers as it introduces us to one of the greatest thinkers of all time - Chanakya.

Written in a semi-autobiographical account, the book brings us sheer positivity and an insight to king-making ability.

ities. It's about an aimless young man who sets off on a journey of self-realisation and spirituality and yet, becomes the richest man in the world. A quaint description of what youth today feels like - aimless, confused and directionless, while also guiding them through it.

Death An Inside Story by Sadh Guru

The title itself is such an intriguing subject which makes one curious about the content within the book. Sadhguru in his book adds perspective to the impermanence of life and its significance while engaging in discussion around various aspects of death.

You can win by Shiv Kherra

The book is a road map for a journey to achieve more while dwelling on prerequisites for living a meaningful life. A construction manual offering footprints to follow and build a triumphant and gratifying life. Overall, this book offers anecdotes, stories which help people grow professionally as well as on a personal level.

Think Like A Monk by Jay Shetty

Written by a millennial, this book by Jay Shetty is a go-to option for today's youth. Think like a monk is written in three parts, where each part helps us understand our mind, purpose and most importantly, healing. Author at the end of each part gives a medication practice in the form of graphs and charts which can blow out the reader's minds.

These exercises not only help one find their personality rather find purpose and direction in life.

The crisis our world has witnessed in the past few years, be it in the financial, economic, social or health related sector, has taught us to keep our emotions at bay and live life in the present..

Webinar on careers post PGP-DSE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Great Learning, one of India's edtech companies for professional and higher education has announced that it will be hosting a webinar on Careers Post PGP-DSE: Placements, trends, and more on February 23, 2022, 5 pm. The one-hour-long live session is free of cost and can be attended by those who want to understand the concept of

Data Science, its scope, and influence across diverse domains.

The live session will be conducted by Mishthy Sablania (Senior Manager, Career Preparation at Great Learning). The purpose of the webinar is to throw light on various insights into the placement process — Career Assistance, Mock Interviews, Resume Preparation, etc. The session will also include alum-

ni stories and their experiences and a Q&A session with the speaker for doubt clarification and questions about the program. It will also deep dive into hiring trends that were observed during the pandemic.

Great Learning offers comprehensive, industry-relevant programmes across various cutting-edge Technology, Data, and Business domains. Its programmes are developed

in collaboration with the academic institutions like Stanford University, MIT, The University of Texas at Austin, National University Singapore, IIT Madras, IIT Bombay, IIT Roorkee, IIIT-Delhi, Shiv Nadar University, and Great Lakes Institute of Management and are constantly reimagined and revamped to address the dynamic needs of the industry. Register: <https://bit.ly/36ys9dB>

AI-driven platform for competency-based learning

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the dire need for the education sector to embrace the use of Artificial Intelligence, the advent of the latest technology with the online platforms has not only helped the students with a better education module but also assisted the educators in providing the best opportunities for the students learning.

AI Testified, a startup incu-

bated at IIT Kanpur is a unique platform that blends Artificial Intelligence into the school education systems, UPSC and State PSC, and other competitive examinations. Being India's pioneering AI-driven test platform, it is highly beneficial in understanding and filling the "learning deficit" among the school-going students and aspirants of various competitive examinations.

"AI Testified uses Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning to identify the conceptual

strength and weakness of each student, with the belief that each student is unique with a different learning curve. The tests are customised according to the needs of individual students. Video lectures and notes on different concepts are also provided to fill in the identified knowledge gap. Also, students are given the choice to use elimination and the 50-50 technique to mark the most appropriate answers. This helps the students to know the accuracy of their concepts and

develop their critical thinking ability," says MK Yadav, CMD, AI Testified (Incubated at IIT Kanpur).

This platform has assumed more importance, as CBSE has recently announced the commencement of a term-based examination policy (MCQs driven) in line with the New Education Policy 2020.

Earlier where students used to be afraid of examinations, this paradigm transition to AI learning will make them enjoy exams.



CYBERSECURITY IS A MUST

Phishing, spoofing, hacking, cyberstalking, ransom attacks are the most common cybercrimes. However, the biggest reason is excessive internet usage during the lockdown, says PRABHAT SINHA

The digital generation's present era is surfing the internet heavily, which has opened the doors of opportunities to everyone utilising digital platforms. However, the usage of the cyber world has awakened cyber frauds, the threatening form of crime where fraudsters hack victims' personal information and data feed online. It is problematic for every individual as cybercrimes are growing with the speed of viruses like COVID and disrupting businesses, Governments, and public services. According to the NCRB report, India recorded 50,035 cases of cybercrime in 2020. It registered an 11.8 per cent increase from last year's comparison, while it is expected to grow 25 per cent by 2020 till 2025 if the preventive steps are not implemented properly.

What makes a criminal commit cybercrime?

This thorny question arises whenever we read or hear about cybercrimes happening across society and the globe. Phishing, spoofing, hacking, cyberstalking, ransom attacks are the most com-

mon cyber crimes. However, the biggest reason is excessive internet usage during the lockdown. There are several other determinants for the drastic surge of cybercrime cases.

Pandemic situation

One of the reasons for growing cyberattacks is lockdown imposed due to pandemic. People have to work remotely and upload and download data on servers for shared usage inside their organisations and projects. Online conferences, meetings, financial transactions, etc, have given cyber attackers additional options.

Lack of skills

Everyone needs to get stable and earn considerable remuneration for their earnings. However, while skilled people are able to secure their jobs, a lot of unskilled people have lost their jobs. Such unskilled and jobless people use cybercrime as their earning medium. Further such people find cybercrime and attacks easier than finding legitimate ways to earn money.

Terrorism

We hear news of the hack of

government websites and social media channels by terrorists. In their campaign to threaten the world, terrorists use cyberattacks as a powerful weapon. For example, we observed several cyberattacks by terrorists last year where they wiped out historical data of a Colorado-based energy company and disconnected internal controls. Similarly, ransomware attacks on Australian utility firms were made by Russian cyber attackers.

Social media

A typical social media addict surfs the internet very frequently. Social media platforms have many apps and programs that look very appealing and attractive. But most such apps are used for stealing your personal data. Nowadays, cyber-attackers are analysing the social media profiles of their targets to get their personal preferences. Hence it is recommended to use social media platforms sensibly and securely.

Unawareness

Still, regular internet users are unaware of the ways of cyberattacks, and they are clueless about simple hacks of protection from

cyber crimes. While the Government and corporations are making all the efforts to spread awareness for cybersecurity, regular people are barely following the standard practices. Following cybersecurity guidelines and practices can prevent cyberattacks and the loss of hard-earned colossal money.

Updates

We often see essential software and apps prompting us to install the latest updates. Actually, those updates include security patches from the latest known cyberattacks. Therefore, try to install updates and upgrade your system software as soon as possible.

Password security

Always use complex passwords comprising alphabets, numbers, and special characters. Don't save your passwords on browsers and apps. Always use different passwords for important accounts. You can also opt for using biometrics authentication for banking and financial apps.

Use passwords for apps installed on your device so that in case of mobile theft, your apps are

not accessible. Nowadays, everyone's bank is found in their pocket and easily accessible. So, keep changing your passwords at regular intervals. Also, instead of installing different payment and UPI apps, try to use fewer transaction apps on your mobile device, reducing cyberattacks chances.

Links

Never click unknown links. Many frauds happen by clicking on the link they share on websites, apps, mail, SMS, or call. Most cyber crimes happen through fraud apps made for the hacking of personal and transactional details. Your account balance may be wiped out within minutes of clicking such fraudulent links. Therefore, it is recommended to download apps from official websites and recommended app stores only. Avoid downloading apps shared through the direct links.

We can prevent cyberattacks by using strong passwords, using VPN while consuming shared Wi-Fi networks like cafés, libraries, hotels, etc.

The writer is IT Expert & Author of Innovate & Seize Your Success

'Technology will continue to shape the future of work'

Amidst the pandemic, technology enabled its users to keep up their experiences in their career, education, or even in day-to-day life, says ABHINAV GUPTA

In recent years we have seen how digitisation has changed the face of the world and helped it to keep progressing even when it was hit hard by the most crucial pandemic of all time. It was the technology that enabled its users to keep up their experiences in their career, education, or even in day-to-day life. The result is now we are living in an era where we can do anything from anywhere at the same or in some cases with greater efficiency. Technology will continue to shape the future of work, transforming every imaginable sector for the foreseeable future.

AI powered cloud applications will finally underpin the market

After the pandemic, no one can deny the fact that Artificial Intelligence has life-saving potential. The numerous innovations by AI from chatbots to automating tasks to virtual assistants and more will continue to drive insights and better solutions in 2022 and beyond too. It is expected to witness a great change in application infrastructure as the business organisations will move towards cloud applications in order to make way for more scalable, secure, and efficient business processes. With cloud computing and virtualisation, companies would be able to carry out their processes cost-effectively by cutting down hardware. The powerful and expansive nature of cloud computing will grow in the future and likely provide more extensive security to the data and ultimately help companies achieve their business goals.

Advancement in internet

The 5th Generation mobile network is going to be a game-changer for every sector in the coming times. Faster speeds, larger capacity, and reduced latency on the internet will open new doors of opportunities in public safety and business. Statistics say that up to 40 per cent of the global population will be 5G holders before 2025. The modern business world has shifted a great deal in the past years. Many businesses have become more familiarized with working even outside of the office. 5G can further facilitate these remote working skills and ultimately help the businesses to experience an increase in productivity.

Evolvement of the security industry

In the coming times, the security



Abhinav Gupta
CTO, Innovana Thinklabs Ltd

industry will respond with greater automation and integration. The scanner tools will bring new updates and provide for a more secure storage process of personal data. The traditional infrastructure will integrate with modern digital innovations to solve digital challenges with ease. Since the risk landscape is getting more and more complex, security needs to be reformed from the presently available basic model to the intrinsically built advanced models. Antivirus solutions and web security extensions will be evolved and may provide more real-time protection and a safe browsing experience.

Melding of physical and virtual spaces

During 2020 and 2021, many of us realised that technology is very important for not only facilitating but also maintaining communications. These communications are not just limited to work but also real emotional connections. AI technology and several new applications will drive people closer to each other even if they are physically miles apart.

New era in IoT & Edge

IoT & Edge started off as a vision for future digitisation are now fast becoming the most potent superpowers of the technology world. Five years from now, Edge will become the new battleground for data management. The second major consensus is that data management and the edge will increasingly converge and reinforce each other. We will see a gradual rise in these technologies as AI-powered IoT will deploy amongst various sectors and will probably take hold of various industries.

Strict lockdowns during the pandemic have sparked momentum in immersive virtual and augmented reality.

Positive impact

The main advantage for the environment is that it will considerably eliminate the need for human travel, resulting in less traffic, less accidents, less pollution, and consequently less global warming.

For political and big business honchos it would be easier to hold conferences in the virtual world, thus saving them on time besides the enormous expenses on their security and travel.

According to a study

published by the CleanTechnica news website in the United States, metaverse will aid in the reduction of other polluting job-related activities. For example, military training activities, such as pilots flying warplanes in the virtual world, might be conducted in the Metaverse, lowering emissions.

It could save event organisers the huge money they have to spend in holding events like concerts. The hugely popular video game Fortnite had 12.3 million people logging in to watch rapper Travis Scott perform virtually last year.

Negative impact

Some analysts are concerned that

MINDIT

widespread adoption of the metaverse may lead to a major increase in emissions. Metaverse's reliance on virtual reality (VR) technology and data centres will have a detrimental impact on the environment, even as it decreases carbon emissions by reducing travel. Data centres utilise artificial intelligence to detect eye and hand movements, but virtual reality relies on cloud services. Operating such facilities necessitates a tremendous amount of energy,

which comes at a significant environmental cost.

According to a report by UK-based digital transformation consultancy ECS, training a single AI model may generate roughly 626,000 pounds of carbon dioxide, which is over five times the lifetime output of an average automobile, according to research performed by the University of Massachusetts.

Future of metaverse

IN BRIEF

MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN LIBERAL ARTS

The of Technology Guwahati is launching a Master's programme in Liberal Arts. It will be offered by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Guwahati from the academic year 2022-2023. The first batch of 30 students will be admitted from the upcoming July 2022 semester based on specific admission criteria to be announced soon.

The programme aims to offer cross-disciplinary and multidisciplinary training to students and hone their ability to think critically and creatively about social, political, and

aesthetic issues that concern our world today and would align with the NEP2020.

By engaging in meaningful cross-disciplinary and multidisciplinary conversations, students will learn to make informed judgments and choices, while also remaining aware of their ethical implications.

The programme will help students to be creative with the skill sets they acquire and to address real-life problems. The programme will also offer opportunities for interested learners to engage with digital technology and methodology, think critically about technological paradigms, and apply digital tools in critical humanities research in praxis-based projects.

SCHOLARSHIP AND TALENT HUNT SEASON II

Mindler, a career guidance platform has launched the Mindler Scholarship and Talent Hunt for Class 12th students across India and the

Middle East. With over 50,000 Class 12th students expected to participate in Season II of 2022 of Mindler Scholarship initiative; this year again

more than 3,000 students will receive scholarships and be able to get admission in the university of their choice. The students will be from 1,000 schools.

LPU'S ARCHERY STUDENT FOR PWC-2022

Bachelor of Arts 3rd Year student, Jyoti Balian at Lovely Professional University has recently been selected for Para World Championship-2022, which is scheduled to be held in Dubai from 19th to 27th February

2022. Balian is now aiming to grab the top medal. With the world's best Para archers in competition for eight different categories, the championship will reveal great action throughout the event.

TRAINING ON JAVA FULL STACK DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Simplilearn, a global digital skills training provider, announced its partnership with Mphasis to upskill freshers in Full Stack Java Development.

Through this partnership with Simplilearn, Mphasis aims to enable freshers with the skills to be job and project-ready. The program is designed to train learners in Java for front-end, backend, and

database layer web development. Upon completing the program, learners will be eligible to become Full Stack Java Developers.

The Simplilearn and Mphasis partnership comes at the right time when the industry is witnessing rapid growth and demand for full stack developers. Kashyap Dalal, Co-founder and Chief Business Officer, Simplilearn, says,

"Globally there is a need for millions of professionals trained in digital skills like programming, Data, Cloud, Devops, etc. These skills are not readily available in the market and increasingly the only scalable model is to hire for aptitude and then create the skills to make them job ready.

New hire onboarding for digital roles is a key focus area for Simplilearn.

SU SIGNS MOU WITH UPVERTER EDUCATION

The Sanskriti University has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with UPVERTER. This collaboration will help to establish relationships between industry & university and eliminate the existing barriers in STEM education, opening up opportunities for students to design and create their own electronic products.

"The objective of the MoU is to work

to develop an interactive curriculum comprehensively through mutual cooperation. There is a need to develop and nurture new partnerships aimed at STEM education and reducing the barriers around it so that students can get better industrial opportunities through the collaborative efforts of both institutions," says Sachin Gupta, Chancellor Sanskriti University.

PU LAUNCHES A FUND FOR WOMEN IN STEM

The Plaksha University, one of India's largest collective philanthropy efforts to build a tech university for the future,

launched Ayalasomayajula Lalitha Fund, to promote enrollment of girls and women in STEM education specifically in higher education. The University aims to award 50 per cent of total scholarships and grants to girl students, that will not only provide equal opportu-

nity to bright minds from underprivileged backgrounds but also increase the ratio of girls in STEM education.

As per the latest All India Survey on Higher Education, released in academic year 2019-20, the percentage of women in engineering and technology in the country is less than 30 per cent. Announcing its vision on the occasion of UN's International Day of

Women and Girls in Science, Plaksha University said that they aim to increase the enrolment of women in the institution to 50 per cent by academic year 2027 through a twofold strategy. First by ensuring that no deserving women candidate is denied admission because of the lack of financial resources. Second by ensuring that the admission process is holistic.



DAAD Graduation International Scholarships in Germany

Ulm University, as part of the DAAD's STIBET doctoral programme, is offering international students the DAAD Graduation Scholarships in Germany for the academic year 2022-2023.

Award: 875 EUROS

Course Level: Doctoral

Supporting documents: Curriculum vitae, cover letter, proposal/approval of the supervising professor, proof of previous scholarships or employment at Ulm University and copy of admission to doctoral studies at Ulm University

Admission requirements: The students must have a master's or bachelor's degree in a relevant field of study.

Language requirement: TOEFL IBT – 88, TOEFL CBT – 230, TOEFL PBT – 570, IELTS – 6.5, CAE/CPE

How to apply: Students need to submit an admission application via the university portal.

The scholarship application form must be filled out separately and submitted to doctoral-students@uni-ulm.de along with the below-listed documents.

Application deadline: May 15, 2022

International Student Scholarships at Hope College, USA

Hope College is proud to announce the International Student Scholarships for the academic session 2022-2023. The programme is open for international students who want to pursue an undergraduate degree at Hope College.

Awards: Up to \$25,000

Course Level: UG

Supporting documents: Certified copies of qualifications, a transcript of results, and copies of any other documentation.

Admission requirements: Must have a previous year's degree certificate with outstanding academic achievement.

Language requirements: TOEFL: Minimum score of 79 with no sub-score less than 18, IELTS: Minimum score of 6.5 with no sub-score less than 6, Duolingo: Minimum score of 100, GTEC: Minimum score of 1200, Pearson PTE Academic: Minimum score of 58 with no band below 53 or Attendance for two or more years at a secondary school where the curriculum is taught in English (still may require the TOEFL or IELTS)

How to apply: Students are required to take admission in the undergraduate degree programme at the college. Eligible candidates will be automatically considered.

Application deadline: March 15, 2022

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT ANAR

Location – WFH
Stipend – ₹20,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/c41f11
Deadline – March 02, 2022

GRAPHIC DESIGN AT WESTERN ORANGE BEVERAGES

Location – WFH
Stipend – ₹10,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/4b1019
Deadline – March 02, 2022

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING (GENERAL) AT SKILLCOUNTY

Location – WFH
Stipend – ₹15,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/a28906
Deadline – March 02, 2022

QUALITY ANALYSIS AT BILATERAL SOLUTIONS

Location – WFH
Stipend – ₹12,000-15,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/94a191
Deadline – March 02, 2022

INTERNET OF THINGS (IOT) AT DKG LABS

Location – Delhi
Stipend – ₹15,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/5eba12
Deadline – March 02, 2022

GRAPHIC DESIGN AT CRAZYBRAND BAZAAR

Location – Lucknow
Stipend – ₹6,000-12,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/371216
Deadline – March 02, 2022

MARKETING AT RUDRA INNOVATIVE SOFTWARE

Location – Chandigarh, Mohali
Stipend – ₹10,000-15,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/b8e138
Deadline – March 02, 2022



White Ferns continue winning run

PTI ■ QUEENSTOWN

The Indian women's cricket team's horror tour of New Zealand continued as the White Ferns demolished the visitors by 63 runs in a rain-curtailed fourth WODI on Tuesday to inch towards a clean sweep in the five-match series here.

The game became a glorified 'T20' due to rain as Amelia Kerr stole the show with a 33-ball-68 which took New Zealand to 191 for 5.

Amelia, one half of the famous Kerr sisters, then mopped up the tail with 3 for 30 as India managed only 128 before being all-out in 17.5 overs.

Teenager Richa Ghosh's counter-attacking 52 off 29 balls was the only silver lining in an otherwise disastrous performance which has now led to five defeats on this tour including the one-off T20.

The bowling performance of the Indians seemed to have nose-dived with each passing game and it was the worst on Tuesday where only Rajeshwari Gayakwad (4-0-26-1) looked the part.

Meghna Singh (1/45 in 4 overs) and Deepti Sharma (1/49 in 4 overs) were two bowlers taken to the cleaners by Amelia who had 11 fours and a six in her kitty.

New Zealand started on a rousing note with a 53-run opening stand between Sophie Devine (32 of



24 balls) and Suzie Bates (41 off 26 balls). Once the platform was laid, Amelia and Amy Satterthwaite (32 off 16 balls) literally pummelled the

Indian bowling.

A chase of 192 was always going to be a tough ask even though the out of form Harmanpreet Kaur

was dropped from the playing eleven.

Smriti Mandhana very understandably was out of rhythm after a

long and hard quarantine and youngsters Shafali Verma (0) and Yastika Bhatia (0) were out in quick succession.

Mithali backs youngsters Shafali and Richa to do well in WC

PTI ■ DUBAI

India skipper Mithali Raj is confident that youngsters like Shafali Verma and Richa Ghosh will rise to the occasion at the upcoming women's World Cup in New Zealand next month.

Mithali reckons the 18-year-old Verma, who was the team's standout performer during the 2020 T20 World Cup, will continue to play impressive knocks for the country in the marquee event.

"Shafali Verma is surely one of the players being watched with great enthusiasm back home," Mithali wrote in her column for the ICC. "She is one of the world's rising stars and I am backing her to have more impressive performances for India throughout the tournament with guidance and

support from the stylish Smriti Mandhana at the other end."

The big-hitting Verma has had a relatively lacklustre tour of New Zealand by her standards, having scored only one half-century. However, Richa Ghosh, who is competing with the Taniya Bhatia for the wicketkeeper's spot, has made most of her chances. The 18-year-old slammed back to back fifties in the second and fourth ODIs. "Taniya Bhatia has been very reliable behind the stumps and Richa Ghosh is hot on her heels, meaning we have two wicketkeepers we can trust."

The veteran batter added that the India team is very "fortunate" to be heading into the marquee event having played top sides like holders England, Australia and hosts New Zealand recently.

The maych was as good as over by the fifth over when India were reduced to 19 for 4.

Richa and Mithali Raj (30 off 28 balls) added 67 runs but it was in a lost cause as wickets fell at regular interval. Amelia's sister Jess also got two wickets upfront while Francis Mackay and Heley Jensen shared the spoils with two and three wickets

respectively.

The only time India had something to cheer about was when Richa clobbered the White Ferns bowlers for four huge sixes and four boundaries while Mithali played the second fiddle.

Once Richa was gone, the stomach for fight wasn't evident in others as six wickets fell for 32 runs.

Ireland, UAE qualify for T20 World Cup

AP ■ MUSCAT

Ireland booked their spot at this year's T20 World Cup with a comfortable 56-run victory over hosts Oman in qualifying on Tuesday, as the United Arab Emirates also secured a ticket to Australia.

The Irish will be making their seventh straight appearance in the showpiece, having only missed the inaugural edition in 2007.

Andy Balbirnie's side made a shaky start to the Global Qualifier A event, losing their first game last week to the UAE, but bounced back with successive wins to reach the semi-finals.

With the two finalists to qualify, Tuesday's last-four game was a winner-takes-all affair, and Ireland made a strong start, posting a challenging total of 165-7 after Oman won the toss and opted to field first.

Oman, who had qualified for the last two T20



World Cups, never got going with the bat and were bowled out for 105, as Irish spinners Simi Singh (3-20) and McBrine (2-24) took five wickets between them.

It was a similarly one-sided game in the other semi-final as the UAE beat previously unbeaten Nepal by 68 runs to qualify for the main tournament for only

the second time.

Wicket-keeper Vriitya Aravind, who smashed 97 not out against Ireland and an unbeaten 84 against Bahrain, hit a quickfire 46 and Muhammad Waseem made 70 as the UAE posted 175-7.

Nepal slumped to 14-3 in reply and never recovered, being dismissed for

107 in 18.4 overs.

Ireland and the UAE will join the 12 sides who reached the 2021 T20 World Cup 'Super 12' stage in the main tournament Down Under, which gets underway on October 16.

The final two spots will be decided at the Global Qualifier B event in Zimbabwe in July.

Praggnanandhaa follows up win over Carlsen

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Continuing his good run, India's teen prodigy R Praggnanandhaa registered wins against fellow Grandmasters Andrey Esipenko and Alexandra Kosteniuk in rounds 10 and 12 of the Airthings Masters, an online rapid chess tournament.

A day after a stunning victory over world No.1 Magnus Carlsen, the 16-year old scored two wins and drew against Nodirbek Abdusattorov early on Tuesday.

He, however, lost to Russian GM Ian Nepomniachtchi in the 11th round.

Despite the twin victories and a draw, Praggnanandhaa is in 12th place with 15 points. He beat the highly rated Russian Esipenko in 42 moves after having started the day with a draw against Abdusattorov.

After going down to Nepomniachtchi, he rallied to beat former women's world champion Kosteniuk in a 63-move encounter.

Praggnanandhaa will be up against Vincent Keymer of Germany, USA's Hans Moke Niemann and Russian Vladislav Artemiev respectively in round 13, 14 and 15 later on Tuesday night. Nepomniachtchi, who lost the world championship match a few months ago to Carlsen, is on top of the standings with 27 points.

Aussie stars Warner, Hazlewood, Cummins to miss start of IPL

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia's star players, including David Warner, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins, will miss the start of the IPL despite skipping the limited overs series against Pakistan, which is set to coincide with the lucrative T20 league.

Though the BCCI hasn't officially announced the dates of IPL-15, the league is expected to begin in the last week of March.

Warner, Hazlewood and Cummins are part of the Test squad for the series in Pakistan, starting March 4-25, but will be skipping the limited overs assignment, beginning March 29.

However, they won't be able to link up with their IPL teams before April 5 as Australia's selection committee chief George Bailey made it clear on Tuesday that centrally contracted players who are not part of the limited-overs matches against Pakistan will not be available for the league until the bilateral series ends.



Hence, the trio will return home following the Tests in Pakistan and prior to starting their IPL stints in India.

The likes of all-rounders Mitchell Marsh and Marcus Stoinis, pacers Jason Behrendorff, Sean Abbott and Nathan Ellis will also miss the start of the league as they are part of the Australian squad for the three ODIs and one T20I against Pakistan.

"I fully respect the IPL as a tournament. I think they're at the forefront of the T20 game," Bailey was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au.

"I think it's been a really important tournament for the skill development of some of our players, so it's important not to underestimate that going forward," he said.

Bailey added that "the protocols that would dictate no centrally contracted Australia player was available to join an IPL team until April 6 were being finalised by CA's Executive General Manager High Performance and National Teams, Ben Oliver."

The likes of Daniel Sams, Riley Meredith, Nathan Coulter-Nile and Tim David, who are not bound by CA contracts, will be free to join the IPL from the start.

While Warner was bought by the Ricky Ponting-coached Delhi Capitals, Hazlewood will join the Royal Challengers Bangalore, while Cummins will return to Kolkata Knight Riders.

Patna Pirates captain confident of winning PKL this year

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

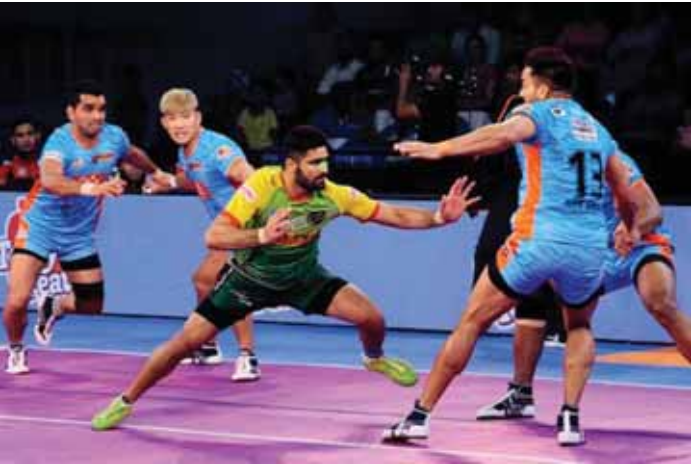
The eighth season of the VIVO Pro Kabaddi League is approaching its end, with the final scheduled to take place on February 25 at the Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel and Convention Centre in Bengaluru.

This year's Pro Kabaddi League began on December 22 of last year, and after 134 games, four teams-Patna Pirates, Dabang Delhi, UP Yoddha, and Bengaluru Bulls-have made it to the final four.

Three-time champion Patna Pirates finished at the top of the league table with 16 wins and accumulated a total of 86 points, and their captain, Prashanth Kumar Rai, is confident that his side will go on to win the trophy on Friday after a superb show in the league round matches.

Speaking during the press conference with the captains of the qualified teams for the play-offs, Prashanth said: "The first thing I want to say is that we're surely going to play in the final on the 25th."

"If you look at our team, we fin-



ished as the table toppers in the league stage. We are consistent with our performance. Both the departments are doing well for us, be it defence or offence (raiders). And with the help of guidance from our coach, we are playing as a unit. We have done well so far, but we are still two steps short of achieving our goal, and we'll do our best to achieve that," Prashanth said.

"We have three stars (for three championship wins) on our jersey and we are ready to add one more to it this time," the player added.

While UP Yoddha captain Nitesh Kumar, who became the first player to complete a century of tackle points in a single season during Season 6, is also bullish about his team's chances of doing well at the business end of the tournament.

The UP team added star raider Pardeep Narwal to the side during the auctions, and despite struggling initially during the tournament because of an injury issue, Pardeep is back to his best and Nitesh believes that Pardeep's return to form is a big positive for this side.

"At the start, when Pardeep Narwal was not able to do well because of the injury he had, others like Surrender Gill and Shrikant Jadhav stepped up and supported him. They both won many crucial matches for us in the league stage. And now when we are in the play-offs, Pardeep has also kicked in. He has done remarkably well in the last two or three games, which is a good sign for us. And since he's one of the best raiders in the world, his form will be a big boost for our team going ahead and will give us much needed confidence," Nitesh said.

UP Yoddha will face last season's runner-up, Dabang Delhi, in the second semifinal on Wednesday, while Patna Pirates will take on season 6 champions, Bengaluru Bulls, in the first semifinal on the same day.



Djokovic wins his first match of 2022 in Dubai

AP ■ DUBAI

Novak Djokovic won his first match of the year when he beat Lorenzo Musetti 6-3, 6-3 to open the Dubai Championships here.

Djokovic couldn't defend his Australian Open title last month because he was deported from the country for being

unvaccinated.

The United Arab Emirates allowed him entry, and Djokovic cashed in at a tournament he's won five times.

Musetti took two sets off Djokovic at the French Open last year but, on a breezy Dubai evening, the Italian wild card couldn't convert bags of break chances while trailing 3-1 in the first set and 4-2 in the second on Monday.

"I have to be satisfied with my tennis, especially after not playing for two and a half, three months," Djokovic said on court.

"Of course, there were moments when I played great, there were moments when I made a couple of unforced errors in a row uncharacteristically. But it's normal to expect that (in my) first match after a while."

He next faces Karen Khachanov or Alex de Minaur.

Andy Murray won his first match in Dubai since his title run in 2017. He beat Australian qualifier Christopher O'Connell 6-7 (4), 6-3, 7-5 after nearly three hours.

Napoli fretting on injuries ahead of Barca showdown

AP ■ NAPLES

Luciano Spalletti is hoping to have a fit first-choice team ready to face Barcelona as Napoli turn their attentions to their decisive Europa League clash in Naples after escaping Cagliari with an undeserved 1-1 draw on Monday.

Victor Osimhen saved a point for Napoli in Sardinia with an 87th-minute equaliser but did not start the game as Spalletti tried to save the players he could for the showdown with Barca at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona.

Captain Lorenzo Insigne and key midfielders Stanislav Lobotka and Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa were among

victor osimhen saved a point for napoli in sardinia with an 87th-minute spalletti tried to save the players he could for the showdown with barca



those unavailable on Monday, and Spalletti also started with Fabian Ruiz and Adam Ounas on the bench with an eye on Thursday's clash.

"We're hoping to play them with players who are fit and in a position to play," said Spalletti.

"We hope to have them all available. This is the kind of game that you dreamed about as a child... I've waited a lifetime to play them."

Napoli emerged with a lot of credit from last week's 1-1 draw at the Camp Nou which leaves the tie on a knife-edge.

They played with verve and confidence for the first hour, deservedly going ahead through Piotr Zielinski

before succumbing to tiredness and Barcelona's trademark possession football.

Ferran Torres levelled from the penalty spot but missed a number of chances which could have easily pushed the tie in the Catalans' favour.

Barca come into the match in high spirits after running out 4-1 winners at Valencia and moving into La Liga's top four thanks to Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's hat-trick.

Xavi's team are unbeaten in five and with the Gabon striker in their ranks after he quit Arsenal they have a serious goal threat who could push Barca back into the Champions League.