

OPINION 6
AMERICA: ITS BASE
IDEA OF ALLIANCES**WORLD 8**
RUSSIA SLOW TO WIN UKRAINE'S
AIRSPACE, LIMITING WAR GAINS**AVENUES 10**
UPI MOMENT
FOR EDUCATION

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY MARCH 2, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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First Indian casualty in Ukraine is student

21-year-old from
Karnataka killed in
shelling on store

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia claimed the first Indian life on Tuesday in Kharkiv region of Ukraine. The victim, 21-year-old Naveen Shekharappa, a native of Karnataka, was a fourth year medical student there and was reportedly killed in shelling while he was out to buy grocery.

Reports indicated Naveen was standing in a queue outside a grocery store in the central area of the city when he was hit.

Pooja Praharaj, a student coordinator in Kharkiv, told a private television channel, "He lived near the Governor's House and had been standing in the queue for food. Suddenly there was an air strike that blew up the Governor's House and he was killed."

A Ukrainian woman picked up his phone, said the student coordinator. "Speaking from his phone, she said the owner of this phone is being taken to the morgue," she shared.

Kharkiv is located in the eastern part of Ukraine and has



Naveen Shekharappa, a final year medical student from Karnataka's Haveri, died when Russian soldiers blew up a government building in Kharkiv, Ukraine on Tuesday

PTI

borne the brunt of Russian assault. Kharkiv is the second largest city of Ukraine. Most Indians living in this city are finding it difficult to travel to the western side of the country due to heavy fighting besides extreme cold weather conditions.

Realising the gravity of the situation, India urged both Russia and Ukraine to ensure the safety of its citizen and provide safe passage for them. Prime Minister Narendra Modi talked to the father of the deceased and expressed his condolences.

Modi also met President Ram Nath Kovind and briefed

him on several issues, including India's response to the Ukraine-Russia war.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla later called in envoys of Russia and Ukraine to express the concerns of India about safety and security of its citizens. He reiterated India's demand for urgent safe passage for Indian nationals who are still in Kharkiv and cities in other conflict zones.

In the latest advisory on Tuesday, the Indian Embassy in Kyiv urged all the citizens to immediately leave the Ukrainian capital by any means available.

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60% Indians left Ukraine; Govt steps up evacuation process

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stepping up the pace of evacuation of Indian citizens, mostly students, from Ukraine, India will over the next 3 days operate 26 flights to bring out Indian citizens. Besides Romania's Bucharest and Hungary's Budapest, airports in Poland and Slovak Republic will also be used.

Giving this information, Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla said, "We had an esti-

mated 20,000 Indian students in Ukraine at the time that we issued our first advisory. From that number approximately 12,000 have since left Ukraine, which is 60 per cent of the total number of our citizens in Ukraine.

"The remaining 40 per cent, roughly half remain in conflict zone in Kharkiv, Sumy area and the other half have either reached the western borders of Ukraine or are heading towards the western part of

Ukraine and they are generally out of conflict areas.

"All of our nationals have left Kyiv. The information with us is that we have no more nationals left in Kyiv, nobody has contacted us from Kyiv since. All our inquiries reveal that each and every one of our nationals has come out of Kyiv."

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked the Indian Air Force (IAF) to be ready to help in 'Operation Ganga'.

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India at UNGA stresses 'path of diplomacy' to end tension

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the situation remains agrim in Ukraine due to the Russian military offensive, India on Tuesday reiterated returning to the "path of diplomacy" to defuse tension. Stressing this point at the United Nations, New Delhi urged immediate cessation of hostilities.

A rare emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is on to discuss the ongoing war in Ukraine. Representatives of more than 190 countries are slated to put their viewpoint and later vote. This is for the first time since 1982 that the UN Security Council has called an emergency special session.

While a UNSC resolution is legally binding, General Assembly resolutions are not. A vote in the 193-member UN body is symbolic of world opinion.

India had abstained along with China and the UAE from voting on a resolution condemning Russia on Friday last week. As a permanent member of the UNSC, Russia had vetoed the resolution and it could not be adopted.

On Monday, India again abstained from a procedural vote to call an emergency session of the UNGA.

Continued on Page 2

Russia marches on, reaches Kyiv

AP ■ KYIV

Russian forces bombarded the central square in Ukraine's second-largest city and other civilian sites on Tuesday in what the country's president condemned as a blatant campaign of terror by Moscow.

"Nobody will forgive. Nobody will forget," vowed President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In Kyiv, the TV tower in the capital was hit killing 5 people, according to Ukraine's parliament, which posted a photo of clouds of smoke around it.

Local media reported that there were several explosions and that Ukrainian TV channels stopped broadcasting shortly thereafter.

At the same time, a 40-mile (64-kilometre) convoy of hundreds of Russian tanks and other vehicles advanced on Kyiv in what the West feared was a bid to topple Ukraine's government and install a Kremlin-friendly regime.

And Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces pressed their attack on other towns and cities across the country, including at or near the strategic ports of Odesa and Mariupol in the south.

Day 6 of the biggest ground war in Europe since World War II found Russia increasingly isolated, beset by tough sanctions that have thrown its economy into turmoil and left the country practically friendless,

apart from a few countries like China, Belarus and North Korea.

Overall death tolls from the fighting remained unclear, but a senior Western intelligence official, who had been briefed by multiple intelligence agencies, estimated Tuesday that more than 5,000 Russian soldiers had been captured or killed so far.

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-biggest city, with a population of about 1.5 million, at least six people were killed when the region's Soviet-era administrative building was hit. Explosions tore through residential areas, and a maternity ward was moved to an underground shelter.

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Prove you are with us: Zelenskyy to EU

Kyiv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday called on the EU to "prove" it is with Ukraine as it resists Russia's invasion during his address to the European Parliament.

"We are fighting also to be equal members of Europe... I believe that today we are showing everybody that is what we are... Without you, Ukraine is going to be alone. We have proven our strength. We have proven that, at a minimum, we

are exactly the same as you are. So do prove you are with us, do prove that you will not let us go," Zelenskyy said.

He asserted: "We are fighting for our land and our freedom despite the fact that all our cities are now blocked. Nobody is going to break us, we are strong, we are Ukrainians."

On Monday, he said Kyiv was not prepared to make concessions "when one side is hitting another with rocket artillery".

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Make India ‘viswaguru’ again, says Venkaiah

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday said the National Education Policy-2020 was a step to make India a 'viswaguru' (universal teacher) in the education sector.

NEP, he said, sought to promote value-based education rooted in India culture and called upon every teacher and school administrator to implement its provisions in true letter and spirit.

The Vice-President presented awards, instituted by the Ramineni Foundation, at a function here on Tuesday to students who performed exemplarily in various schools.

"India was once a land of world-class universities like Nalanda, Takshasila,

Vikramasila and Pushpagiri. Students from across the globe used to come here for education. India should regain such eminence again," he said.

Venkaiah Naidu asked the teachers to make learning a more interactive, immersive and enjoyable experience for students and stressed on the guru-sishya tradition to make education meaningful and holistic.

"Teachers should inspire confidence in students and make them ready to face any adversity and walk the right path in any given situation," he noted.

He said there was no dearth of talent among youngsters but identifying and honing it through required skills was the key.

Venkaiah Naidu also reit-

erated the importance of education in one's mother tongue, shedding the "colonial mindset" and returning to Indian roots.

On the occasion, he also presented 'Guru Sanmaanam' awards to Mandal Education Officers of Guntur district in appreciation of their services during the Covid-19 pandemic. He lauded the efforts of teachers throughout the country, especially in government schools, for ensuring continuity of education during the pandemic through innovative means.

Andhra Pradesh Education Minister A Suresh, Ramineni Foundation Chairman R Dharmapracharak, MP Mopidevi Venkata Ramana, state BJP president Somu Veeraju and others attended the event.

EC orders re-polling in Handia Assembly Constituency in UP's Prayagraj

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday ordered re-polling at the Manikpur primary school polling station of Handia Assembly constituency in Prayagraj district of Uttar Pradesh. The re-polling will take place from 7 am to 6 pm on Thursday (March 3), Chief Electoral Officer of the state Ajay Kumar Shukla said in a statement.

The commission has ordered re-polling at polling station number 311 — Manikpur Handiya primary school — where polling was held on Sunday, the statement said.

The decision was taken after certain important documents went missing from the polling station after the conclusion of polling, it added.

EDMC seeks funds from Centre for development work

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The cash-strapped East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) has sought funds worth Rs 259 crore from the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to carry out development-related work, the civic body said on Tuesday.

The move comes ahead of the civic polls in Delhi due in April.

The ministry provides funds to local bodies to strengthen infrastructure and implement new development plans, it said.

The EDMC has sought funds worth Rs 259 crore from the ministry, the civic body said in a statement.

Schemes for which the corporation has sought the funds

include repair of roads for dust pollution mitigation, paving of its rough parts with interlocking tiles, installation of efficient street lights at dark spots, building new classrooms and sports facilities in schools, and for procurement of equipment for maintenance of parks, it said.

Apart from these, a proposal for a scheme worth Rs 80 crore has already been sent to the ministry for augmentation of health facilities by constructing a new building at the Swami Dayanand Hospital, the statement said.

Chief Engineer Dilip Ramanani said as soon as the funds are made available, work on these schemes will be started which will benefit residents.

All Indians have left Ukraine capital Kyiv: Foreign Secretary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

All Indian nationals have left Ukrainian capital Kyiv, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said on Tuesday.

At a media briefing, Shringla said he has conveyed to envoys of Russia and Ukraine India's demand for "urgent safe passage" for all Indian nationals stuck in Kharkiv and other conflict zones.

He said at a high-level meeting on the Ukraine crisis, PM Narendra Modi expressed deep anguish over the loss of life of an Indian citizen in Kharkiv.

"We remain very concerned over the situation in Kharkiv, Sumy and other conflict zones," Shringla said.

"Over the next three days, 26 flights have been scheduled to bring back Indian citizens," he said.

Shringla said a C-17 IAF aircraft is expected to fly out at 4 AM on Wednesday to Romania to repatriate our citizens.

India has been operating flights to bring back Indians from Romania and Hungary after they crossed over to these countries.

Shringla also said that Prime Minister Modi received a call from President of France Emmanuel Macron. Modi also spoke to the President of Poland.

Apart from Bucharest and Budapest, airports in Poland and the Slovak Republic will also be used to operate evacuation flights, he said.

India at UNGA stresses path...

From page 1

New Delhi also reiterated that diplomacy and dialogue was the way forward to defuse the situation.

The UN Security Council comprising 15 members met to vote on the emergency special session of the 193-member General Assembly on Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The vote for the UNGA session was procedural and therefore none of the five permanent members of the Security Council, including China, France, Russia, the UK and the US could exercise their vetoes.

Highlighting his country's stand in the UNGA session on Tuesday, Permanent Representative of India to UN T S Tirumurti said it was deeply concerned over the deteriorating situation in Ukraine and reiterated its call for immediate cessation of violence and end to hostilities, saying all differences can only be bridged through honest, sincere and sustained dialogue.

Tirumurti told a rare emergency special session of the UN General Assembly that New Delhi is doing whatever it can to undertake immediate and urgent evacuation efforts of Indian nationals still stranded in Ukraine.

"India is deeply concerned

that the situation in Ukraine continues to deteriorate. We reiterate our call for immediate cessation of violence and end to hostilities," Tirumurti said. "My Government firmly believes that there is no other choice but to return to the path of diplomacy," he said.

Noting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has advocated this strongly in his recent conversations with the leadership of the Russian Federation and Ukraine, Tirumurti said, "We reiterate our firm conviction that all differences can only be bridged through honest, sincere and sustained dialogue." He said there is an urgent and pressing humanitarian situation developing in Ukraine.

"India is doing whatever it can to undertake immediate and urgent evacuation efforts of Indian nationals who are still stranded in Ukraine. The safety and security of Indian nationals, including a large number of students, remains our top priority," he said.

He noted that the complex and uncertain situation at the border crossings is 'adversely impacting' the uninterrupted and predictable movement of people.

"This important humanitarian necessity must be immediately addressed," he said.

MP reports 285 Covid-19 cases, two deaths

PTI ■ BHOPAL

The Covid-19 case tally in Madhya Pradesh rose to 10,39,192 on Tuesday after 285 new cases were reported, a health department official said.

The death toll went up to 10,729 with two deaths recorded since previous evening. The positivity rate stands at 0.5 percent.

The recovery count stood at 10,25,342 after 611 people recovered during the

day.

The state now has 3,121 active patients. Bhopal and Indore, the two worst-affected cities, registered 64 and 19 cases, respectively, during the past 24 hours. With 53,806 samples examined during the day, the number of tests conducted so far went up to 2,79,45,895. A government release said 11,37,28,205 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered so far in the state, including 5,758 on Tuesday.

On Mahashivratri, Ujjain sets record by lighting over 11.7 lakh oil lamps

PTI ■ BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh Government on Tuesday set a new Guinness world record of 'largest display of oil lamps' by lighting more than 11.71 lakh lamps in Ujjain as part of the Mahashivratri celebrations.

The city thus broke the record set in Ayodhya last year, officials said. Ujjain is home to Mahakaleshwar, one of the 12 jyotirlingas associated with Shiva. The state government's

culture department hosted a grand event called 'Shiv Jyoti Arpanam' in Ujjain, which was executed by the city administration, officials said. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was also present on the occasion. "You have not only created a record by lighting 11,71,878 lamps, but also written the history of this holy occasion in golden letters," Chouhan said in a tweet accompanied by a picture while accepting the certificate from Guinness World Records officials.

Cong faces backlash in Bihar over its Telangana chief's remarks

PTI ■ PATNA

Telangana Congress president Revanth Reddy's diatribe about Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's "Bihari DNA" on Tuesday left the party re-faced in the Hindi heartland state, where it is battling political marginalisation.

Reddy had attacked the TRS leader for appointing bureaucrats hailing from Bihar to top posts and taking counsel from political strategist Prashant Kishor and claimed that the Telangana CM's ancestors had migrated to the southern province from the eastern

state. The ruling NDA in Bihar was quick to point out that Reddy's remarks came close on the heels of "UP Bihar ke bhaiye" jibe of Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, another Congress leader.

"The Congress has been, for long, a spent force in Bihar. The behaviour of its leaders elsewhere suggests the worst is yet to come for the party in the state," said Sanjay Kumar Jha, senior JD(U) leader and a close aide of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Jha, who holds key portfolios in the state cabinet, also

said it was "Bihari DNA of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan" that set the stage for the Congress' decline.

The RJD of Lalu Prasad, arch rival of the chief minister, was also sharply critical of Reddy. RJD spokesperson Mrityunjay Tiwari, whose party of late seems to have turned its back on its old alliance with the Congress, demanded an apology from Reddy.

BJP OBC Morcha national general secretary Nikhil Anand, whose party sees the Congress as its principal rival nationally, also came out with scathing criticism of Reddy.

Candle march held in Delhi to pay tribute to Indian student killed in Ukraine

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Workers of the Congress' youth wing held a candle march here to pay tribute to the 21-year-old Indian student who was killed in shelling in Ukraine's Kharkiv city.

The march was carried out from the Indian Youth Congress (IYC) office to Jantar Mantar. Naveen Shekarappa Gyanagoudar died on Tuesday in shelling in Kharkiv which is witnessing intense fighting in

face of a renewed Russian assault. Extending "deepest condolences" to the family members of Gyanagoudar, IYC National President, Srinivas BV said, "Between life and death, instead of helping thousands of Indians, the (Narendra) Modi government is giving only advice of self-reliance.

"For the past five days, the Modi government is simply driving thousands of children in Ukraine from here to there."

Russia marches ...

From page 1

Kharkiv's Freedom Square — Ukraine's largest plaza, and the nucleus of public life in the city — was struck with what was believed to be a missile, in an attack seen by many Ukrainians as brazen evidence that the Russian invasion wasn't just about hitting military targets but also about breaking their spirits.

The bombardment blew out windows and walls of buildings that ring the massive central square, which was piled high with debris and dust.

Inside one building, chunks of plaster were scattered, and doors, ripped from their hinges, lay across hallways.

"People are under the ruins. We have pulled out bodies," said Yevhen Vasylenko, a representative of the Emergency Situations Ministry

in Kharkiv region. In addition to the six killed, 20 were wounded in the strike, he said.

Zelenskyy pronounced the attack on the main square "frank, undisguised terror," blaming a Russian missile and calling it a war crime.

He said 16 children had been killed around Ukraine on Monday, and he mocked Russia's claim that it is going after only military targets. "Where are the children, what kind of military factories do they work at? What tanks are they going at, launching cruise missiles?" Zelenskyy said.

Human Rights Watch said it documented a cluster bomb attack outside a hospital in Ukraine's east in recent days. Local residents also reported the use of the weapons in Kharkiv and the village of Kiyanka, though there was no independent confirmation.

If the allegations are confirmed, that would represent a new level of brutality in the war and could lead to even further isolation of Russia.

The Kremlin denied using such weapons. Many military experts worry that the Kharkiv attacks mean Russia could be shifting tactics in Ukraine. Moscow's strategy in Chechnya and Syria was to use massive artillery and air bombardments to pulverize cities and crush fighters' resolve.

The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor said he plans to open an investigation into possible war crimes in the invasion. Unbowed by Western condemnation, Russian officials upped their threats of escalation, days after raising the specter of nuclear war.

A top Kremlin official warned that the West's "economic war" against Russia could turn into a "real one."

60% Indians left Ukraine....

From page 1

So far, commercial airlines have been bringing out stranded citizens from there and nine flights have already returned with a total 2012 Indian nationals since February 26.

On Tuesday, 616 Indians came to India by three evacuation flights from Romania's capital Bucharest and Hungary's capital Budapest. Seven more civil flights are scheduled for Wednesday.

"In order to scale up the ongoing evacuation efforts under Operation Ganga, the PM has called for the Indian Air Force to join the evacuation efforts. Leveraging the capacities of our Air Force will ensure that more people can be evacuated in a shorter timeframe," Government sources said.

They said the IAF involvement would also help deliver humanitarian aid efficiently. The IAF is likely to deploy several C-17 heavy lift transport aircraft as part of Operation Ganga from Tuesday.

India has 10 C-17 Globemaster planes and each plane can accommodate more than 400 people and it can fly non-stop up to 4500 km.

Sources said the planes are likely to focus their efforts on bringing out stranded students from Kyiv, Kharkiv and Odessa. As the Ukrainian airspace is closed, the C-17s like the Indian commercial airliners will evacuate Indians from neighbouring countries of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova.

According to officials, the Air India Express flight IX-1202 carrying 182 Indians from Bucharest via Kuwait landed in Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) on Tuesday morning and were welcomed by Union Minister Narayan Rane.

Of the 182 passengers, 25 were from Maharashtra, 38 from Haryana, 34 from Uttar Pradesh, 10 from Gujarat and the remaining 75 from other parts of the country.

The aircraft had left from Mumbai for Bucharest on Monday to bring back its stranded nationals from Ukraine amid a worsening crisis in the country. This is the second evacuation flight operated to Mumbai from Bucharest and seventh flights under the "Operation Ganga" mission.

Air India Express is the international budget arm of Air India, which is now owned by the Tata Group.

IndiGo operated the Budapest-Delhi flight via Istanbul with 216 Indian nationals. India's largest carrier also operated Bucharest-Delhi service via Istanbul with 218 Indian nationals.

IndiGo sent four planes, two to Budapest and two to Rzeszow in Poland, to evacuate Indians. SpiceJet also sent a plane to Kosice in Slovakia for evacuation on Tuesday. Slovakia shares land border with Ukraine on the western side.

Minister of Law and Justice Kiren Rijiju was in SpiceJet's special flight to Slovakia as a

Special Envoy of the Indian Government to oversee the evacuation. The Kosice flight departed from Delhi at 4 pm on Tuesday and the return flight will operate via Kutaisi, Georgia. The Kosice flight is the second evacuation flight being operated by SpiceJet under 'Operation Ganga' after a special flight left on Monday night for Hungarian capital Budapest from Delhi.

Union Minister General (Retd) VK Singh met 80 Indian students staying at Gurudwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha at Warsaw in Poland on Tuesday. Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia left for Romania and Moldova while Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri for Hungary. Given the seriousness of the situation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on Monday directed four of his Cabinet Ministers to be positioned in the four neighbouring countries to oversee the evacuation efforts.

The Indian Embassy in Romania assured Indian nationals that no visa is required to exit Romania by special flights. "We have received queries from Indian students evacuated from Ukraine and presently in shelters in Romania that they may not be able to leave after some days due to visa requirements. We want to assure that no visa is required to exit Romania by special flights," the Embassy statement reads.

The statement comes after students raised queries that their evacuation may take some days due to visa requirements.

Haryana Govt contacted 700 out of 1,786 students from State studying in Ukraine: Khattar

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The Haryana Government has contacted 700 out of 1,786 students from the state studying in Ukraine, while 90 students have been brought back from the war-hit country, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said on Tuesday.

"The students of Haryana stuck in Ukraine will be brought back safely. For this, the Ministry of External Affairs and the government of Haryana are making dedicated efforts," he said.

The chief minister said the state government has so far contacted 700 students through

e-mail, WhatsApp and other media.

As many as 90 students have returned safely to the state, a release quoted him as saying in Karnal.

Khattar said in view of the crisis in Ukraine, the state government had already set up a control room.

A help desk has been set up at Delhi airport to help the students. Along with this, some students of Haryana have also reached Mumbai by plane from Ukraine and to help them, a control room is also being set up there, he said.

All possible help will be given to bring these students

safely back to Delhi and Haryana, he added.

The help desk at Mumbai airport will start functioning from Wednesday. It will make arrangements for the students from Haryana who arrive at Mumbai to reach Delhi, he said.

He said deputy commissioners are contacting the families of those still stuck in Ukraine.

Notably, the Haryana chief minister had on Monday directed deputy commissioners to constitute teams of officers to contact the families of 1,786 students of the state in Ukraine.

First Indian casualty....

From page 1

The caution from the Embassy came in the backdrop of the Russian forces advancing towards the national capital of Ukraine and satellite images showing a 64-km long convoys racing towards Kyiv.

"All Indian nationals including students are advised to leave Kyiv urgently today. Preferably by available trains or through any other means available," the Indian Embassy in Ukraine tweeted.

According to an estimate, there are nearly 15,000 Indians including students still in Ukraine.

As regards the first Indian casualty, Naveen, the Ministry of External Affairs said, "With profound sorrow we confirm that an Indian student lost his life in shelling in Kharkiv this morning. The Ministry is in

touch with his family. We convey our deepest condolences to the family."

Giving this tweet message, Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi also said Shringla "was calling in the Ambassadors of Russia and Ukraine to reiterate India's demand for urgent safe passage for Indian nationals who are still in Kharkiv and cities in other conflict zones". It is imperative that Russia and Ukraine respond to the need for safe passage urgently, said sources.

French President Emmanuel Macron and President of the European Council, Charles Michel also spoke with PM Narendra Modi.

The Indian embassy on Monday had asked students to go to the railway station in Kyiv, where special evacuation trains

have been arranged by Ukraine to take people to the western region. Many students complained that they were not allowed to board the trains or they were mistreated by officials. Ukraine condoled the death of an Indian student during intense shelling in the city of Kharkiv and renewed appeals to world leaders to use their resources against President Vladimir Putin to force him to stop the Russian aggression.

At the same time, Ukrainian envoy Igor Polikha thanked India for extending humanitarian aid to his country, adding that the first plane carrying the relief materials is expected to land in Poland tonight. The ambassador also sought to compare the Russian invasion of Ukraine with the "massacre by Mughals against Rajputs".

Cases filed during anti-farm law stir, R-Day violence

AAP Govt nod to 17 cases' withdrawal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has given its approval to withdraw 17 cases, including one involving the violence on Republic Day last year, registered by the Delhi Police during the anti-farm law protests. A senior Delhi Government official said that the matter has been escalated and the requisite files have been sent to Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal. The Delhi Police had identified 17 out of 54 cases registered during November 2020 to December 2021 for withdrawal. One of the cases is related to about 200-300 protesters and 25 tractors reaching the Red Fort and entering its premises through the Lahori Gate, resulting in damage to ticket

counters, a doorframe metal detector and baggage scanners at the monument.

Another case was registered at the Jyoti Nagar police station in Northeast Delhi against protesting farmers entering Delhi from the Loni border, riding 150-175 tractors and allegedly obstructing policemen from discharging their duty and assaulting them.

Most of the cases were registered against the protesters for the violation of Covid-19 protocols and guidelines during the over one-year-long anti-farm law stir at Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur borders of Delhi. <

The protesters, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, laid siege at Delhi borders in November 2020 demanding that the Centre withdraw the three controversial farm laws

enacted by the Parliament. The protest ended in December 2021 with the Narendra Modi Government withdrawing the farm laws.

The Centre had also agreed to the demand of the agitating farmers' umbrella organisation Samyukta Kisan Morcha for the withdrawal of the cases registered against the protesters, between November 2020 to December 2021. In a letter, the Centre on December 9, 2021, had stated that it was agreed to immediately withdraw cases registered against the protesters and their supporters during the farmers' stir.

The protesting farmers in convoys of tractors had entered the national Capital on Republic Day last year leading to violence and vandalism on the roads as well as the Red Fort situated in walled city.

Parental consent not needed for 10th, 12th offline classes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the ease in Covid-19 cases across the national Capital, the Directorate of Education (DoE) said that the students of classes 10 and 12 will no longer need to bring consent letters signed by their parents to attend offline classes in schools.

For the first time after the Covid pandemic outbreak, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has given permission to end the online mode of operations to the schools in Delhi. From April 1, the schools will completely open in the offline mode for all the classes. Earlier on Saturday, the DDMA had issued an order that the blended and hybrid mode (online and offline) of learning and consent from parents will only be followed for student up to class nine and those in class 11 till March 31.

According to the letter issued by DoE to the schools, all schools may conduct offline classes for students of grade 10

and 12 and consent of parents for attending offline classes is not mandatory. "Schools may also deploy transportation facilities for the convenience of students and parents with Covid-appropriate behaviour being followed," the letter further stated.

Due to the nationwide lockdown, the schools for all classes in the national Capital were closed in March 2020, to contain the spread of the Coronavirus. While the schools were reopened in phases in hybrid mode only after examining the Coronavirus situation, the students were allowed to attend offline classes only after the consent of their parents.

Meanwhile, the daily Covid caseload has been witnessing declining trend in the national Capital. Delhi on Monday reported considerable decline of nearly 46 per cent in daily Covid cases at 258 fresh infections. The city reported no Covid related death for the first time after December 31.

'Dilli Bazaar' project gets a fillip

Delhi Govt floats 'Expression of Interest-cum-Request for Qualification' from agencies interested in partnering for design, development platform

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Government has floated 'Expression of Interest-cum-Request for Qualification' (EOI-cum-RFQ) for agencies interested in partnering to design, develop, operate and maintain the 'Dilli Bazaar' platform, including the digital portal as well as offline services on Tuesday. 'Dilli Bazaar' is a path-breaking, state-of-the-art e-marketplace being built by the Delhi Government to empower businesses based in Delhi by helping them grow and diversify. The user-friendly and easy-to-operate platform will be designed by deploying the best-in-class technology to enhance the digital presence of local businesses of Delhi, including Delhi traders, sellers, wholesalers, service providers, manufacturing units, etc. A senior Government official said that the first phase

of the project will focus on boarding sellers of products, and service providers will be enabled on the platform in the second phase. The Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC) of Delhi was tasked with assisting the industries department in carrying out a benchmarking exercise and preparing a strategic roadmap for Dilli Bazaar. Jasmine Shah, Vice-Chairperson of DDC Delhi said: "As the Government will help sellers set up their virtual shops with zero setup cost, Delhi's local businesses will be able to Covid-proof themselves and access a global online identity."

Shah said, "DDC has concluded a detailed three month consultation exercise with various market associations of Delhi, existing e-commerce platforms, logistics providers etc as well as national and internal benchmarking to create a unique roadmap for Dilli Bazaar. The platform will aim to provide a unique visual navigation experience to the iconic markets of Delhi, and at the same time allow the smallest of

businesses across Delhi go online with minimal effort."

Every seller on the 'Dilli Bazaar' platform will have its own store-front to enable them to showcase their unique shops and products through detailed product catalogues. The platform also envisions to be among the first and largest e-commerce marketplaces to be compliant with Government of India's Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) initiative, enabling the seller to be easily discoverable and allowing them to conduct their businesses across multiple buyer platforms.

Promoting the motto of 'Go Local', the customers on this platform will be able to search by products, markets, sellers and geographical area to enable their discovery of the distinctive markets of Delhi. The portal announced by Chief Minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal recently, will be Delhi's own e-marketplace where all shop-owners and service providers of Delhi will have a virtual store and will be able to sell their products and services online across the globe.

Kejriwal condoles death of Indian student in Ukraine shelling

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday condoled the death of an Indian student who was reportedly killed in shelling in Ukraine's Kharkiv city on Tuesday morning.

Kejriwal hoped that all the students who were stranded would be brought back to the country soon. "Feel terrible to hear this news. Prayers for his family. Pray for the safety of all other Indians stranded there and hope they will be back home soon. Hope the conflict will soon come to an end," he said in another tweet.

Concerned over the reports of Indians stranded in Ukraine, Kejriwal earlier in the day urged the Central Government to bring back Indians stranded in Ukraine at the earliest and provide them with all help. The Delhi Chief Minister tweeted:



"Amid adverse circumstances in Ukraine, Indian students along with other Indians are facing difficult conditions. Request Indian Government to bring back all Indians from Ukraine as soon as possible by extending them all possible help. The Delhi Government is with the Central Government for all sort of cooperation,"

Kejriwal's remarks came after a news report claimed that Indians stranded in Ukraine are allegedly not getting help from the Indian Embassy in Ukraine. In the tweet, he also attached

the said news report. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed the death of the Indian student in a tweet and said it was in touch with his family. India began evacuation of around 14,000 of its stranded citizens on February 26. In order to scale up the rescue operations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asked the Indian Air Force (IAF) to evacuate Indians stranded in Ukraine due to the Russian military offensive against that country.

The IAF is likely to deploy several C-17 aircraft as part of Operation Ganga from Tuesday, sources said.

Till now, only private Indian carriers were evacuating Indians from Romania and Hungary, countries with land borders with Ukraine on the western side, as the Ukrainian airspace had been shut since February 24.

Two sharpshooters of Kala Jathedi gang held after gunfight

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following an exchange of fire, the Delhi Police on Tuesday nabbed two sharpshooters of the Kala Jathedi gang in the national Capital. With their arrest, police claimed to have foiled a conspiracy to kill gangster Tillu Tajpuria and a Delhi Police Constable.

The accused have been identified as Parvinder (31) and Tony (22), both residents of Haryana. Police said that the duo had planned to execute Tajpuria when he was to be produced in a Delhi court.

On September 24 last year, jailed gangster Jitendra Gogi was shot dead by two men, who were dressed as lawyers, inside a Rohini courtroom here. The police in retaliatory fire had killed the assailants who were from the rival Tillu gang. The police said 22 rounds were fired during the encounter in

north Delhi on Tuesday. According to Brijendra Kumar Yadav, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), outer north, specific inputs was received that Parvinder, an active member of the Kala Jathedi gang, along with his associate would come to Alipur area to join others on Tuesday as they were planning to kill a Delhi Police constable and rival gangster Sunil Maan alias Tajpuria on the directions of Goldi Brar and Jathedi.

"Around 2.15 AM, the police signalled a bike that was coming from GT Karnal road in Alipur area to stop but the occupants tried to escape. Seeing themselves surrounded by the police, both the accused started firing indiscriminately. Two bullets hit Sub-Inspector Rashmi's bullet-proof jacket," said DCP. "In retaliation, the police also opened fire, caught both accused and snatched their weapons. A total 14 round

bullets were fired by the police and eight were fired by accused," said DCP. "During interrogation, it was revealed that both the accused were sharpshooters of Jathedi and Goldy Brar. They came to Delhi on Jathedi and Brar's direction as they had to kill Tajpuria and a Constable. It was also revealed that Parvinder was wanted in a case of murder in Bengaluru," said the DCP.

"Parvinder was also involved in cases of loot of around Rs 24.7 lakh at Lahori Gate in Delhi, Rs 35 lakh in Haryana's Beri Jhajjar and Rs 7 lakh in Jhajjar's Sadar area. He lived with Mithun, an active member of the Jathedi gang. But when Mithun was arrested, Parvinder had fled to Nepal," said the DCP. Two pistols, four live cartridges, eight empty cartridges and a stolen bike have been recovered from them, police said.

Man arrested for killing girlfriend in hotel room

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a 28-year-old man from Uttar Pradesh (UP) for allegedly killing his girlfriend inside a hotel room following an argument in southwest Delhi's Vasant Kunj area. Police said that the deceased and accused were in a relationship for the past four years.

The accused has been identified as Shivam Chauhan, a resident of Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh.

According to Gaurav Sharma, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southwest district, on Sunday around 3 PM, police got information regarding body of a woman in one of rooms of Hotel Lak Residency and man, who came with her, was missing. "The deceased was identi-

fied as a resident of Kishangarh, Vasant Kunj, and she was staying with Chauhan. Police found that Chauhan and the deceased came to hotel on Friday, but accused absconded from there on Sunday at 11 PM," said DCP. "Police conducted raid and apprehended Chauhan near Mitrauli in Uttar Pradesh.

During interrogation, Chauhan confessed his crime and disclosed that he was in relationship with deceased for last four years, but for past few days, she was deceiving him as she was in relationship with one Utkarsh," said DCP.

"On Saturday, when they were in hotel room, Utkarsh was calling her incessantly. When he asked about the continuous calls, she gave excuse that Utkarsh was her sister's boyfriend and that's why he was calling her," said DCP.

NMC extends last date for property tax amnesty

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) has extended the last date for availing amnesty scheme for payment of property tax with 100 per cent waiver of both interest and penalty to March 31. Standing Committee Chairman in NMC, Jogi Ram Jain on Tuesday said that the civic body has extended the last date of Amnesty Scheme from February 28, 2022 to March 31, 2022. He said that in amnesty scheme, 100 per cent waiver of interest and penalty and 15 per cent rebate on principal amount is being given to property tax payers on lump sum payment of outstanding property tax up to March 31, 2022. Jain said that this decision has been taken to facilitate those property tax payers who could not deposit property tax due to

any reason and could not avail benefit of amnesty scheme. On other hand, with the move Corporation would get revenue as well, he said. "The decision has been taken to facilitate those taxpayers who could not deposit property tax due to any reason and could not avail benefit of scheme. On other hand, the corporation would get more revenue," he added.

The corporation had started a three phase amnesty scheme for citizens, according to which if a citizen is unable to deposit outstanding property tax in the first phase due to any reason, then he or she can take advantage of the scheme by depositing the outstanding amount in the second and similarly in the third phase.

Under this scheme, in the first stage, 100 per cent rebate on interest and penalty will be given on deposit of outstanding property tax.



Visitors at the National Zoological Park after it reopened for the public on Tuesday

Ranjani Dimri | The Pioneer

Delhi reports marginal increase in new Covid cases, four deaths

SIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi on Tuesday reported a marginal rise in fresh Covid infections at 344, against 258 reported on the previous day, as well as four more deaths, as per the Health Department bulletin.

The infection rate in the city has risen to 0.80 per cent, while the number of active cases stands at 1,769.

With recovery rate climbing at 98.50 per cent, the death rate stands at 1.40 per cent, and active case rate continues at 0.09 per cent.

With 416 patients recovering in the last 24 hours, the total number of recoveries has gone to 18,32,341. A total of 1,318 Covid patients are being

treated in home isolation at present. The number of Covid containment zones has also declined to 4,581. The fresh infections and deaths has pushed the tally to 18,60,236, and the death toll to 26,126.

Meanwhile, a total of 42,947 new tests -- 34,035 RT-PCR and 8,912 Rapid Antigen - were conducted in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 3,64,22,890.

Out of 49,196 vaccines administered in the last 24 hours, 5,792 were first doses and 40,563 second doses. Meanwhile, 2,841 precaution doses were also administered. The total number of cumulative beneficiaries vaccinated so far stands at 3,13,97,557, according to the health bulletin.

Couple held for duping people of crores of rupees

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a couple from Rajasthan's Jaipur for allegedly duping several people of crores of rupees by promising Railway and Government contracts. Police said that the duo was wanted in at least four criminal cases and have been absconding for the last three years.

The accused has been identified as Abhishek Aggarwal (38) and his wife Meenakshi (34), natives of Supaul district in Bihar. Police said that in the last five years, the duo cheated big businessmen and property dealers of approximately Rs 20 crore.

According to Vikram Singh, the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Dwarka district, the



victims were swayed by their lavish lifestyle and paid advances to the duo with the hope of getting government contracts.

"After getting advances, the couple fled and switched off their mobile phones. Police teams analysed several mobile numbers used by the couple," said the additional DCP. "The couple lived a very lavish lifestyle and

claimed that they could fetch any government contract through their contacts. When people approached them, they demanded crores of rupees. After getting the money they used to flee," said the additional DCP. "During investigation, the police traced the husband-wife duo to Jaipur. They were apprehended and later arrested," the additional DCP added.

Water supply to be affected in parts of Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Water supply would be affected in parts of the national Capital on Wednesday due to some of the maintenance works being carried out by the Delhi Jal Board. The areas where water supply would not be available or available at low pressure are sectors of Rohini, Holambi Phase - II, Badli Village, Budela, D-Block Janakpuri, Sagarpur, Delhi Cantt, RK Puram, Katwaria Sarai, Ber Sarai, Green Park, Safdarjung Enclave, Hauz Khas, Munirka Village and DDA Flats, Kishan Garh, Masjid Moth Village, Part of Mehrauli, IIT, JNU, AIIMS, Safdarjung Hospital and adjoining areas of the command of Deer Park reservoir. The DJB has advised the residents to store sufficient quantity of water to avoid any inconvenience.

Huge cache of arms, ammunition recovered

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Gurugram Police on Tuesday found a large number of arms and ammunition including two live hand grenades in a bathroom of an unoccupied house in Sector-31 of the millennium city. Police said that they are scanning CCTV cameras in the area to identify the culprit.

It took police five hours to successfully defuse two hand grenades, 15 practice grenades (MK 90) and one bicait strip. The police team also recovered 43 used cartridges from the spot.

The house is just metres away from a CNG pump where a triple murder occurred in the early hours of Monday. Police said that the house belongs to Ravinder Aggarwal, a resident of Punjabi Bagh in West Delhi area and soon he will be called for questioning. According to



Subhash Boken, the spokesperson of Gurugram police, a bomb disposal team was called after a tip-off was received by the police on Tuesday morning.

"The operation which started around 9:30 AM lasted for five hours. After receiving specific inputs, police launched a search operation in

the house along with the bomb squad and a dog squad. The suspected area was cordoned off during the search," said Boken. "The house owner is learnt to reside in Delhi who has been traced by the police. It appears that a consignment of arms was hidden by someone who is yet to be identified," said a police official. An official

of the search operation team said to defuse the bombs a seven feet trench was dug up and a few blocks of cement bag was used to stop the further explosion.

A high sound was also heard in the surrounding areas during the disposal of the bombs. "I was too surprised like bombs were recovered in a residential area. It was a serious lapse on part of the security," Harender Singh, a neighbour said, adding that however, they did not notice any suspicious activities nearby the house."

"When I heard the information I immediately reached the spot. It was shocking for us that bombs were recovered in a residential area. I was also a former army man. The bombs were old. It will be ascertained after investigation whether these ammunitions were belongs to the Indian army or not," B S Yadav, RWA president of Sector-31 said.

Ilker Ayci declines Tata’s offer to join as CEO of AI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Turkish Airlines Chairman Ilker Ayci has declined Tata Sons’ offer to be the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director of Air India. Ayci’s appointment was questioned because of his proximity to pro-Pakistan Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as well as alleged links with Al-Qaeda. Ayci had been expected to assume his role at Air India on April 1.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) affiliate Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) had expressed reservations and appealed the government to not give clearance to the appointment of Ayci, “keeping in view national security”.

“Since the announcement, I have been carefully following news in some sections of the Indian media attempting to color my appointment with undesirable colors,” Ayci said in a statement. “As a business leader who has always prioritized professional credo and more importantly, the happiness

and well being of my family above all else, I have come to the conclusion that it would not be a feasible or an honourable decision to accept the position in the shadow of such narrative,” he added. Ayci had resigned as the Chairman of Turkish Airlines on January 27 — the day the government handed over Air India to Tata Sons.

Ayci said he remains grateful to the Tata Group and its chairman N Chadrasekaran for extending to him the honour and the opportunity to lead Air India. “However, at a recent meeting with Mr Chadrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Group, I regretfully informed him and I wish to inform the public, as well, that I will decline the position,” he said. Ayci said he has taken this decision with a heavy heart, and he wishes Air India and the Tata Group every success.

On February 14, Tata Sons announced the appointment of Ayci and the CEO & MD of Air India but this was subject to requisite approvals that included a thorough background check by the Ministry of Home

Affairs every time a foreign national is appointed at an important position in a domestic company.

As per a wiretap authorised by a Turkish court as part of a corruption investigation in Turkey, Ayci allegedly secretly met with an Al-Qaeda financier on August 18, 2013 and encouraged him to bid in tenders for the privatisation of thermal power plants. He asked him to finish the preparations for the project before his presentation to then Prime Minister Erdogan. Besides, he was also considered close to Erdogan, who is known for his pro Pakistan stance.

Between 1994 and 1998 Ayci served as an advisor to Erdogan, when he was Mayor of Istanbul. He went on to serve as Chairman of Turkish Airlines between 2005 and 2012, helping turn around the fortunes of the once-struggling carrier.

Tata Group had on October 8 last year won the bid to acquire debt-laden state-run Air India by offering Rs 18,000 crore for it

Cong leader Adhir accuses TMC of stopping him from performing duties

Urges Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to take up the matter with the authorities concerned

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has accused the ruling TMC in West Bengal of stopping him from performing his duties as a public representative and has urged Speaker Om Birla to take up the matter with the authorities concerned. Chowdhury, who is also the president of West Bengal Congress, has alleged in a letter to Birla that “goons of the ruling TMC” in the presence of local police are creating obstacles for him during municipal elections.

He cited several incidents where Congress nominees including women in the municipal polls in his constituency Behrampur were allegedly “beat-

en up mercilessly” and forced to withdraw their nominations or not come out to campaign. “TMC goons are harassing me and humiliating me publicly and I am being prevented from discharging duties as an MP. I am being obstructed in performing my duties as a public representative,” Chowdhury said.

He alleged that he is being prevented from helping people in distress to create an atmosphere that “I cannot be relied upon by the people”. “Whenever I am moving out to help Congress workers in distress, I am being stopped, gheraoed and surrounded by hooligans of the ruling party who are unleashing a reign of terror in cahoots with the local police,” he alleged.

Chowdhury also alleged that this is being done to weaken the Congress, which is fighting the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal. In the letter to Lok Sabha Speaker, Chowdhury said: “As a local representative, I am supposed to attend to the problems and needs of my constituents. Even if they call me at odd hours, I am duty bound to visit them, listen to

their problems and to help them to the best of my abilities.

“However, the ruling party in West Bengal directly and indirectly creates hurdles in the effective discharge of my duties as a public representative,” the Congress leader alleged adding the “ruling party goons” are threatening candidates of other political parties with violence.

“I am mobbed/gheraoed and heckled by the TMC goons wherever I go for campaigning or to attend to the problems of my constituents. My movement is completely restricted in West Bengal. The ruling party goons are doing all the violence and nuisance and are restricting my movement in collusion with the local authorities.

“As a custodian of the rights and responsibilities of Members of Parliament of Lok Sabha, I shall appeal to you to take up the matter with the authorities concerned so that I can effectively discharge my responsibilities as an MP and political leader,” he said. Voting was held on Sunday in West Bengal for 108 civic bodies and the counting of votes will take place on March 2.

CEL disinvestment put on hold, allegations being examined: Govt to HC



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has informed the Delhi High Court that the disinvestment of the PSU Central Electronics Limit (CEL) has been put on hold and allegations against the selected bidder are under examination.

The controversies started when a little known firm Nandal Finance and Leasing Pvt Limited was selected for buying the CEL. Government was responding to the recent petition against the disinvestment filed by CEL employees union.

There were two bidders for the controversial disinvestment.

Later it was found that the winner Nandal Finance and other firm JPM Industries were related companies. The employees union represented by Advocates Vivek Chib and Satya Sabharwal sought a CBI probe into the dubious disinvestment process.

“This allegation is currently being examined by the Government and as a matter of abundant precaution, the Letter of Intent (LoI) has not been issued in favour of the successful bidder as per the usual procedure and has been put on hold,” said Government to Delhi High Court Bench of Justice Kameswar Rao. The next hearing in the case is scheduled for July 11.

Opp leaders condole death of Indian in Ukraine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition leaders on Tuesday condoled the death of an Indian student, Naveen Shekarappa Gyanagoudar, a native of Chalageri in Karnataka’s Haveri district, in shelling in Ukraine and they called upon the Centre to draw up a strategy for the safe evacuation of all stranded Indians.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi expressed condolences to Gyanagoudar’s family and friends and urged the government to expedite the evacuation of Indians stranded in war-torn Ukraine.

“Received the tragic news of Indian student Naveen losing his life in Ukraine. My heartfelt condolences to his family and friends. I reiterate, Government of India needs a strategic plan for safe evacuation. Every minute is precious,” Rahul Gandhi wrote on Twitter.

CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury urged the



government to further step up efforts to urgently ensure evacuation of all Indians. “Tragic loss of life. Further loss of young lives caught in crossfire must be prevented,” Yechury said.

Shiv Sena leader and Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi termed the news of death of the Indian student as ‘heartbreaking’. “This is tragic and a heartbreaking news. The country grieves with the fam-

ily of Naveen,” Priyanka stated. Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) president Jayant Chaudhary too condoled Naveen’s death and urged the Centre to quickly evacuate other Indians stranded in the war zone.

Max temp likely to remain ‘below normal’ in N India plains during March to May: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday projected that maximum temperatures are likely to remain “below normal” in the northern plains, including Punjab, parts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, during the March to May period. According to IMD, the number of heat waves in the Indo-Gangetic plains is also likely to be lower than normal during the period. “Above normal maximum temperatures are most likely over many areas in western and adjoining central India, northwest India and northernmost parts of northeast India,” it said. However, below normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of Peninsular India, east and northeast India as well as the northern plains, the IMD said.

“The probability of occurrence of heat waves over west-central and parts of northwest India will be higher during summer, while heat waves will be comparatively lesser in the Indo-Gangetic plains,” IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said. “The maximum temperatures are likely to remain above normal in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, major parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat and adjoining areas of southwest Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra,” he said.

“During the upcoming hot weather season (March to May), normal to above normal minimum temperatures are most likely over many parts of northwest India, most parts of northeast India, some parts of central India, east coastal region and some areas along the foothills of the Himalayas,” the IMD said in a statement.

During March, normal to

below normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of Peninsular India and east and northeast India, whereas above normal maximum temperatures are forecast over many parts of western and central India. Minimum temperature expected to be above normal in most parts of northwest and west India.

No heat wave is predicted in March in the northern plains. For the plains, a “heat wave” is declared when the maximum temperature is more than 40 degrees Celsius, and at least 4.5 notches above normal. A “severe” heat wave is declared if departure from normal temperature is



more than 6.5 degrees Celsius, according to the IMD.

The IMD also said India recorded 44 percent more rainfall in the winter season. Heavy rainfall events (15) in the country in February were the lowest in four years, it said, adding that most heavy rainfall events were concentrated in Kerala and Jammu and Kashmir. The country saw 18 events each of heavy rainfall in 2021 and 2020 and 82 in 2019.

Climate change causing mild to severe mental health problems in people: IPCC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A wide range of climatic events and conditions like extreme heat and cold conditions due to global warming will have adverse impact on mental health, leaving people in anxiety, depression, acute traumatic stress and sleep problems ranging from mild to severe which may even require hospitalization, according to the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II’s report.

Titled ‘Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability’, released on Monday, the report notes that the “pathways through which climatic events affect mental health are varied, complex and interconnected with other non-climatic influences that create vulnerability.

“The climatic exposure may be direct, such as experiencing an extreme weather event or prolonged high temperatures, or indirect, such as

mental health consequences of undernutrition or displacement,” said the report.

It has cautioned that not eliminating emissions will cause serious harm to the world, especially South Asia with increased unbearable heat waves, food and water scarcity and sea level rise.

The report also mentioned non-climatic moderating influences which range from an individual’s personality and pre-existing conditions, to social support, to structural inequities.

“Depending on these background and contextual factors, similar climatic events may result in a range of potential mental health outcomes, including anxiety, depression, acute traumatic stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide, substance abuse, and sleep problems, with conditions ranging from being mild in nature to those that require hospitalization,” said the report.

Referring to a study, the report said that in Canada, an

association was found between mean heat exposure of 28 degree Celsius within four days of exposure and greater hospital admissions for mood and behavioural disorders, including schizophrenia, mood, and neurotic disorders.

“A US study found mental health problems increased by 0.5 per cent when average temperatures exceeded 30 degree C, compared to averages between 25–30 degree C; a 1 degree C warming over five years was associated with a two per cent increase in mental health problems.

“Another study found a 1 degree C rise in monthly average temperatures over several decades was associated with a 2.1 per cent rise in suicide rates in Mexico and a 0.7 per cent rise in suicide rates in the US. A systematic review of published research using a variety of methodologies from 19 countries found increased risk of suicide associated with a 1 degree C rise in ambient temperature,” the report said.

ED summons Nawab Malik’s son in money laundering case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned arrested NCP minister Nawab Malik’s son Faraz Malik in connection with the money laundering case registered by the agency against underworld don Dawood Ibrahim. However, the junior Malik skipped the summons.

Faraz reportedly received the ED summons at 11.30 AM on Monday asking for production of a document related to a land deal between Nawab Malik and Dawood Ibrahim’s sister.

The ED is probing a money laundering case related to allegations that the minister bought land at Kurla in Mumbai from Dawood Ibrahim’s sister Hasina Palkar by paying Rs 85 lakh of which Rs 30 lakh was shown in sale agreement and the remaining Rs 55 lakh was paid in cash.

The ED had on February 23 arrested the NCP leader in connection with the probe into



the land transaction between Malik and Palkar. Malik has been remanded to ED custody till March 8.

On Monday, Nawab Malik was brought back to the ED office at Ballard Estate in south Mumbai after being discharged from JJ Hospital. He had complained of discomfort during his questioning and was admitted to the hospital after blood was found in his urine.

Malik has so far “not cooperated” with the ED investigation, sources said.

Faraz’s name has cropped in the investigation as he was

one of the two persons who allegedly delivered Rs 55 lakh in cash and Rs 5 lakh in cheque to Palkar in 2005-06 for the Kurla land deal.

The ED has linked Malik indirectly to the Dawood Ibrahim syndicate that he usurped a prime three-acre property at Kurla - Goawala Compound worth Rs 300 crore. The landowner, according to the allegations, did not get paid. Malik, however, paid Rs 60 lakh to Palkar for her purported share in the property, funding fugitive gangster’s illegal activities.

Congress-JD(S) leaders will join BJP ahead of 2023

Assembly polls: K’taka CM

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday said several leaders from Congress and JD(S), from various districts, who wish public welfare, are in touch with the BJP and will be joining the party in the days to come.

The Chief Minister was speaking after inducting former JD(S) MLA from Devanahalli, Pilla Munishamappa and his supporters, and some Congress leaders into BJP at the party state headquarters here.

Pointing out that the joining of Congress and JD(S) leaders and workers from Bengaluru Rural and Ramanagara districts will strengthen the party in the region, a BJP release quoting Bommai said, such events of leaders from other parties joining BJP would continue in the months to come.

He also expressed confi-

He also expressed confidence that the BJP will increase its strength in north and southern Karnataka regions and will return to power in 2023

dence that the BJP will increase its strength in north and southern Karnataka regions and will return to power in 2023.

Meanwhile, stating that Congress will not come to power in Karnataka for 10 more years, state BJP President Nalin Kumar Kateel said, thereafter the state will become “Congress free”.

Criticising the Congress party and its ongoing ‘padayatra’ (foot march) demanding for implementation of Mekedatu project, he said there is infighting in the grand old party for the chief minister post (during 2023 elections), between its state President D K Shivakumar and Leader of Opposition in the assembly Siddaramaiah.

India slips 3 points in UN’s SDG score

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With India slipping three spots from last year’s 117 to rank 120 on the 17 SDGs adopted as a part of the 2030 agenda by 192 United Nations member states in 2015, India is now behind all south Asian nations except Pakistan, which stands at 129, a new report has said.

The south Asian countries ahead of India are Bhutan ranked 75, Sri Lanka 87, Nepal 96 and Bangladesh 109. India’s overall Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) score was 66 out of 100.

According to the Centre for Science and Environment’s State of India’s Environment Report, 2022, released by

Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav on Tuesday, India’s rank dropped primarily because of major challenges in 11 SDGs including zero hunger, good health and well-being, gender equality and sustainable cities and communities.

India also performed poorly in dealing with quality education and life on land aspects, the report stated.

The previous year, India had suffered on the fronts of ending hunger and achieving food security, achieving gender equality and building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation.

On the state-wise preparedness, the report said

Jharkhand and Bihar are the least prepared to meet the SDGs by the target year 2030.

Kerala ranked first, followed by Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh in the second position. The third position was shared by Goa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Among the Union Territories, Chandigarh was ranked first, followed by Delhi, Lakshadweep and Puducherry in second place and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in third, the report said.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for

people and the planet.

There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership.

Some of these goals are no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure.

It also includes, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions and lastly strengthening global partnerships for the goals.

Caste vs Hindutva in last 2 phases

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The last two phases of the ongoing Assembly elections in eastern Uttar Pradesh (UP), will witness a close contest between the two strands of identity politics: Caste and Hindutva.

Hindutva bastion Gorakhpur, BSP in Ambedkar Nagar and Samajwadi Party's citadel Azamgarh go to polls in the sixth phase on March 3 and in the seventh phase on March 7. The campaigning for the sixth phase of polling ended on Tuesday evening. The BJP, struggled to counter the caste-based identity politics since its emergence in 1990 after the implementation of Mandal Commission report, the party for over two decades was not able engineer a larger Hindu identity despite consistently focussing on Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

Three mammoth victories of the BJP in 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections and 2017 UP Assembly elections not only redefined the reinvented caste



based politics, it spelt doom for caste-based parties of UP, the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party. The BJP trounced these parties by forging new social coalition and the political mobilisation of less dominant castes and sub-castes.

Three back to back successes of the BJP in 2014, 2019 and 2017 will be put to severe test in the sixth and seventh phase of 2022 Assembly elections. Polling for the sixth phase will be held on March 3 across 57 Assembly constituencies across 10 districts including

Ambedkarnagar, Balrampur, Siddharthnagar, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Deoria and Ballia.

Voting in the last and seventh phase will take place on March 7 in 54 assembly constituencies in nine districts including Azamgarh, Mau, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Mirzapur, Bhadohi and Sonbhadra. In the sixth phase, Gorakhpur Sadar will be an important seat to watch out for as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be contesting his

first-ever assembly election from there. Yogi has been an MP from Gorakhpur several times but this is the first time that he will be contesting an assembly election.

For over three decades, the Gorakhpur Sadar Assembly seat has been a stronghold of the BJP. This time the SP has fielded Subhavati Shukla, wife of late BJP vice-president Upendra Dutt Shukla against Yogi. Also, Bhim Army Chief Chandrashekhar Azad is in the fray from here.

BSP's Khwaja Shamsuddin and Congress's Chetna Pandey are the other contestants. Ambedkarnagar, which was once considered as the bastion of BSP, has incumbent BSP MP Ritesh Pandey whose son Rakesh recently switched over to the SP.

The Pandey family has a clout in the district, which could impact the results after Rakesh switched over to the SP ahead of the polls. Former minister in the Yogi government, Swami Prasad Maurya, who recently jumped the BJP ship to

Samajwadi Party, will be trying his luck this time from Fazilnagar seat in Kushinagar. Maurya had earlier contested from Padrauna Assembly seat in Kushinagar.

The BSP has fielded Iliyas Ansari from this seat while the BJP has fielded Surendra Kushwaha. Another former BJP minister and chief of Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party, Om Prakash Rajbhar is in the fray from Zahooraabad Assembly seat of Ghazipur, which will vote on March 7. Rajbhar has alleged that the BJP had been ignoring Backward Classes in the state.

Rajbhar's party is contesting the polls in alliance with Samajwadi Party. Azamgarh, which is considered as the citadel of Samajwadi Party, has incumbent MP and party chief Akhilesh Yadav, who contested from Karhal assembly seat in Mainpuri in phase three of the election.

This is Akhilesh Yadav's first-ever Assembly election and the SP will be looking to grab all seats of Azamgarh and adjoining districts.

Power hunger leading to poll violence is not good: TMC leader

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a major embarrassment for Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress senior party leader and MP Saugato Roy on Tuesday disapproved of the electoral malpractices that were earlier alleged by the Opposition parties in the just -concluded municipal elections for 108 civic Boards.

"What has been happening is not acceptable ... one feels sorry for this... even after repeated appeal (to stop electoral violence) the message does not seem to be percolating down the rank and file," Roy a senior parliamentarian and a former Union Minister said on Tuesday.

"It seems that tremendous lust for power is behind whatever isshappening ... but this is not required ... the TMC is capable of winning the elections comfortably without all this ... if it continues we may have to pay a price for that," the senior party leader was quoted assaying. Roy's statement comes two

days after the State saw large scale violence in the municipal elections where complaints of violence and booth capture came from about 1,250 out of 11,300 booths. In many of the remaining constituencies too the opposition parties could either not file nominations or were not allowed to campaign, opposition BJP and Left complained adding in many other places the voters were simply not allowed to reach the booths.

Roy's statement notwithstanding party spokesperson Kunal Ghosh however denied reports of violence saying the opposition parties were trying to cover up their failure to compete with allegations of violence by the TMC.

"We do not require to capture booths because the name of our leader is Mamata Banerjee who has won hearts by her excellent performance ... remember it is the same Trinamool Congress led by the Chief Minister that won the Assembly elections by huge margin not even a year ago...

showly do we have to resort to violence," he said. Political analyst BN Chakrabarty said that "electoral violence is the result not only of TMC's non-performance but also its failure to provide jobs ... as the State is witnessing massive unemployment crisis the TMC is quickly converting the unemployed youth into its band of trained mercenaries ... so unemployment is in the interest of TMC ... but the trend will one day backfire."

Meanwhile, the Opposition BJP suffered yet another blow as the Calcutta High Court on Tuesday turned down its petition to stop counting process in Contai municipality --- the home town of Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari --- alleging rampant rigging on the election day.

The bandh called by the BJP against Sunday's electoral violence had received mixed response on Monday. The State Government had made massive police bandobast for the counting that will take place on Wednesday, police said.

Mayawati facing major challenge from rebels within her party

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Already being labelled as the 'B' team of the Bharatiya Janta Party, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati has been facing a major challenge from rebels within her party especially in her citadel Ambedkarnagar.

Analysing the situation particularly in the remaining two phases, Mayawati has clearly instructed party cadres to "teach the rebels a lesson and ensure their defeat" but it is yet to be seen whether the BSP has to pay heavy price in eastern UP due to the exit of its top leaders in the area.

Sources said that most senior rebel leaders of the BSP are contesting on SP tickets now. Ambedkar Nagar, once regarded a BSP bastion, now has Lalji Varma, Ram Achal Rajbhar and Tribhuvan Dutt, all BSP rebels, contesting elections from the district on SP tickets.

Varma, , was the BSP's Legislature Party leader in the UP Assembly. Also five-time MLA, Ram Achal Rajbhar is a former state BSP president and a key OBC face in the region. Tribhuvan Dutt is a Dalit, is a former two-time MLA and a former Lok Sabha MP.

The fourth SP candidate, Rakesh Pandey, is the father of sitting BSP MP from Ambedkar Nagar, Ritesh Pandey but he is contesting on a SP ticket. The defection of these BSP leaders to SP has undoubtedly bolstered the prospects of Samajwadi Party in the district.

The SP hopes to challenge the BJP at the cost of the BSP in Ambedkar Nagar, where four out of its five candidates are former BSP leaders.

At a recent rally, Mayawati explained to voters why she had to 'throw them out' of the party. She accused rebels of encouraging factionalism within party. In 2017, the BSP won three seats in Ambedkar Nagar - Katehari, Akbarpur and

Jalalpur. Another BSP rebel, who joined and quit BJP, is Swami Prasad Maurya and he is contesting from Fazilnagar seat in Kushinagar, also on a SP ticket. The BSP and BJP are now working overtime to ensure defeat of Maurya.

Swami Prasad Maurya, has undertaken a door-to-door campaign in rural areas to rake up issues of caste census, stray cattle menace, lack of health and education facilities and lack of employment among voters and is deliberately avoiding indulging in caste politics.

"I was elected from Padrauna in Kushinagar in the 2009 bypoll, 2012 and 2017 Assembly elections. The outsider tag (given) by rival parties will be rejected by people. Along with traditional support base of Samajwadi Party, I am getting support from other communities as well. They know that like Padrauna, Fazilnagar will also become a developed constituency," he said.

Besides rebels, the BSP also had to fight a double battle to cross the election trail as rumors kept floating that many BSP candidates had pledged their support to candidates from other parties. Interestingly even some letters were released in this regard though they were later found to be fake.

One such letter was said to have gone viral for Pratappur seat of Prayagraj, in which it was mentioned that whoever was the strongest to defeat the SP, vote for him. Later, the BSP issued a clarification that someone had made it viral on a fake letter pad.

Similarly such letter went viral in Jaunpur's Zafarabad seat. BSP General Secretary Mevalal Gautam later issued a clarification on this claiming that his signature on letter was 'forged'. BSP candidate from Zafarabad seat, Santosh Kumar Mishra is fighting with full force and party was making efforts to ensure his win.

JEE-Main's first phase to be conducted in April, 2nd in May: NTA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency (NTA) said on Tuesday that JEE-Main's first phase will be conducted in April while the second phase is scheduled in May. While the first phase of the engineering entrance exam will be conducted from April 16 to 21, the second phase will be from May 24 to 29. The Joint Entrance Examination-Main (JEE-Main) comprises two papers.

Paper one is conducted for admission to undergraduate engineering programmes — BE and B.Tech — at NITs, IITs and other centrally-funded technical institutions, and institutions and universities funded and recognised by participating state governments.

It is also an eligibility test for JEE (Advanced), which is conducted for admission to IITs. Paper two is conducted

for admission to B.Arch and B.Planning courses." The applications for JEE-Main 2022 will start from today, March 1, and the last date to fill the JEE Main 2022 application form for the first session is March 31, 2022.

The exam will be held in Assamese, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu in addition to Hindi, English, and Gujarati," an official said.

Last year, the exam was conducted four times to offer flexibility to students and a chance to improve their scores. The first phase was held in February and the second in March.

The next phases were scheduled for April and May, but those were postponed in view of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The remaining two phases were conducted in August and September last.

Malik challenges arrest by ED in Bombay High Court

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court will hear on Wednesday a *habeas corpus* petition filed by Maharashtra Minorities Affairs Minister Nawab Malik of NCP challenging his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case. In his petition filed through his lawyers Taraq Sayed and Kushal More on Monday, Malik termed his arrest by the ED as "illegal" and it was a "misuse" of Central agencies by Centre.

Among other things, 62-year-old Malik urged the high court to quash the ED's Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) filed against him, order his immediate release and declare his arrest as 'illegal'.

Malik also urged court to set aside Special PMLA Court's order remanding him to ED's custody for 8 days till March 3. Malik, who had earlier been picked up from his house at 6 am by ED officials and taken to their office for questioning, was arrested under section 19 of the

Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on February 23, in connection with the purchase of a huge plot of plot of land at "a throw-away price" from two alleged henchmen of Karachi-based Dawood Ibrahim."I have reason to believe that Malik has been found to be guilty of an offence punishable under provisions of PMLA," Assistant Director of ED Niraj Kumar had stated in the arrest order.

Later, Malik had told a special PMLA court: "The ED officials came to my house early in morning, took me to ED office where they detained me and later, recorded my statement. At the ED office, the officials gave me a summons copy at ED office and asked me to sign it".

The ED, in its application seeking Malik's remand that had contended that he, allegedly in connivance with members of the Dawood gang, hatched a conspiracy to grab ancestral property of a woman in Kurla, Goawala Compound, at a throwaway price though it was worth around Rs.300 crore.



Devotees wait to offer prayers to Lord Shiva on the occasion of Maha Shivratri, at Aap Shambu Temple, in Jammu on Tuesday.

PTI Photo

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella's son dies

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tech giant Microsoft on Tuesday announced that its Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella's son Zain Nadella, who was born with cerebral palsy, has died. He was 26.

"Very sadly Satya's son Zain Nadella has passed away. The Nadellas are taking time to grieve privately as a family," a Microsoft spokesperson said in response to an email query by PTI. Condolence messages poured in on social media platforms and many took to Twitter to mourn the demise.

Nadella's son was born on August 13, 1996, after his wife Anu during her thirty-sixth week of pregnancy noticed that the baby was not moving as in a normal situation. The Microsoft CEO in a blog in 2017 mentioned that Zain did not cry at

time of birth and had to be shifted to Seattle Children's Hospital with its state-of-the-art Neonatal Intensive Care Unit from the hospital in Bellevue across Lake Washington. Nadella had said he learnt that damage caused by utero asphyxiation caused severe cerebral palsy in his child.

He also wrote that as a father of a son with special needs was turning point of his life and helped him better understand the journey of people with disabilities. Several political leaders in India expressed their condolences for Nadella family. "Saddened to hear abt passing of @satyanadella's son Zain.

My deepest condolences to him and his family n friends. I pray that God gives him n family strength to bear with this loss," Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said in a tweet. .

HC orders CBI probe in teacher selection scam

PNS ■ KOLKATA

In yet another judicial setback for the Bengal Government the Calcutta High Court has ordered a CBI investigation into the alleged irregularities in the appointment of teachers in Government-aided schools.

Saying that it was "extremely surprising" that some candidates were given appointment despite their names not being there in the merit list Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay said that prima facie he was of the opinion that such irregularities could not have taken place without the connivance of the senior officers of the School Selection Commission. The petitioner had appeared for the test in



2016 but came to know about the irregularities in 2021 where after she moved the court, the advocate representing her said. The court directed the central investigating agency to file a preliminary report on March 28, the next date of hearing.

The petitioner had drawn the attention of the court to the fact that some of the appointees were neither from the panel of the selected candidates published in 2016 or from the waiting list for that

matter."I direct the Director, Central Bureau of Investigation to constitute a committee, headed by an officer not below the rank of a Joint Director, with officers not below the rank of DIG to initiate the enquiry. It is expected that no person connected with the matter will be left out of this enquiry," the Judge said in his order on Monday.

Justice Gangopadhyay however clarified that it was not that the Court did not have any confidence on the State police, but for obvious reasons the matter was being given to the CBI for investigation. The Judge said that there was a need to know the "mastermind in this dirty game" which was why the CBI probe was being ordered.

Parents terrified after student's death in Ukraine

PNS ■ ALIGARH

After a student from Karnataka was killed amid heavy shelling in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, the parents whose children are still stucke in Ukraine are terrified and want their children to return back home safely.

The parents have appealed to the Prime Minister to bring back their children as soon as possible. Indian students are upset amid the war in Ukraine. Some are trapped in Ukraine and some have reached Romania.

The students are spending their time in the war bunkers and camps amid the harsh winter. Information about another student of Madnai of Sadabad being trapped in Ukraine has come to

the fore. Till now the total number of students from Hathras has gone up to 12, out of which 10 are from Sadabad and two from Hathras region. Students are desperate to come home. Their relatives are also in a bad way mentally.

The relatives of medical students who are trapped in different areas of Ukraine are also worried. They are able to see their children only on video call. Many of the students are unable to contact their parents due to internet shutdown.

Ashish, son of Ramesh Chandra, a resident of Hathras's housing development colony, is also trapped in city of Kharkiv, Ukraine. His relatives are also worried. The condition of the students is becoming very serious.

Maha Covid tally reaches 675, daily cases rise

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra logged 675 Covid-19 infections on Tuesday, even as the daily cases in Mumbai rose marginally from 73 to 77. A day after the State recorded 407 infections, the daily cases rose marginally to 675. With fresh infections recorded on Friday, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the State rose from 78,65,705 to 78,66,380.

With five 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 1,43,701 to 1,43,706. With the fresh 77 cases, the total number of cases in Mumbai mounted from 1,056,472 to 10,56,549. 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 22 and 28 stood static at 0.01 per cent.

As 1,225 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 77,11,343 to 77,12,568. The recovery rate in the state stood static at 98.04 per cent.

The number of "active cases" in the state dropped from 6,663 to 6,106. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.82 per cent. The active cases in Pune dropped from 2312 to 2177. The active cases in Mumbai dropped 815 from 757, while the number of active cases in the neighbouring Thane dropped from 527 to 481. The active cases in Ahmednagar dropped from

626 to 626, while the number of active cases in Nagpur came down from 343 to 261. Of the 7,79,40,925 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 78,66,380 have tested positive (10.09 per cent) for COVID-19 until Tuesday.

Currently, 1,31,412 people are in home quarantine while 663 people are in institutional quarantine. Meanwhile, 104 fresh Omicron case was recorded in Maharashtra on Friday, taking the total number of new Covid-19 variant to 4,733. Of these cases, 4,509 patients have been discharged after they tested negative in the RT-PCR tests. Till Friday evening, 9,382 samples had been sent for genome sequencing, out of which, results of 8,407 patients have been received, while the results of 975 samples are awaited.

A thin line

India is indulging both Russia and Ukraine but spelling out a clear policy will be good

Is there an invisible undercurrent that runs through India's policy — or strategy — on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, or are we getting the messaging wrong? The world sees India abstaining from a UN Security Council vote not once but twice. First, it was the American-sponsored resolution condemning Russia; then, the procedural vote for an emergency session of the UN General Assembly. Be clarified that a Security Council vote is binding, the General Assembly's is not. India has a historical and deep relationship with Russia, which is its largest arms supplier. A host of defence agreements and projects are in various stages of consideration and progress right now. By abstaining from the Security Council vote, India may have achieved a double: It sits in with its stated policy that dialogue is the only way to resolve differences. It can be interpreted as reflecting the partnership with Russia. In any case, India's abstention was never going to affect the vote. To that extent, the foreign office mandarins can be content thinking that they have come up tops both ways. But that is not foreign policy; it is at best a strategy to keep both sides happy without committing yourself. After the vote, however, New Delhi has thrown enough hints to show that while abstaining, it is also wholeheartedly with the rest of the world in actively sympathising with the cause of Ukraine. The Americans are doing it by imposing sanctions. Some European countries are doing it by arming Ukraine.



India is sending critical aid, especially medical, to Ukraine. It is also more forthright on the matter of invasion, post-vote. It is on record stating that the situation in Ukraine "has worsened", describing it as a "humanitarian crisis". India stresses the "importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations". This is the closest New Delhi has come to question Russia's actions in Ukraine. India also regrets that the "path of diplomacy was given up". That is as much an observation about Russia as it is about other countries which were in touch with President Vladimir Putin to make him give up plans to invade Ukraine. These gradual escalations in pronouncements are followed by action in terms of the supply of critical aid to Ukraine. On the domestic front, New Delhi's strategy is playing out in the form of an all-out effort to evacuate the 20,000-odd Indians, mostly students, stuck in Ukraine. The task gets difficult for a few thousand Indian students in eastern Ukraine, in cities like Kharkiv, Kyiv and Sumy, which are close to Russian air bases and witnessing intense fighting. An Indian student has already wondered aloud why, if Russia is India's friend, can New Delhi not ask Moscow to help evacuate the students instead of making them travel over 1,000 km to safe border points in western Ukraine. The naïve thought notwithstanding, it surely calls for a policy from India, not just a strategy.



Devotees at Baba Baijnath temple on the occasion of Maha Shivratri, in Kangra district

PTI

Party's over!

Barely had Delhi's booze party reached a high when the Govt poured cold water over it

With crucial elections to the three municipal corporations due next month, the Delhi Government has shown some responsibility by ordering that all discounts, concessions, rebates or offers being doled out at retail liquor shops should be discontinued. The decision was ostensibly taken to address the issue of overcrowding in and around these shops, which caused 'law and order' problems and inconvenience to the neighbourhood residents. The order correctly noted that the risk of COVID-19, Omicron and other variants of the virus was still not over and the chock-a-block shop premises could turn into 'super-spreaders'. The BJP and Congress are already at the throat of the ruling AAP, claiming that the Arvind Kejriwal-led party has turned the Capital into a huge liquor store of sorts as part of its populist measures to win over the electorate ahead of the polls. The BJP has taken the battle to the AAP's door by deciding to hold a referendum on March 4 seeking the opinion of 10 lakh Delhiites on the pitfalls of the new excise policy, including the reduction in the number of dry days and opening of vends even in the vicinity of schools and temples.



The excise commissioner's order clarifies that the decision was necessitated also because of the licensees indulging in "unhealthy market practices" but it wasn't elaborated upon. Apparently it hinted at the practice being followed by certain outlets which, in their bid to attract more buyers, had placed banners and hoardings to 'advertise' their lucrative schemes. The last fortnight experienced high spirits and serpentine queues outside most liquor vends, which have been handed over to private players after the Government exited this business. The more prudent owners who held licences to two or more such liquor outlets, chose to do business as usual at select vends while offering 'buy-one-get-one-free' or 'buy-two-get-one-free schemes' in the not-so-affluent neighbourhoods. The exercise was mainly aimed at exhausting the existing stocks before the issuance of fresh L72 licences. The recent order, however, marks a marked departure from an essential facet of the State Government's new excise policy which had allowed liquor retailers to sell their wares at discounted rates or club these together as a package deal. Of course, the exercise did help buyers in pecuniary terms and protected them against 'brand pushing', but it did take a toll on the city's health.

America: Its base idea of alliances

The modern history is replete with instances where the US chose to look the other way when one of its allies asked for a helping hand

Speaking on *CNN* last week, well known American columnist and TV personality Fareed Zakaria was pessimistic about the prospects of Ukraine in its current clash against Russia. Zakaria felt that for the next several decades, India would have to face China's hostility. New Delhi should, therefore, align itself solidly with the US. In any case, the Ministry of External Affairs should forget its old habit of dancing with neutralism. Coming from a former Indian, Zakaria's advice must be taken as earnest.

However, it would be advisable to look at America's record as an ally; written, spoken or implicit. Towards the end of World War I, President Woodrow Wilson promoted the establishment of the League of Nations, headquartered at Geneva. Its function was to be similar to that of its successor, the United Nations Organisation. The League functioned to the extent of conducting an exchange of population between Bulgaria and Turkey, as well as Greece and Turkey. Unfortunately, the American Senate based at the Capitol in Washington DC refused to endorse the unnecessary involvement of the US in Europe's affairs. That, effectively, was the end of the League of Nations, an idea that had been conceived and actively promoted by an American President.

World War II broke out on September 1, 1939, when Germany's Wehrmacht invaded Poland, which had a written treaty of alliance with Britain and France, according to which if any of the three countries were to be attacked, all three would fight together to defend one another. Yet, in September 1939, Britain and France did nothing other than expressing sympathy for Poland, which was overrun in its west by Adolf Hitler and the east by Josef Stalin. Never before had history witnessed horses being butchered by battle tanks, a fate that befell the cavalry units of the Polish Army when German Panzer tanks were unleashed on them. So much for the value of an alliance!



The US is racially an Anglo-Saxon nation. The cultural bonds between the US and Britain are fraternal and close. Prime Minister Winston Churchill's mother Lady Randolph Churchill was an American. After the Battle of Britain, the crucial clash between the Air Forces of Britain and Germany in the summer of 1940, Churchill realised that there was no way for his country on its own to overcome Nazi Germany. He flew to Washington DC to appeal to President Franklin Roosevelt as well as the US Congress to come to the aid of their British brethren. Else, the fear was that western civilisation would go under the Nazi jackboot. Churchill returned empty-handed, save for an American promise to supply arms on a rental basis, called the Lend Lease. This was despite Churchill's stirring appeal to Washington: "Had my father been an American and not my mother, would you not have helped me?" Such was the 'fraternity' between the two Anglo-Saxon partners.

Washington didn't anticipate that Japan would soon sail across half the Pacific undetected and destroy Pearl

THE US ENTERED WORLD WAR II ONLY WHEN IT WAS ATTACKED, WHEN IT HAD NO OPTION; IT DID NOT FIGHT WHEN ITS BROTHER BRITAIN WAS DESPERATELY IN NEED OF HELP

Harbor, America's vital naval base, on December 7, 1941. The US then declared war on Japan, which retaliated with a similar declaration. The Axis alliance of Germany, Italy and Japan required that if any of these countries were at war, the other two would join in immediately. Consequently, Germany and Italy declared war on the US. It was thus only in December 1941 that this European conflict, which had begun more than two years ago, truly became a world war, leaving no option for the US but to join it. In other words, the US entered the fray only when it was attacked; it did not fight when its brother was desperately in need.

Taiwan, another country that is an American ally and faces an expansionist China, to a considerable extent, is ethnically Chinese but its leader Chiang Kai Shek was allied to the US until his defeat at the hands of Mao Zedong in China's civil war that ensued from 1945 to 1949. It was Chiang who led many of his followers to the island that is today Taiwan. The country's political system is democratic, while its economic ideology is free and liberal. Taiwan was

not only admitted to the UN promptly, but also continued as a member of the Security Council. When the threat of war from mainland China grew graver, a security agreement to protect Taiwan was signed with the US. That agreement, the Taiwan Relations Act, is still in force although in 1972, quite casually, Taiwan was removed from the Security Council and its seat was given to communist China, which is now considered an adversarial nation.

This American habit of engaging in a tango for change is a source of apprehension to potential allies. Fareed Zakaria is oblivious of such changes, he cannot be in any position to be advising India's foreign policy moves. In any case, for a large country, it is desirable to be self-reliant and flexible towards the changing tunes of international affairs. The economic benefits that could accrue from a wealthy ally would be too small for a large country, while the US willingness to come to the aid of allies is doubtful.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN SAKE

Sir — Is the world heading towards annihilation? Are the COVID pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war just the tip of an iceberg? In an era when science and technological inventions are supposed to make lives easier for humankind, machines and other such scientific creations have upended human beings. The race for supremacy has nations competing with one another, producing weapons of mass destruction. The vagaries of nature and climatic upheavals continue to unleash untold miseries on mankind. Unseasonal rains/floods in certain areas and droughts in other regions; hurricanes, tsunami and other catastrophes; all these climatic trends could wreak havoc.

As much as natural calamities have been the cause of large-scale destruction across the world, the spate of 'virus invasions' has further hit the human race. The 'discovery' of a virus each day has been the bane of the world. The inability of virologists to check these rampaging viruses has complicated matters. At a time when calamitous situations threaten to wipe out the human race, we have global 'super powers' trying to impose their will on less powerful nations. We are rushing into an awful situation which may be averted if we were only a bit more circumspect about hasty decisions.

Pachu Menon | Margao

PUNISH THE PNB SCAM ACCUSED

Sir — It is shocking to learn that the CBI is begging to be allowed to prosecute former CEO Usha Ananthasubramanian and two ex-Executive Directors Brahmaji Rao and Sanjeev Sharan of the Punjab National Bank even though the case was registered more than four years ago in connection with ₹13,578 crore Choksi fraud. It is not hard to discern the reason behind the prolonged delay in bringing to book the top bank officials involved in jaw-dropping scam amounts. If it is not the Government's unwillingness to risk getting its own complicity exposed, what else can it be?

During the last two decades, a number of frauds have taken place in Indian

Oppn leaders must stay united



Till the other day, 'Opposition unity' sounded like a cliché. All discussions about a united Opposition centred around a few ambitious leaders. Not an easy task, considering the man these leaders desire to see the back of is one-of-a-kind, Narendra Modi. That said, some non-BJP Chief Ministers are flexing muscles to keep the hope alive among the Opposition ranks. Though West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee started off well, buoyed by a massive win in the West Bengal Assembly election, that critical push to the singular cause was lack-

ing. Perhaps the Congress' aversion to Mamata has stopped her from going the whole hog.

Since there is no dearth of friends for the 'grand old party', no 'united front' or 'third front' can afford to take off without the Congress. If the party does well in the just-concluded Assembly polls, then the necessity to carry it along will become all the more imperative. Therefore, when Telangana CM KCR met his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray to discuss Opposition unity, they were cautious with their words. It is important for the Opposition leaders to focus on agendas. The BJP-led Government's flops have to be dissected threadbare. They need to draw more leaders into their fold; leaders with a good pan-India image, and these politicians should speak in tandem. Any infighting before the final push may sound the death knell for Opposition 'unity'.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

banks. No official found guilty of connivance with the fraudsters was subjected to prosecution, trial and punishment (except ex-Indian Bank chairman Gopalakrishnan). If a bank clerk/cashier is caught stealing even a rupee, he gets dismissed within a quarter of a year. But top bank officials who cause the loss of thousands of crores of rupees are allowed to go scot-free? The argument that these 'poor' officials were acting under political pressure does not hold water; they do not bend for nothing.

MR Anand | Vrindavan

LENT: A PERIOD OF PRAYER, FASTING

Sir — Lent, the 40-day period of prayer and fasting for Christians all over the world in preparation for Easter, begins this year on March 2 with Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday, officially known as the Day of Ashes, is a day of repentance when Christians confess to their sins and profess their devotion to God. Here's something interesting: There are actually 46

days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. How? The answer takes us back to the earliest days of the Church. Jesus' original disciples, Jews, believed the Sabbath was Saturday. Jesus rose from the dead, however, on a Sunday.

So the early Christians starting with the apostles transferred the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Since all Sundays, not simply Easter Sunday, were days to celebrate Jesus' resurrection, Christians were forbidden to fast/do penance on those days. Therefore, when the Church expanded fasting/prayer period in preparation for Easter to 40 days, Sundays could not be included in the count. Thus, for Lent to include 40 days of fasting, it had to have six full weeks (with 6 days of fasting each week), plus four extra days that follow it. And that's how we arrive at the 40-day figure for Lent.

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

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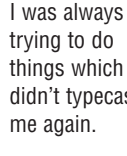


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



I am here. We'll not lay down weapons...they are our truth.

Ukraine President — Volodymyr Zelenskyy



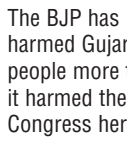
I was always trying to do things which didn't typecast me again.

Actor — Jimmy Sheirgill



Being constantly judged on social media can get to you.

Indian women's team bowler — Jhulan Goswami



The BJP has harmed Gujarat's people more than it harmed the Congress here.

Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi

FIRST COLUMN

FROM THE HIJAB TO THE KITAAB: A PERSPECTIVE

Education must rise above social-religious beliefs and gender stereotypes



MADHURI SUKHIYA

Does civic nationalism still hold good in India today? The distinctiveness of Indian democracy lies in its diversity and not in the divisiveness between the majority and the minority which sometimes becomes a cause for concern. The controversy surrounding the hijab in some Karnataka educational institutions has not only stirred many a conscious mind but has also been a matter of deep discord. The hijab has a wider connotation and is not merely a covering. It is also a reflection of certain values and represents identity. Ironically, it has become entangled with different perspectives and ways of thinking. How much of it is to do with uniforms in educational institutions? Dress codes are reflective of discipline in education at the school level but at a higher or college level, one needs to ask: Do dress codes enrich the education system? States have their own takes on it. However, for many, it




is more a matter of a minority within a minority trying to be at par with the rest, especially in the field of education and exercising their choice too. This matter has not been easy to resolve and did take a turn for the worse leading to closure of schools for few days in Karnataka.

India has many cross - cutting cleavages, be it caste, class, religion and the like and these can certainly be utilised to strengthen the democratic ethos and prevent pervasive populism from holding sway. It is certainly not as if the young Muslim girl students invoked religion or culture that disturbed the harmony of educational institutions. The Indian Constitution allows the right to practise, profess and propagate religion of one's choice, but certainly with reasonable restrictions. Whether the wearing of the hijab in educational institutions constitutes an essential religious practice of Islam needs further probe in the light of constitutional guarantees coupled with several decisions taken by the Supreme Court and High Courts when dealing with litigating parties. Of late, the Karnataka government's decision to leave it to the courts to decide appears to be the right course of action. The Karnataka High court on its part has reserved the judgement on pleas against hijab curbs in colleges and will deliberate on the matter before coming to a conclusion. Resolving this issue on the basis of law and the Constitution is a better option. In 2017, 'instant triple talaq' was declared unconstitutional, and this was an exemplary judgement. Constitutionalism has been the very essence of Indian democracy and has helped to sustain it. A two-year tryst with the pandemic and ensuing lock downs has done enough damage and education should not stand to suffer in any way. After all, it is our ray of hope and the most potent instrument by far by which we can change the world for the better. A question that naturally comes to our minds is that if turbans and the crucifix can find their way into educational institutions, should the hijab be left behind. The keenness expressed by our young students to pursue education despite their hardships is encouraging in itself. 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' has been an excellent national initiative of the current Government and substantial work has been done to improve the lot of the girl students. We need to carry that spirit forward. Education must rise above social-religious beliefs and gender stereotypes, thereby creating safe spaces and prompting us to think, do we really need to choose between the 'hijab' and the 'kitab'. Whether hijab empowers women or motivates and inspires them is a matter of opinion, but should it be a pre-condition to accessing education needs serious thinking.

(The writer is a Professor at Delhi University. The views expressed are personal.)

Manufactured social networking's frenzy

Next time you want to react or feel deeply about a post, please be conscious of the faceless phoney peer accounts playing their game



SHILPA ARORA SHARMA

The news delivered through social media is more tenable these days. The viral posts, online bashing, online-visibility and trending hashtags have more sensory acceptance than what they show on the TV Channels.

It is obvious that our virtual world ailments are embodied from our real-world behaviours. If strangers can gather to witness a road-side quarrel to engage in some sadist entertainment, the same gets manifested in the digital world. However, there's a twist: the online onlookers are fed with the action 'intentionally' and they end up absorbing 'the propagated perceptions' as the truth.

This era of exciting trending hashtags, viral videos, influencers, unlimited availability of information and individual empowerment vibrates our lives with its stupendous momentum every day. Do we even care to notice the ingredients used in the recipe of this sensory indulgence?

As the upbeat societies had always been thriving on the game of shallow pleasures of showing off their jewellery, handbags, branded wear and foreign trips, the ego stroking has gone another level by the new-fangled riches with the display of their online presence.

Apart from the affluent looking for online validation, we have a booming industry of Influencers who are self-proclaimed symbolization of the society fashion, life-style and norms.

This influencing is a power since the dawn of civilization that allowed anyone to climb to the political top. Do not undermine it as a mere validation by their millions of followers, but they have serious finances rolling around their brand value. A micro influencer of 10000 followers may easily get 10-20 thousand rupees for a post and mega influencers may get lakhs.

Smart Retail Corporations now have marketing strategy to pay influencers mushrooming in every nip and corner of the society who could advertise their products in their own style to their followers. Paying influencers is more effective than throwing a commercial for prime TV or giving an advertisement in the Newspaper. Just to highlight, as per financial express, the influencer marketing industry in India was estimated to be of ₹900 crore by the end of 2021.

Whenever there is a financial turnover, it comes with its sister industries and strategies. For influencers it's their digital public relation agencies. So, if influencers gain money and power in society, they must pay back-end teams constantly to maintain and uproot their social media handles.

It is evident that the influencers' brand value is identified by their number of followers and their post engagements. Most successful influencers hire digital PR agencies to ensure staying upbeat in their game. If you want to invest in your online brand, get an agency, most of them offer packages to get yourself followers, high

post engagements and sometimes, packages to make your posts viral. Any idea, how much is the digital PR industry worth? As per Statista website, the digital marketing industry in India is ₹292,000 crore.

Here comes the manufacturing part, many popular websites such as Forbes and PRWEEK carry research articles that almost all influencers may have fake followers causing the inflation fraud. Instagram is one such platform where single user may create multiple accounts and even if the fake or alternative accounts get reported multiple times, the platform takes forever to remove the accounts. Just simply google to purchase Instagram followers and the unlimited Digital PR agencies would be available. Looking at what exists, it's not a far-fetched thought, that these digital PRs and social media platforms could be hand and glove running the Digital Influencing Show.

These fake accounts operated by humans or bots also boost the valuation of Social Media platforms. Here, the 'doctrine of Network Effect' is the key. The value of the services of utilities given by any platform increases when the number of people using the platform increases. Hence, it's not surprising that if Twitter Audithead states that Twitter is a place which is largely haunted by fake profiles which could be a huge number such as 40-50 per cent at a given time and that explains why twitter is such a happening place. Not just Twitter and Instagram, the reports on internet are alarming for each giant social media platform.

For the sake of sanctity and legal integrity, these fake accounts have a smaller life cycle as below:

Fake Account Creation by Human or Bot -> Increase Following of the client -> Increase the Likes/retweet/Views of the client -> Post stories as per the narrative of the client -> Get caught by the Machine Learning/Artificial Intelligence Engine of a Platform or Get Reported by Many Accounts -> Get Deleted -> Repeat.

As we can see the above steps, the fake profile deletion is performed by almost every platform and they also report it. Facebook reported to have deleted 1.3 billion fake accounts between October-December 2020.

Let us look at the possible overhead of allowing fake accounts in any platform.

The database storage costs and operational costs of the additional fake accounts that could have been prevented by not allowing them.

Expensive Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence Deployment to check fake accounts.

Human Resource Costs to provide oversight to the automated process of fake account deletion.

Human Resource Costs to implement the manually reported fake account deletion.

Advertisement costs wasted on the fake accounts.

The above costs are humongous and could have been simply avoided by a verification or a KYC kind of module at the time of account creation. But then, why would the super intelligent management of Social Media giants not decide to do this, just for the sake of cutting these overhead costs, if ethical grounds are of meagre consideration?

Could it be because the Digital PR agencies and social media platforms are in one team to increase the monetary turnover of the industry? Could it be because the social media giants want to inflate the earnings through online advertising, which gets inflated due to fake accounts? Could it be because, the social media platforms want to boost up their "Network Effect" by allowing inflation fraud to their user base, in turn amplifying the exchanges of online interactions which if were to be done by real people would have been way too lesser, unattractive, unignited, untar-geted and restricted to individual's minuscule level of communication. If we imagine Twitter without fake profiles, it would be extremely dull with hardly any trending hashtags of issues except on some rare occasions.

Fake accounts not just spice up any platform but also rotate money, hence appear a necessary frill. In today's world, if you must voice up in social media, the digital narrative is a package available with a price tag.

If this awareness deepens, it may strike your ethical fabric, but come as it may, neither we can withdraw from it nor we can live in a denial of what kind of system we digitally breathe-in.


Next time you want to react or feel deeply about a post, please be conscious of the faceless phoney peer accounts playing their game. They are just work, so you should not take anything personal. Always remember, the posts of praising or demeaning someone may be all the outcome of PR industry's tedious labour, waiting to grab your senses and get you entangled.

Be careful, it may be fake, only you make it real by engaging with it.


IF WE IMAGINE TWITTER WITHOUT FAKE PROFILES, IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DULL WITH HARDLY ANY TRENDING HASHTAGS OF ISSUES, EXCEPT ON SOME RARE OCCASIONS. FAKE ACCOUNTS NOT JUST SPICE UP ANY PLATFORM BUT ALSO ROTATE MONEY, HENCE APPEAR TO BE A NECESSARY FRILL

(The writer is a cyber security expert. The views expressed are personal.)

POINT COUNTERPOINT




WE HAD URGED INDIA TO GIVE US POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. STOP THE AGGRESSOR TOGETHER! — UKRAINE PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY



INDIA'S POWER IS MEANT FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WORLD AND NOT TO SCARE ANYONE... THIS IS OUR CHARACTER. — DEFENCE MINISTER RAJNATH SINGH

Is the Dravidian Model an alternative to Gujarat Model?

DMK supremo Stalin consolidates self and State in a short time, adapting himself and his party to the changing times



KALYANI SHANKAR

Tamil Nadu chief minister M. K. Stalin has proved worthy of his late father and five times chief minister, the late M. Karunanidhi. Within nine months of his party coming to power, Stalin has consolidated his position in the state, establishing his authority with a massive win in the urban body civic polls last week.

Stalin asserted the sweeping victory was a 'crowning moment' for the 'Dravidian model of governance'. Stalin has pitted the Dravidian model as an alternative to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Gujarat model'.

The low-profile politician has reasons to be proud of his achievements, as the civic poll results showed DMK's seat share in corporations stood at 69.29 percent; it was 61.41 percent in municipalities. The DMK alliance has also bagged over 80 percent of the posts in municipal councils, and town panchayats, including in the Western belt considered an AIADMK stronghold.

He has gained new ground and expanded his party's base further in these polls. DMK's allies, including Congress, Left parties, Viduthalaai Chiruthaigal Katchi, Tamizhaga Vazhuvirimai Katchi, and Indhiya Jananayaga Katchi, also helped in taking the DMK front's tally beyond the two-thirds mark. DMK had lost all 10 mayoral posts in the 2011 local body elections.

Rival AIADMK lost mainly because of the power tussle between its co-convenors E. Palaniswamy and O. Pannarselvam, both former

AIADMK chief ministers. The cadres were confused because of this rivalry.

The Sasikala factor was also a reason. She has been plugging for a single leader to head the party (meaning herself) since she came out of jail last February after completing her four-year sentence in a disproportionate assets case. She kept away from In the 2021 Assembly polls, but has been touring the state since then. EPS and OPS have rejected her claims on the party.

AIADMK also lost its alliance parties, DMDK, Puthiya Tamilagam, Mukkulathor Pulipadai, Manithaneya Jananayaga Katchi, New Justice Party, and All India Samathuva Makkal Katchi. Even BJP dumped the AIADMK. In contrast, Stalin humored the allies and kept them intact, even praising them after the urban poll results.

Karunanidhi picked Stalin, his younger son, as his political heir overlooking the claims of the elder Alagiri and daughter Kanimozhi. Named after Josef Stalin of former USSR, Stalin was grounded in party affairs and became a valuable backroom boy. He was known as 'Thalapathi' (general) to his supporters.

Stalin held important posts such as General Secretary,

Youth wing chief, minister, and later Deputy chief minister in Karunanidhi's cabinet. He was also the mayor of Chennai Corporation.

Apart from politics, Stalin also had a film career. He acted in the 1987 Tamil film 'Ore Raththam', (same blood) written by his father, M Karunanidhi.

Stalin emerged out of his famous father's shadows after Karunanidhi's death in 2017, leading the party to victory in 2021. Though he was not a great orator like his father, he compensated with his hard work and changed the DMK to suit modern times.

Stalin, who is not a mass leader, the professional event managers helped change his image. In 2021, he appointed poll strategist Prashant Kishore to advise him. He had ditched his dhoti for jeans, a T-shirt, and sneakers to vibe well with the 80 lakh first-time voters. Stalin loves sports, arts, and cultural activities and plays cricket, badminton, and chess. He tries to identify himself with the common man (Ungalil Oruvan - one amongst you). He cycles, ride a motorbike, and even travels in autorickshaws to strike a chord with voters.

After winning the state last year, Stalin has become ambitious and is trying to find a role in national politics. He combined with his West Bengal, Telangana, and Maharashtra counterparts to form a federal front to make himself relevant for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. In the changing national politics where the opposition lacks a credible leader, Stalin has

emerged as an established leader of Tamil Nadu and in the south.

However, Stalin is facing criticism for grooming his son Udayanidhi as his political heir.

Stalin has made all the right moves - getting capable bureaucrats and choosing right people as his ministers. He managed the Covid challenge well as his first challenge. Tamil Nadu has been a good performer in health, education, and gender equality and talks of social justice.

Stalin has the edge over his rivals as there is no charismatic leader in the other parties. Like his Odisha counterpart Naveen Patnaik, Stalin has come to stay in state and national politics, but he should be careful not to commit any glaring mistakes.

Russia-Ukraine war

What to know on day 6 of Russian assault

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia's war on Ukraine is now in its sixth day, with a miles-long convoy of Russian tanks and armored vehicles inching closer to the Ukrainian capital and fighting intensifying on the ground.

Russia on Tuesday stepped up shelling of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, pounding civilian targets there. Casualties mounted and reports emerged that more than 70 Ukrainian soldiers were killed after Russian artillery recently hit a military base in Okhtyrka, a city between Kharkiv and Kyiv, the capital. But Ukrainian fighters are putting up a fierce resistance and surprisingly, Russia has not been able to dominate the skies. There are increasing fears that as Russia becomes more isolated under an avalanche of Western sanctions, Vladimir Putin could become even more reckless and set off a world-altering war.

Across Ukraine, civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict with families and children huddled in underground subway stations, basements and other shelters.

The Red Cross appealed Tuesday for 250 million Swiss francs (USD272 million) to help people affected by the war. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Cross federation said they fear "millions of people face extreme hardship and suffering

without improved access and a rapid increase in humanitarian assistance." On Monday, a Ukrainian delegation held talks with Russian officials at the border with Belarus, though they ended with no agreements except to keep talking.

Meanwhile, Western sanctions triggered by the invasion sent the Russian ruble plummeting, leading ordinary Russians to line up at banks and ATMs. And Russian teams were suspended from all international soccer matches, including qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup, pushing the country toward sports pariah status.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FRONT LINES?

Ukrainian authorities say the center of Kharkiv was hit Tuesday by renewed Russian shelling that struck the administration building along with residential buildings. There was no word on casualties.

Previously, officials in Kharkiv, a city of 1.4 million, said at least 11 people were killed and scores were wounded in shelling Monday.

The Russian military convoy threatening Kyiv - a city of nearly 3 million people - is far bigger than initially thought, with satellite images showing it occupying much of a 40-mile (64-kilometer) stretch of road north of the Ukrainian capital.

The convoy was no more than 17 miles (25 kilometers) from the city center on Monday, according to satellite imagery



A man reacts inside a vehicle damaged by shelling, in Brovary, outside Kyiv, Ukraine, on Tuesday. Russian shelling pounded civilian targets in Ukraine's second-largest city again Tuesday

AP/PTI

from the Maxar company.

Kyiv's outgunned but determined troops have slowed Russia's advance and held onto Kyiv and other key cities - at least for the time being, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy - who had earlier cut diplomatic ties with Moscow and declared martial law and whose defiance has drawn much admiration from the West - asked NATO to impose a complete no-fly zone over Ukraine for Russian airplanes, helicopters and missiles. Britain's

deputy prime minister, Dominic Raab, rejected the call Tuesday, saying it would risk widening the war by putting the alliance in direct conflict with Russian forces. Zelenskyy called the attack Tuesday on Kharkiv's main square "frank, undisguised terror," blaming a Russian missile and calling it a war crime. "Nobody will forgive. Nobody will forget."

Over the weekend, Russian artillery hit a military base in Okhtyrka, a city between Kharkiv and Kyiv,

where more than 70 Ukrainian soldiers were killed, the head of the region wrote on Telegram, posting photographs of the charred shell of a four-story building and rescuers searching through the rubble.

Ukrainian authorities say Russian forces have blocked Kherson, a major port on the Black Sea. Russian troops have made significant gains along Ukraine's coast in an apparent effort to cut it off from both the Black and the Azov seas.

WHAT ARE ORDINARY

UKRAINIANS AND CIVILIANS DOING?

For many, it has meant sheltering in basements and subway stations while Russian forces attack cities and street fights rage. Others have scrambled to escape, leaving homes and husbands, fathers and sons to fight, taking trains and buses or walking for miles to a safer country. Across Ukraine and in refugee shelters across the borders, parents have struggled to comfort their children. Mothers rock them on subway platforms or carry them for miles in the cold. At one border station in Poland, refugees were met by boxes of donated clothes and toys. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have sought safety at night in Kyiv's subway system and other makeshift shelters around the country, where parents try to calm their children's fears.

On Monday, U.N. Human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said her office had confirmed that 102 civilians, including seven children, have been killed in the Russian invasion and 304 others wounded since Thursday, though she cautioned the tally was likely a vast undercount.

WAR SANCTIONS AND WORKAROUNDS

Western officials believe Putin wants to overthrow Ukraine's government and replace it with a compliant regime, reviving Moscow's Cold War-era influence. His comments have raised fears

that the invasion of Ukraine could lead to nuclear war, whether by design or mistake.

The United States and the European Union have levied sanctions on Russia's biggest banks and its elite, frozen the assets of the country's Central Bank located outside the country, and excluded its financial institutions from the SWIFT bank messaging system - but have largely allowed its oil and natural gas to continue to flow freely to the rest of the world. Sanctions experts expect Russia to try to mitigate the impact of the financial penalties by relying on energy sales and leaning on the country's reserves in gold and Chinese currency. Putin also is expected to move funds through smaller banks and accounts of elite families not covered by the sanctions, deal in cryptocurrency and rely on Russia's relationship with China.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE UNITED NATIONS?

The U.N.'s two major bodies - the 193-nation General Assembly and the more powerful 15-member Security Council - held separate meetings Monday to discuss Russia's war on Ukraine.

The council meeting opened with the news that the United States was kicking out 12 Russian U.N. Diplomats whom Washington accuses of spying. The assembly will give all U.N. Members an opportunity to speak about the war and more than 110 signed up to do so, with speeches to continue

Tuesday. The assembly, which allows no vetoes, is expected to vote later in the week on a resolution coordinated by European Union envoys, working with Ukraine.

The draft resolution, obtained by The Associated Press, demands that Russia immediately stop using force against Ukraine and withdraw all troops. Meanwhile, the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor said he plans to open an investigation "as rapidly as possible" into possible war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine - both alleged crimes committed before the Russian invasion, but also any new crimes that either side might have committed since the invasion started.

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE FLED UKRAINE?

The U.N. Refugee agency says that about 660,000 people have fled Ukraine for neighboring countries since the Russian invasion began. The number, given on Tuesday, was up from a count of more than 500,000 a day earlier.

UNHCR spokeswoman Shabia Mantoo said in Geneva that "at this rate, the situation looks set to become Europe's largest refugee crisis this century." Earlier, when the overall figure still stood at around half a million, she said the count included 281,000 in Poland, more than 84,500 in Hungary, about 36,400 in Moldova, over 32,500 in Romania and about 30,000 in Slovakia.

Russia slow to win Ukraine's airspace, limiting war gains

AP ■ WASHINGTON

In war, winning quick control of airspace is crucial.

Russia's failure to do so in Ukraine, despite its vast military strength, has been a surprise and may help explain

how Ukraine has so far prevented a rout.

The standoff in the sky is among the Russian battle shortcomings, including logistical breakdowns, that have thrown Moscow off stride in its invasion. Typically, an invading force would seek at the outset to destroy or at least paralyze the target country's air and missile defenses because dominance of the skies allows ground forces to operate more effectively and with fewer losses.

US Military officials had assumed that Russia would use its electronic warfare and cyber capabilities to blind and paralyze Ukraine's air defenses and military communications.

A possible explanation for Russia's failure to do so is that President Vladimir Putin built his war strategy on an assumption that Ukrainian defenses would easily fold, allowing Russian forces to quickly capture Kyiv, the capital, and crush Ukrainian forces in the east and south without having to achieve air superiority.

US expels 12 diplomats from Russia's mission to UN, Moscow calls its hostile action

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

The US has expelled 12 diplomats from Russia's mission to the UN, saying they engaged in "espionage activities", a move which Moscow described as a "hostile action" and gross violation of the commitments by the US as host country of the United Nations headquarters.

US Mission to the United Nations Spokesperson Olivia Dalton said that the US has informed the United Nations and the Russian Permanent

Mission to the United Nations that "we are beginning the process of expelling twelve intelligence operatives from the Russian Mission who have abused their privileges of residency in the United States by engaging in espionage activities that are adverse to our national security."

"We are taking this action in accordance with the UN Headquarters Agreement. This action has been in development for several months." Russia's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia was addressing an end of Presidency press conference at the UN Headquarters when he got a telephone call informing him of the expulsion of his diplomats by the US. Russia was President of the 15-nation Security Council for the month of February.

"I just received the information that the US authorities have undertaken another hostile action against the Russian mission to the

United Nations, grossly violating their commitments under the host country agreement. They told us they are announcing 12 people (UN diplomats) from the personnel of the Russian mission persona non grata and demanding that they leave by March 7," Nebenzia said.

He said the US authorities just visited the Russian mission and "gave us a note prescribing us to do what they demand. You know that with the Secretary-General we raised the issue of arbitrage with the host country, which grossly violates its commitments under the host country agreement."

So far it has not been done, but I think it's high time already. This is just hot news that I received right away."

When asked who the Russian diplomats were who have been expelled,

he said he didn't know the names yet, but that they are 12 in number.

"This is sad news and another demonstration of gross disrespect to the host country agreement, to US commitments within the framework of their obligations, both under the UN Charter, the host country agreement and Vienna conventions," Nebenzia said.

When asked if Russia is going to respond to Washington's decision to expel its diplomats, he said "I'm sure that the response will follow because it's a diplomatic practice which provides for a tit-for-tat. It's not our choice. We didn't initiate it and I think that the answer will be given but it's not for me to decide."

AP ■ BUDAPEST

Hungary's right-wing nationalist prime minister, Viktor Orban, has for more than a decade nurtured close political and economic ties with Russia, giving him the reputation as the Kremlin's closest European Union ally.

For weeks, as Russian President Vladimir Putin amassed tens of thousands of troops along the borders of Ukraine, Hungary's neighbour to the east, Orban avoided condemning the buildup and spoke emphatically against applying sanctions.

As tensions escalated, Orban even travelled to Moscow, where he met with Putin in the Kremlin, their 12th official visit in as many years, and lobbied for larger shipments of Russian gas.

But when Russia's large-scale invasion commenced last week, Orban for the first time laid responsibility for the tensions and violence on Moscow in what could be a turning point in his more than decade-long, pro-Russia approach. "Russia attacked Ukraine this morning with military force," Orban said hours after the invasion began Thursday. "Together with our European Union and NATO allies, we condemn Russia's military action."

Though Orban neglected to mention Putin by name, or to call the "military action" an invasion, his apparent about-face was long awaited by his critics both in the EU and in Hungary.

It could also be a sign that he realizes his posture toward Moscow is "not rooted on sta-

ble fundaments," said Daniel Hegedus, a fellow for Central Europe at the German Marshall Fund.

Russia policy," Hegedus told the Associated Press. "I think (Orban) realised that Russia is a security threat in the region."

A formerly communist country that was dominated by the Soviet Union for more than 40 years, Hungary has historically deeply distrusted Moscow, which ordered the brutal repression of an anti-Soviet uprising in 1956 that led to thousands of civilian deaths and some 200,000 refugees fleeing the country.

As the communist system in Eastern Europe neared its end in 1989, Orban, then a 26-year-old anti-communist leading a movement of young liberal democrats, demanded the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary in a speech to several hundred thousand people on Budapest's Heroes' Square.

But in recent years, Orban - whom critics accuse of increasingly authoritarian tactics since entering power in 2010 - has pursued a diplomatic and economic strategy he calls "Eastern Opening," a policy which advances closer ties with autocratic countries to Hungary's east amid what his government sees as Western decline.

As part of that strategy, Orban has initiated a 12 billion-euro (\$13.6 billion) Russian-backed project to add two nuclear reactors to Hungary's only nuclear power plant, financed primarily by a Russian state bank.

His government has also increased Hungary's dependence on Russian natural gas, and in 2019 provided a headquarters in Budapest for the Moscow-based International Investment Bank (IIB), an institution with Soviet roots that critics say could be a conduit for Russian spying.

As the conflict between Russia and Ukraine escalates, Orban faces greater pressure than ever to choose between Moscow and Hungary's Western partners in the EU and NATO military alliance - but is showing increasing signs that he may continue to straddle the line between the two.

The Czech Republic on Friday said it would pull out of the IIB to punish Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, and urged other members of the bank to do the same - which, on Sunday, Hungary's neighbour Romania did.

Also on Friday, Polish prime minister and key Orban ally Mateusz Morawiecki warned in the Financial Times that Putin's aggression in Ukraine would extend to other parts of Eastern Europe if left unchecked, and urged Western countries to end the "era of illusions" about Russia.

"We are seeing that the price of European naivete over Russia is Ukrainian blood," Morawiecki wrote. Speaking to journalists Saturday at Hungary's border with Ukraine, Orban said his country would support all proposed EU sanctions against Moscow, and acknowledged that Russia's invasion would likely cause changes in his relationship with Putin.

China warns US of 'heavy price' for backing Taiwan's independence

As Biden's defence team lands in Taipei

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Tuesday warned the US that it will pay a "heavy price" for its attempts to show support to Taiwan's independence as a delegation of ex-American defence officials dispatched by President Joe Biden landed in Taipei amid apprehensions that Beijing may attempt action against the self-ruled island akin to Russia's military assault in Ukraine.

Taiwanese media reports said a five-member delegation headed by former US

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mike Admiral (ret'd) Mullen was received by Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu, raising concerns in Beijing over the US efforts to step up its engagement with Taiwan, which China firmly affirms as part of the Chinese mainland.

China in recent months ratcheted up military preparations sending hundreds of its air force jets into Taiwan's Air Defence Zone besides beefing up its naval force keeping the self-governing breakaway island on tenterhooks.

Officials in Taiwan and the US say that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has drawn fresh attention to China's threat to

forcibly annex the self-governing island.

Besides Mullen's visit, former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was due to arrive in Taiwan on Wednesday. Both Mullen and Pompeo, known for their anti-China rhetoric during their stint under former US president Donald Trump, are due to meet Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, who Beijing blames as the ring-leader of advocating Taiwan's independence.

Much on the expected lines, the Chinese Foreign Ministry had some sharp words to criticise the visit of US officials.

"The Chinese people are firmly determined to defend

national sovereignty and territorial integrity," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here when asked about the American officials visit. "The attempt by the US to show support to Taiwan will be in vain no matter who it sent. China urges the US to abide by the one-China principle," he said.

He denounced the US guided-missile destroyer USS Ralph Johnson last Saturday sailing through the contested waters of Taiwan Straits, saying the US moves to back Taiwanese independence forces will "accelerate" their fall.

"I wonder what is the US intention behind this high

part of this passage of USS Johnson. If it intends to embolden Taiwan's independent separatist forces, then it will only accelerate the fall of Taiwan independence forces and the US will pay a heavy price for his adventurous acts," Wang said.

"If the US intends to intimidate China by this, then, in front of the 1.4 billion Chinese people united in their steely determination, the so-called military deterrence will be nothing but scrap metal," he said.

"Such US tricks involving sailing across the Taiwan Strait will better leave the show to those obsessed with hegemony," Wang said.

Notice Inviting RFP
No.RMSA/H.1/1570/2021/9181 Date: 28/02/2022
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 Happiness Index for the students of Secondary level.
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.

**Mission Director, SSA, Assam**
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog /CF/3538/21

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform that Ms. Preeti Mittal D/o Mr. Devendra Kumar Mittal is the owner in possession of SECOND FLOOR PORTION, WITH ROOF RIGHTS, MEASURING AREA 50 SQ. YDS. PART OF PROPERTY BEARING NO 10/302, SITUATED AT THE ABADI OF LALITA PARK, LAXMI NAGAR, IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE SHAKARPUR KHAS ILAQASHAHADARA DELHI 110092 vide Regd. Sale Deed dated 14.07.2020 in respect of said Floor executed by Mr. Tejpal S/o Mr. Narayan Dass in favor of Ms. Preeti Mittal D/o Mr. Devendra Kumar Mittal duly regd. in the office of SR VIII/A, Preet Vihar, Doc no. 2128. Earlier Late Smt. Sapna Alias Daya W/o Mr. Tejpal was the owner vide Reg. GPA of 2008 and died intestated on 04 July 2014. And further Regd. Relinquishment Deed dated 09.01.2020 in respect of said Floor executed by Ms. Mamta D/o Mr. Tejpal in favor of Mr. Tejpal S/o Mr. Narayan Dass, duly regd. in the office of SR-VIII/A, Preet Vihar, Vide doc no.219, Book no.1, Vol no. 1775, on pages 5 to 8, Regd. on 16.01.2020.
That now Ms. Preeti Mittal want to sale the same property to Ms. Sajida and same to be mortgage with Satin Housing finance Ltd. If any person have any objection or any right, title or interest in the property. Please raise objection with in 7 days of this notice failing which same shall be deemed as forfeited.
Advocate Mahesh Bansal Mob. No. 9968347592 Satin Housing finance Ltd.

FORM NO. INC-26
[Pursuant to rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rule, 2014]
NOTICE
Before the Ld. Regional Director, Northern Region,
In the matter of sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 and clause (a) of sub-rule (5) of Rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014
AND
In the matter of **GOLFGREEN RESIDENCY PRIVATE LIMITED**, having its registered office at KH. No. 403/268/2, H. No. C-239, New Ashok Nagar, Near Kail Badi Mandir, New Delhi-110 096
...Petitioner
NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the company proposes to make application to the Central Government under Section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Company in terms of the Special Resolution passed at the Extra Ordinary General Meeting held on Tuesday, 22nd February, 2022 to enable the Company to change its Registered Office from "State/National Capital Territory of Delhi" to the State of "Uttar Pradesh".
Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the Registered Office of the Company may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to the Ld. Regional Director, Northern Region, B-2 Wing, 2ND Floor, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi-110003, within fourteen days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company, at its registered office at KH. No. 403/268/2, H. No. C-239, New Ashok Nagar, Near Kail Badi Mandir, New Delhi-110 096.
For and behalf of the Applicant
GOLFGREEN RESIDENCY PRIVATE LIMITED
SD/-
Anil Prakash Sharma (Director)
DIN: 07123276
H.No- F-93, F Block, Rajiv Nagar, Begumpur,
Sultanpuri C Block, New Delhi-110 086

Date: 02.03.2022
Place: Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE
Known to all that my client Sheetal Chauhan is going to purchase property A2, UGF on Plot No. B-1400/7C, Block-C, khasra No. 16/1, & 2, Delhi, Saket, New Delhi from Pradeep Kumar, Hansraj, Sandeep Kumar, Nitesh Kumar Puri, Ram Nath Gupta, Hans Raj And mortgaging the same with PCHFL and they purchased property from Jai Prakash, Sunder Singh, Anita wd/o Mr. Sandeep and they derived property after death of Muktyar Singh and Sandeep S/o Muktyar by virtue of relinquishment deed dt. 10.02.2020. It is informed that any deal with said property by any person except my Publication & sale institution shall be deemed as null and void. If any person is having right in said property then he may contact and apprise his claim to undersigned within 8 days of this publication.
AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760, Dwarka Sector, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
Ph: -95950113918

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General public on behalf of Fullerton India Home Finance Company, That, Mr. Sunil Kumar is claiming owner (attorney of Property bearing No. 6/23A, area measuring 100 sq.Yds., out of total area measuring 200 sq. Yds., Situated in the area of Village/Tik Nagar, New Delhi. The said property by virtue of Regd. GPA, Notarized Agreement & regd. will all dated 14.05.2003 executed by Mrs. Tara Rani who was owner of the said property by virtue of Co-venance deed dated 12.05.1999. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned claiming owner/attorney holder want to sell Entire First floor of said property to Mr. Rohit Grotia who is taking Loan from Fullerton for purchase of the said floor, if anybody has any objection/for the ownership of above owner /attorney holder over the said property, its sale, Mortgage/litigation, & any kind of objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.
Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, 12nd Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N. Delhi-15
Ph: 011-41112527-28, kumarandassociatesadvocates@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to public at large that my Client **Indusbank Ltd.**, having of one its Branch at Jhansi/Jhansi intends to grant Loan/Financial facility to Sh. Subhash Chand Bansal S/o Late Sh. Mannu Mal Bansal against 'Built-up Property' bearing Plot no. 17, area measuring 340 Sq. Yds., in Block-D, Situated in Residential Colony known as Green Park Main, New Delhi".
Aforesaid Sh. Subhash Chand Bansal claims to be the owner of the above-mentioned property by virtue of Deed of Family Partition dated 23.02.1999 duly registered as Document No. 2880n 23.02.1999 with the Sub Registrar- Office, Delhi. Any person(s) who has/have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to right, title or interest in the above-mentioned property in any manner whatsoever, must immediately contact the undersigned in writing alongwith all supporting documents in respect of their claim(s) or objection(s). If no such claim is received with in a period of 10 Days from the date of Publication of this notice, then it will be presumed that no one has any paramount right, title or interest in the above-mentioned property and even if someone has any claim/objection, he/she/ they have given up the same.
Himanshu Ahuja (Advocate)
Contact No.: 9810310373, 011-41830049
E-mail Address : alegal@rediffmail.com

GST collection up 18% at over ₹1.33 lakh cr in Feb

Omicron impact dents month-on-month mop-up

New Delhi: GST collections in February grew 18 per cent to over Rs 1.33 lakh crore in February even as the Omicron wave dented the month-on-month collection momentum.

This is for the fifth time in the current fiscal that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection has crossed Rs 1.30 lakh crore mark. Also, this is the first time, cess collection has crossed the Rs 10,000 crore mark, signifying recovery in certain key sectors, especially automobile sales, the Finance Ministry said on Tuesday.

The GST revenues had hit a record high of Rs 1,40,986 crore in January.

"The gross GST revenue collected in February 2022 is Rs 1,33,026 crore of which Central GST is Rs 24,435 crore, State GST is Rs 30,779 crore, Integrated GST is Rs 67,471 crore (including Rs 33,837 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 10,340 crore (including Rs 638 crore collected on import of goods)," the ministry said in a statement.

The revenues for February 2022 are 18 per cent higher

than the GST revenues in the same month last year and 26 per cent higher than in February 2020.

During the month, revenues from import of goods were 38 per cent higher, and that from the domestic transaction are 12 per cent higher than the year-ago period.

The ministry said February, being a 28-day month, normally witnesses revenues lower than in January.

This growth in February 2022 should also be seen in the context of partial lockdowns, weekend and night curfews and various restrictions that were put in place by many states due to the Omicron wave, which peaked around January 20, it added.

During the current fiscal, the gross mop-up in April was over Rs 1.39 lakh crore, in May (Rs 97,821 crore), June (Rs 92,800 crore), July (over Rs 1.16 lakh crore), August (over Rs 1.12 lakh crore), September (over Rs 1.17 lakh crore), October (over Rs 1.30 lakh crore), November (Rs 1.31 lakh crore) and December (over Rs 1.29 lakh crore).

Deloitte India Partner MS Mani said that GST collections exceeding Rs 1.33 lakh crore despite the challenging pandemic situation on January 22 indicate that the collections are now on a stable trajectory and the FY22 targets would be exceeded.

"While on an overall basis, the collections are 18 per cent higher than the same period last year, there is significant divergence amongst states with increases in the range of 2 per cent to 23 per cent amongst the large states," Mani added.

NA Shah Associates Partner Parag Mehta said the GST audits for March 2021 have also been completed on February 28 and balance tax payable due to errors and omissions has also led to higher collections.

"The growth trajectory in collections should now be in this range only," Mehta added.

Tax Connect Advisory Partner Vivek Jalan said the robust GST Collection is a result of restrictions on availing of ITC by the GST departments across the country. **PTI**

Number of ultra HNIs in India increases 11% in 2021 at 13,637

India 3rd in billionaire population globally

New Delhi: The number of ultra-high-net worth-individuals, having net assets of USD 30 million (about Rs 226 crore) or more, in India increased 11 per cent last year on the back of buoyant equity markets and digital revolution, according to Knight Frank.

India also ranked third in billionaire population globally in 2021. US is number one with 748 billionaires, followed by Chinese mainland at 554 billionaires and India with 145 billionaires.

In its latest edition of The Wealth Report 2022, property consultant Knight Frank said the number of ultra-high-net-worth-individuals (UHNWs) globally increased by 9.3 per cent in 2021 to 6,10,569, from 5,58,828 in the previous year.

"In India, the number of UHNWs (net assets with USD 30 million or more) has grown by 11 per cent YoY (year-on-year) in 2021, the highest percentage growth in APAC," Knight Frank said in a statement.

The number of UHNWs

in India grew to 13,637 in 2021 from 12,287 in the previous year.

Amongst key Indian cities, Bengaluru witnessed the highest growth in the number of UHNWs at 17.1 per cent to 352, followed by Delhi (12.4 per cent, 210) and Mumbai (9 per cent, 1,596).

The consultant has pegged the number of UHNWs growing 39 per cent by 2026 to 19,006 from 13,637 in 2021. In 2016, the number of UHNWs stood at 7,401.

Knight Frank India Chairman and Managing Director Shishir Bajjal said: "Equity markets and digital adoption have been the key factors driving the growth of UHNWs in India. The growth in younger, self-made UHNWs has been incredible in India and we foresee them to drive new investment themes and innovation."

With a healthy growth in the UHNWI and billionaire population, he said India is expected to be one of the fastest growing countries amongst its global peers, further strengthening itself economically and emerging as a superpower in different sectors.

As per the report, around 69 per cent of the super wealthy

individuals in India are expected to witness an increase of over 10 per cent in their net worth in 2022.

"Asia continues to be the forerunner in the billionaires' club contributing to 36 per cent of the total billionaires in the world in 2021. India has ranked 3rd in terms of billionaires' population in 2021 following US and China," the statement said.

For the first time, Knight Frank has examined the size of the 'next generation' of the world's UHNWI population and assesses what that could mean for the property markets.

"Globally, it is estimated that 135,192 UHNWs are self-made and under the age of 40, accounting for around a fifth of the total UHNWI population. India has ranked 6th in percentage growth of the UHNWI population that is self-made and under the age of 40 years," it said.

Over the next five years, Knight Frank forecasts that the global UHNWs population will grow by a further 28 per cent, with Asia and Australasia at 33 per cent each seeing the largest growth, followed by North America (28 per cent) and Latin America (26 per cent). **PTI**

RBI imposes penalty on 3 co-op banks



Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty on three cooperative banks, including Nagrik Sahakari Bank Maryadit, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, for deficiencies in regulatory compliances.

A fine of Rs 4.50 lakh has been imposed on Nagrik Sahakari Bank Maryadit for contravention of the directions issued by the RBI to urban cooperative banks on exposure norms and statutory/other restrictions-UCBs and Know Your Customer (KYC), the central bank said.

The Reserve Bank has imposed a penalty of Rs 1 lakh on Jila Sahakari Kendriya Bank Maryadit, Panna for con-

travention of certain provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund Scheme, 2014 and KYC.

Also, a penalty of Rs 25,000 was imposed on Jila Sahakari Kendriya Bank Maryadit, Satna for non-compliance with the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund Scheme, 2014.

The RBI, however, added the penalties are based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the banks with their respective customers. **PTI**

CryptoWire enters into pacts with Bitbns to commence trading on index IC15 from April

New Delhi: CryptoWire on Tuesday said it has entered into an agreement with cryptocurrency exchange Bitbns to commence trading on India's first global crypto index IC15 beginning next month.

With the commencement of trading on IC15, an index of cryptocurrencies, around 4 million users of Bitbns will get the benefit of trading on IC15, CryptoWire, an app that provides insights about the new asset class, said in a statement.

Market participants, individuals and institutions get the advantage of spreading their risks by taking a view on the entire market versus concentrated risk on a single currency.

The company said IC15 will now be traded on Bitbns from the first week of April, giving its users greater market

leverage.

It pointed out that liquidity-related risks would be mitigated by trading on the index.

It will broaden the product offerings through Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) and other wealth management products, derivatives and basket trading for arbitrage benefits, it said.

This arrangement is similar to Trading of S&P-Dow Jones and FTSE equity indices or ETF products, which trade on NYSE, CME, Nasdaq and London Stock Exchange. Globally, Galaxy Crypto Index is one of the most popular indices for the crypto sector.

Commenting on the strategic partnership CryptoWire Managing Director Joseph Massey said, "IC15 is India's first Global Index of Crypto-currencies, and it represents more than 80

per cent of crypto assets by market capitalization. As the crypto-currency market develops and widens, the participants would find the IC15 index offering of much greater institutional use through ETF and alternate wealth management product."

The licensing arrangement by CryptoWire would entail royalty payments consisting of a mix of fixed and revenue dependent variable charge to cover and support research and development work, Massey said, adding that CryptoWire is neither a crypto exchange nor a crypto-currency.

An index is the most visible barometer representing the business dynamics happening in the underlying real and digital economy, it said.

The IC15 index represents crypto-currencies which have

a large value chain integrating the real economy with blockchain and digital economy.

Bitbns Founder and CEO Gaurav Dahake said, trading in IC15 index will bring India on the global crypto map as the index prices will be seen globally and enable the industry to monitor broad-based movement in the crypto industry.

The index will also show the market price implications of various news and policy decisions taken globally, Dahake said.

Bitbns has 4 million users and 156 coin-pairs traded on the exchange.

It is to be noted that the government, the RBI and the SEBI have been cautioning people about the cryptocurrencies that could be a "high risk" area. **PTI**

Coal India output rises 4% to 64 MT in February

New Delhi: State-owned CIL produced 64.3 million tonnes of coal in February, registering a growth of nearly 4 per cent compared to the year-ago period.

Coal India Ltd (CIL) had produced 61.9 MT of coal in the corresponding month of previous fiscal.

In a statement on Tuesday, the company said that stepping up its output tempo, it produced 64.3 MT of coal in February.

On a month-on-month basis, CIL's average production increased to 2.3 MT per day in February. So, despite being three days lesser than January, the sequential production in February was at par with the previous month. CIL's all out efforts are focused on ending FY'22 in the realm of 630 MT, according to the statement.

CIL's production at 542.4 MT during April-February period of FY'22 was a historic high for this period. Coal output surged ahead 27.3 MT in absolute terms on a year-on-year comparison.

"The company expects to post the highest ever production by the closure of FY'22, going past the previous high of 607 MT recorded in FY'19," the company said.

CIL's off-take in February has scored a strong 12 per cent double-digit growth at 57.4 MT against same month last year. The gain in absolute terms was 6.2 MT.

Till February of the current fiscal, CIL's total off-take was nearly 600 MT. Only once earlier, the off-take crossed that mark when the company despatched 608 MT in FY'19, which is the highest to the date.

Kuhoo raises USD 20 mn from West Bridge Capital

Mumbai: Kuhoo, a fintech startup focused on student loans, has raised USD 20 million (about Rs 151 crore) from West Bridge Capital in seed funding.

Kuhoo is floated by banking veteran Prashant A Bhonsle, who had earlier worked with ICICI Bank, HDFC Credila and InCred.

The digital platform provides online loans to students aspiring to study in universities, both in India and abroad, Bhonsle said.

It is also the first student loan provider to offer products across various streams like engineering, MBA, executive education, online courses, coaching classes, and even new age courses, he added. **PTI**

Mahindra total sales increases 89% to 54,455 units in Feb

New Delhi: Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) on Tuesday said its total sales increased by 89 per cent to 54,455 units in February.

The company's total sales stood at 28,777 units in February 2021.

The Mumbai-based auto major's passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market rose by 80 per cent to 27,663 units last month as against 15,391 units in February last year, the auto major said in a statement.

Commercial vehicle sales increased to 23,978 units last month as compared with 11,559 units in February 2021.

The company said its exports last month stood at 2,814 units as against 1,827 units in the same month last year.

"All segments showed robust growth including SUVs at 79 per cent, which registered the highest ever monthly volume. We expect demand to continue to remain strong as the Covid situation eases further.

"We continue to closely monitor the semiconductor-related parts supply and take corrective action as appropriate," M&M Automotive Division CEO Veejay Nakra noted. **PTI**

Ashok Leyland total sales rise 7% in Feb

New Delhi: Hinduja flagship firm Ashok Leyland on Tuesday reported a 7 per cent rise in commercial vehicle sales to 14,657 units in February.

The company had sold 13,703 units in the same month last year, Ashok Leyland said in a statement.

Domestic sales were up 4 per cent at 13,281 units against 12,776 units in February 2021, it added.

Medium and heavy commercial vehicle sales grew 16 per cent to 8,280 units compared to 7,114 units in the year-ago month.

Sales of light commercial vehicles in the domestic market were down 12 per cent at 5,001 units against 5,662 units in February 2021, the company said. **PTI**

Maruti Suzuki sales decline marginally in February

New Delhi: The country's largest car maker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Tuesday reported a marginal drop in total wholesales at 1,64,056 units in February.

The company had sold 1,64,469 units in February 2021, MSI said in a regulatory filing.Last month, the company's domestic sales slipped 8.46 per cent to 1,40,035 units as against 1,52,983 units in February 2021, it added.

"The shortage of electronic components had a minor impact on the production of vehicles which are primarily sold in the domestic market. The company took all possible measures to minimise the impact," MSI said.Sales of mini cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, fell 17.81 per cent to

19,691 units as compared to 23,959 in the same month last year.

Similarly, sales in the compact segment, including models such as Swift, Celerio, Ignis, Baleno and Dzire, slumped 3.38 per cent to 77,795 units as against 80,517 cars in February 2021.Sales of mid-sized sedan Ciaz increased to 1,912 units as compared to 1,510 units in February 2021.

Utility vehicle sales, including Vitara Brezza, S-Cross and Ertiga, declined to 25,360 units as compared to 26,884 vehicles in the year-ago month, MSI said.

Exports jumped over two-fold to 24,021 units as against 11,486 units in the corresponding month last year, the company said. **PTI**

Fintech startup Snapmint raises USD 9 mn from angel investors

Mumbai: Snapmint, a buy-now-pay-later platform, has raised USD 9 million in its series-A funding from a clutch of investors and industry leaders led by Prashasta Seth of Prudent Investment Managers.

The round also saw participation of 9Unicorns, Anicut Capital, Negen Capital, Livspace founder Ramakant Sharma, Usama Fayyad of Open Insights among other angels, the city-based startup said in a note on Tuesday.

The fintech platform has over 4 million consumers on its platform, many of them from smaller towns, and serves over 27,000 pin-codes.

With the investment,

Snapmint plans to expand its network of merchants, launch a suite of innovative products and add more customers, it said.

Snapmint was founded in 2017 by four IIT Bombay batchmates Nalin Agrawal, Anil Gelra, Abhineet Sawa and Rahul Agarwal.

The USD 810-billion domestic retail market is the fourth largest in the world, and affordable credit options will continue to boost growth of this market.

According to a Bain & Co report, 80 per cent of growth in new e-retail customers has come from small towns in 2021. **PTI**

Ashneer Grover quits as BharatPe MD soon after getting board meeting agenda

New Delhi: Fintech firm BharatPe's managing director Ashneer Grover has resigned minutes after receiving an upcoming board meeting agenda, which included consideration of action against him based on the report submitted by advisory firm PwC.

Ashneer Grover resigned as Managing Director and from the Board Director of BharatPe minutes after receiving the agenda for an upcoming Board meeting that included submission of the PwC report regarding his conduct and considering actions based on it. The Board reserves the right to take action based on the report's findings," Bharatpe said in a statement. **PTI**

The board meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday to discuss the PwC report findings on Grover's conduct. There have been allegations of financial irregularities against him.

According to sources, Grover in his resignation letter said that he is being forced to bid adieu to a company of which he is a founder. Grover alleged in the letter that he and his family have been embroiled in baseless and targeted attacks by a few individuals, who are ready to not only harm his reputation, but also the reputation of the company.

Queries sent to Grover did not elicit any immediate reply. **PTI**

Honda Cars wholesales dip 23% in Feb

New Delhi: Honda Cars India on Tuesday reported a 23 per cent decline in domestic sales to 7,187 units for February.

The company had dispatched 9,324 units to dealers in the domestic market during February 2021.

Exports stood at 2,337 units last month as compared with 987 units in February 2021.

"We are witnessing improvement in consumer sentiment as COVID-situation seems to be tapering off and markets are opening-up. This is positive for the industry.

"On the supply side, chip shortage continued to impact our production and despatches in Feb'22. We hope the situation improves in future so that we can meet the market demand more effectively," Honda Cars India Director (Marketing and Sales) Yuichi Murata said in a statement. **PTI**

UPI moment for education

Digital University, built on a networked hub-spoke model, would enable institutions to offer online courses with no limits on seats and no difference in recognition between online and conventional degrees, says DR ABHAY KARANDIKAR



The UPI was launched on April 11, 2016. It is hard to believe that just five years ago, digital payments via the UPI did not exist - in January 2022 alone, 4.6 billion transactions with a value of 8.3 lac crore rupees were made possible via UPI, with 297 participating banks and innumerable apps. The success of the UPI lies in hub and spoke model where the hub (NPCI) ensures that the banks, public and private players- spokes are not only able to seamlessly interoperate with each other via the open protocol of the UPI, but also maintain their individual ability to innovate and bridge the last mile with consumers, in their own hyper local way. The protocol allows for hubs to also interoperate with each other, thus enabling multiple countries to participate in the ecosystem.

The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement of the establishment of a Digital University as part of the budget speech on February 1, 2022 is a similar transformative moment for higher education. The announcement mentioned the establishment of a Digital University that aims to provide students across the country access to world-class quality universal education with a personalised learning experience at their doorsteps, in dif-

ferent Indian languages and formats.

To understand the magnitude of impact that the Digital University can bring about, let us look at it from a student's point of view today. The number of reputed institutions is limited and hence there is a race for seats in these institutions, with cut off marks for admissions going up every year. Once admitted, students can't take a break - missing a year essentially means quitting the programme. Students can't change institutions mid-course, since enrolling in another institution essentially means starting from scratch again. After graduation, students need to keep returning to the institute to get verified transcripts.

In contrast, the Digital University, built on a networked hub-spoke model, would enable institutions to offer online courses with no limits on seats and no difference in recognition between online and conventional degrees. Socio-economically deprived students who normally find it hard to secure admission to top institutes because of lack of access, would be able to attend the same class taught by the top teachers in the field. Evaluation can be based on an online proctored exam or a computer-based assessment. This hub

and spoke construct has the potential to facilitate the creation of a thriving ecosystem of both public and private technical education providers.

Just like the Internet operates on several open standards that enable billions of computing devices across the world to talk to each other, the Digital University will be powered by several standards that define the foundations of modern education. The most important one is the National Academic Depository (NAD), which is the storehouse of all academic data and awards for students, including certificates, diplomas, degrees, marksheets - all duly digitised and lodged by academic bodies. These electronic documents can be easily accessed by students on Digilocker (a provider of NAD services), just like our vaccine certificates or driving licences are. These electronic documents will not only eliminate the need for students to go to their colleges to obtain verified transcripts but will also eliminate fraudulent practices like forging of paper certificates, thus maintaining the authenticity, integrity and confidentiality of the award.

The Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), powered by NAD, is a credit based system that helps a stu-

dent earn credits for every course taken. A degree is awarded when mandated credits towards a program are earned by a student. This enables a student to graduate with the same degree, by taking a combination of courses based on their strengths and interests, even cutting across disciplines to be awarded dual degrees if requisite credits for both degree programs are satisfied. ABC also provides a credit based system that enables a student to transfer credits awarded to them for one program from an institution to another institution, with their consent. This enables true study mobility for students from one program to another, from one institution to another, even if the student happens to take a break between two courses within a programme.

In order to help institutions interoperate with each other, the National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR) defines technology principles, standards and best practices around data interoperability, governance, quality, security and privacy. NDEAR identifies the building blocks for education that can be implemented by several public and private partners collaboratively using open source software. Imagine a student from one institution being able to

login to the digital library of another institution, or an app by a private player using a common login that verifies their student credentials.

Digital University will not only help push the limits of science and technology ushering in new inventions and discoveries, but will also help increase the number of institutions and courses that students aspire to go to. Coupled with the online medium that most of these courses would be offered in, the number of seats available for students will also multiply many fold - thus reducing or hopefully eliminating the stressful race of students for the limited seats that exist in physical campuses today.

In five years from now, we very well could be in a very different world of education than we experience today. Only time will tell, but one thing is certain - like any new area, it will take a collaborative effort of both industry and academia, technologists and educators to build on the strong foundations laid out by this construct of a Digital University.

The writer is Dr Abhay Karandikar, Director of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur and Rahul Kulkarni, Chief Technologist, Samagra and Co-founder, DoNew

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

BSC AND MSC COURSES IN AI AND CS

The University of Birmingham Dubai is inviting applications for its BSc and MSc courses in Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science.

Course date: September 2022

Entry Requirements and admission details: Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science BSc students with 75% from Standard 12 from ISC, CBSE, Maharashtra and West Bengal State Board or 80% from Other State boards will be eligible to apply.

Mathematics: This course also requires students to have 85% or above in Mathematics in Standard 12. If students do not meet the entry requirements for maths, they may be eligible to take a maths entry test.

Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science MSc a four-year or a three-year bachelor's degree in any subject other than computing with 55-60% from a recognised institution in India. Applicants can be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Application process: Applications for September 2022 are open. To submit an online application, please click

Admissions

OPEN

on the Apply Now button on the course page.

UG AND PG AT IIAD

The Indian Institute of Art and Design (IIAD) in collaboration with Kingston School of Art, London offers undergraduate programmes in Fashion Design, Fashion Business Management, Communication Design and Interior Architecture & Design and postgraduate programmes in Fashion Design and Fashion Business Management.

Website: www.iiad.edu.in

Admissions Process: IIAD Entrance Test

Last date to apply: 14th April, 2022

Exam Date: 24th April 2022(Online) & 23rd and 24th April 2022 (Online and Offline)

Admission Helpline: +91 98713 83633, 11 4138 0000

Webinar on how IOT tech brings change in life

PNS ■ UTTAR PRADESH

The Sanskriti School of Engineering and Information Technology organised webinar on how IOT technology brings change in life. An IoT ecosystem consists of web-enabled smart devices that use embedded systems, such as processors, sensors and communication hardware, to collect, send and act on data they acquire from their surroundings. The webinar was aimed to understand the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to aid in making data collection process easier and more dynamic. Prof Dr U S Panday (department of CSE, Delhi University) was the keynote speaker of the Webinar.

He says, "The internet of things helps people live and work smarter, as well as gain complete control over their lives. In addition to offering smart devices to automate homes, IoT is essential to business with a real-time look into how their systems really work, delivering insights into everything from the performance of machines to supply chain and logistics operations. IOT is playing important role whether to select correct news from fake one in media houses or use of robotics for operating in OT".

How the insurance sector has evolved

With businesses and lives subject to risk and uncertainties, the importance and demand of insurance has increased more than ever, says LAYAK SINGH

The aim of insurance is to reduce financial uncertainty and make accidental loss manageable. It provides financial support and reduces uncertainties in business and human life. In simple terms, insurance is a means of protection from financial loss. It uses a hedge against the risk of a contingent, uncertain loss. The insurance sector has evolved over time, covering several aspects of life. With businesses and lives subject to risk and uncertainties, the importance and demand of insurance has increased more than ever. This has brought a big change in the insurance sector, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. A plethora of career opportunities have opened in the insurance sector and the disruption of technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Blockchain has further increased the demand of skilled workforce in the industry.

Insurance is a fast-growing sector, offering brilliant career opportunities with the advent of insurance technology and rise of insurtech startups in this space. The job roles or profiles in the insurance industry include actuaries, underwriters, claim adjusters, etc. While actuaries calculate probabilities of future events, underwriters determine

what risks are worth insuring. Claims adjusters analyse losses to determine how much people or businesses are owed through their insurance policies.

Apart from that, data scientists, sales agents, marketers, customer service representatives and risk managers play integral roles in making the insurance industry function. Ideally, an insurance career is a good choice for millennials as they are the future of insurance. They possess many of the qualities that recruiters in the insurance industry are looking for, such as an affinity for teamwork, an entrepreneurial spirit and problems solving skills.

Qualifications needed to start a career in insurance sector

Minimum educational qualification to join the insurance sector is 10+2 or equivalent. The candidates need to obtain a licence to work in this sector for which they need to appear in exams conducted by the Insurance Institute of India. In addition to this a degree in finance, business, economics, or mathematics may prove to be more helpful.

Technology/tools used in training or education for insurance sector

Insurance companies are today using cutting edge technologies like AI, Machine



Layak Singh
Co- Founder & CEO, Artivatic.AI

Learning, Internet of Things (IoT) to prepare insurance students for better risk management and predictive analysis. Institutes offering courses in insurance and management have made new technologies, apart from telematics and social media data, as part of their curriculum.

Online courses available for a career in insurance sector

The Banking and Financial sector was one of the first adopters of technology-based learning. E-learning and online courses help insurance students to keep at par with changing norms and regulations, new products as well as processes in the market along with regular mandatory compliance training. Many institutes are today providing online courses to candidates who want to make a

career in the insurance sector.

Skills required in insurance industry

Depending on the role, specific soft and technical skills are required in the insurance industry. For instance, maths and numeracy skills are required for actuaries, good communication skills are required for insurance salesmen, analytical, quantitative, and decision-making skills are required from underwriters. The job of claim adjusters is investigative in nature, so it needs analytical and critical thinking skills. Apart from that, customer service, organising abilities, problem-solving, attention to detail and presentation are some common skills needed for a successful career in the insurance industry. Understanding of new technologies like AI, ML, Blockchain, IoT being used in the insurance sector has also become a prerequisite now. Insurance industry also needs Computer Vision Developers, Data Annotation Engineers, UI designers, Product Specialists (Insurance) & Quality Analysts.

Pandemic has hugely changed the insurance industry

After the pandemic, most people are not visiting banks or financial institutions for getting insurance or loans, so remote

technology and remote communication is flowing through data in the form of mobile apps. This makes it crucial for insurance companies to upskill their agents and other people engaged in underwriting or risk management. The paperwork or legacy system is slowly dissolving and now the insurance process is moving towards digitization. Insurance companies will have to make their employees understand the use of AI, data, ML in digitisation in the processing of risk, avoiding frauds and preventing claims.

Before the pandemic, health insurance had only 6-10 per cent penetration in the market, but now people are coming for their protection, their family's protection, business protection and for that reason, the growth has been changed. Currently, the penetration for health insurance has increased to 20 per cent in the insurance sector.

Similarly, earlier 90 per cent sales used to happen offline, but now online sales have reached almost 20 per cent as people have understood the need for the internet. Several startups have been shut down and employees do not have better health or life insurance, so the buying and awareness has increased dramatically.

Unprecedented growth of E-Commerce

Over the past two decades, the FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) sector in India has witnessed remarkable transformation especially in terms of adopting online sales across different categories. Facilitated by changes in consumer behaviour, rapid urbanisation, rising disposable incomes and internet penetration, e-commerce has grown exponentially providing growth opportunities to both big and small players in the FMCG industry. As per reports by Nielsen, a market research firm, the contribution of e-commerce to total FMCG sales is expected to go up to 11 per cent by 2030. With huge opportunities for growth and development in the e-commerce segment, the competition in the FMCG sector is set to become tighter where both offline and online retail strategies will hold the key.

Growth of E-Commerce

From \$38.5 billion in 2017, the Indian e-commerce market is expected to reach \$200 billion by 2026. Growing at a YoY rate of 5 per cent, the e-commerce market in India is expected to become the second-largest by 2034, surpassing that of the United States.

E-Commerce trends will positively impact FMCG businesses

Digital innovation and the growth of e-commerce has led to the emergence of several new players in the market who are giving stiff competition to existing players. With differentiated business models optimised to serve the rising demands of the present consumer, these players are expected to contribute to more sales for the FMCG sector over the coming years.

Apart from that, new and existing players are re-inventing their business processes by forming links with stable and

bigger e-commerce businesses.

With the development of e-commerce platforms for grocery stores and local retailers aggressively underway, it is further going to contribute to sales and overall business growth in the FMCG sector.

As a growing number of consumers are opting for contactless and safe deliveries through e-commerce channels, online platforms, as well as local neighbourhood stores, are also witnessing an uptick in demand. Enhanced product information and valuable reviews are some of the other factors that are driving consumers towards online shopping.

The landscape of shopping has dramatically transformed over the last few months. While retail still holds a lot of significance, e-commerce has taken off and is expected to further aid FMCG brands in driving sales, increasing market share and attracting new customers. With e-commerce encouraging a direct-to-customer (D2C) model, FMCG businesses are benefiting in different ways such as better monitoring, quickly reaching out to consumers and building trust.

Omni-Channel strategy is important

It isn't just about replicating an offline strategy—a personalised experience for the consumers is essential. From product pictures to precise and clear brand descriptions to various product portfolios for digitised platforms, FMCG businesses should look to enhance the scope of their online offerings by increasing coverage for delivery; offering more convenient and quicker delivery options; and providing items or products that are hard to find offline.

The writer is Manish Aggarwal, Director, Bikanor, Bikanervala Foods Pvt Ltd

Lawpreneurz announces UPSC & Judiciary Courses

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Lawpreneurz, India's one of its kind digital law learning platform announced to widen its scope of course offerings to judiciary and USPC aspirants in India. Founded in 2017, Lawpreneurz has been instrumental in amplifying quality education in the domain of India's legal education system.

Its newly launched courses

on UPSC and Judiciary are designed with the purpose to provide innovative solutions to students. This expansion of courses offered has been launched to ease the struggles students face due to constantly evolving nature of the education system.

It includes a broad selection of custom made quality videos, solving previous year papers and test series, live doubt solving sessions, all

curated by learned professionals in the field of law for reinforced learning. The UPSC curriculum comprises courses on Indian Polity and Governance, Economics, History, Reasoning, Geography, Quantitative Aptitude, Science & Technology, etc.

Raunaq Kakkar, the Founder and Director of Lawpreneurz comments, "We are delighted to introduce

courses on UPSC and Judiciary. At Lawpreneurz, we are committed to provide one stop solution for legal education where students can realise their dream of cracking some of the toughest competitive examinations in the country. Through our certified courses and highly proficient faculty, we look forward to offer the students an extensive and integrated education in the domain of law."

SP Jain receives high ranking in Quilt 2021 survey

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The SP Jain School of Global Management, a Forbes 12 ranked business school, has outperformed every university in Australia in the percentage of overseas student employment (full-time). The other parameters were overall employment rate, labour force participation rate and median salary. Compared with the 40 Australian universities across all disciplines, SP Jain outperformed the university aver-

age by a large measure on three of the four employment outcomes.

Commenting on these rankings, Nitish Jain, President of SP Jain Global, says "We are delighted to have done well across all parameters. Many factors are used in determining these rankings. For us, graduate success is key. The impact of SP Jain's Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program is reflected through the success of our many alumni who are working

at top organisations literally all around the world."

"Being a student-centric institution of higher learning, SP Jain focuses on all three parameters - Input (admissions), Processes (Curriculum) and Output (placement). Clearly, the placement of our students and the resounding success of our alumni aligns quite well with what we've seen from this recent 2021 QILT graduate outcomes survey. Every effort is taken by the team at SP Jain to ensure that no

stone is unturned with a primary objective on student success and well-being and in transforming them to become responsible citizens," says Dr Vaidyanathan (Vaidy) Jayaraman, Dean of the School's UG Programs & Professor of Supply Chain Operations, Data Sciences & Analytics.

SP Jain Global's BBA is a 4-year multi-city programme where students live, study and work in three of the world's leading business capitals.



Supply chain is here to stay and will be a top job creator for the next many decades. Industry needs knowledgeable and passionate candidates and the opportunities are many, says PRADEEP SHUKLA

Post Graduate Diploma in Supply Chain Management is often termed as equal to an MBA in Supply Chain Management. It is a course programmed by many institutions and colleges, both Government and private to give an in-depth understanding of Management of the Supply Chain.

It is a 24 months course giving you insights and in-depth learning on many of the supply chain attributes like Inventory, Purchase, Logistics, Distribution, Supplier management, Quality Management and strategic planning. Apart from the above mentioned attributes of supply chain management it gives you a bird eye view of how it should be managed during various aspects of the value chain. Many colleges have a course like this and is available for both full time and part time students. Many colleges have now started offering these courses online also with self study mode or in alignment with study centres. Enrollment in any of these modes is a good choice during current COVID conditions. If somebody

already has a formal degree you can take up PGDM - Supply Chain for career enhancement. These courses are available only for Graduate candidates. Never forget to check the authenticity of the institution. It is important that you get this diploma from a recognised University/College/Institutions.

Those who don't see supply chain as good enough would love knowing that India's supply chain costs or logistics cost is estimated to be around 13 per cent of the total GDP of India. The global average is around 8 per cent. These statistics will help you understand that there is plenty of space and creativity and efficiency that can be achieved when it comes to managing supply chains in India. Not only it employs around 8 per cent of the total workforce of India but according to NSDC it was one of the top 5 job creators in India. These courses are not worthy enough for knowledge enhancement for fresh or working executives, but it is also creating good jobs for the candidates. According to National Skill Development corporation (NSDC), India



Pradeep Shukla
Group Director & CEO PrimoLCS

employs around 16.74 million people in the logistics sector. This will be growing to around 28.4 million workforce in a couple of years. According to a report of TeamLease India 2021 there will be a minimum 3 million jobs created by year 2022 and 120000 jobs in warehousing alone. Supply chain job requirements have been accelerated due to the current COVID situation the world is facing. This sector has seen unprecedented demand for the workforce in these tough times. The logistics workforce has been super busy despite

the pandemic, because the world cannot stop and people in the Logistics workforce are on the forefront for people's lives to go on.

The PGDM - Supply Chain/Logistics is the key to acquiring knowledge and jobs in this ever-growing field. It opens plenty of opportunities for skilled people who have done this course. It opens up for you the Transportation Sector, Manufacturing Companies, Shipping and Logistics, E-Commerce sector and many product companies, apart from many unlisted sectors here. Just remember there is no company in the world that does not need a supply chain manager. These jobs are important in nature in terms of organisation and also it is a value added service to the core industry which will help organisations achieve better supply chains and cost effective solutions for better storage and movement of material.

If you get this PGDM from some well rated colleges/institutions it will open up much wider chances of you getting employment

in top companies. This opens the opportunity to be employed as supply chain, Transportation, Inventory, Purchase, Supplier Network Managers and many other senior positions. These jobs can fetch you anywhere between 5 to 15 lacs per annum depending upon your work experience and other factors involved. It is one of the best courses to do because even when the markets are slowed or the growth is stagnant the job market for the supply chain market is never slow and will keep you employed even the roughest and toughest of the time, just like the COVID we are in. Across world services didn't stop in these pandemic times apart from essential services such as supply chain services. People need goods and we supply chain people to make sure it is available all across the value chain.

One thing I can say with confidence, supply chain is here to stay and will be a top job creator for the next many decades. Industry needs candidates with knowledge and passion and the opportunities are mind boggling.

'Continued innovation is key to staying a step ahead'

Entrepreneurs need to keep returning to the drawing board, unlearning, and relearning skills, while also learning to adapt and stay responsive to new developments, says ANISH SRIKRISHNA

India is home to the third largest start-up ecosystem in the world with a growing number of unicorns. Yet, statistics indicate that most of them fail to make it to the five-year mark. While the factors influencing the scaling up of startups are complex, staying the course can get harder with time and increasing competition.

To maintain consistency, structure growth and achieve set goals, certain core areas that will aid the building of a startup into a successful venture are:

Maintain the strategic vision

The first step for any business is setting a strategic vision. It sets the long-term objective for the organisation, thereby creating the goalposts for its development. A strategic vision not only provides the company with its purpose but is also essential in evaluating its growth and performance vis-a-vis the competition.

Lead by example

Most successful entrepreneurs lead from the front. Employees are more likely to put in the extra effort when they see their leaders going the extra mile. Values like honesty, punctuality, and professionalism are critical in building a cohesive atmosphere at work.

Be disruptive

An innovative product or service is the most ideal for a startup to differentiate itself from its competitors. However, for the idea to be sustainable, it is critical to ensure that it adds real value to the consumer's life. For instance, PayTM enabled almost instant online payments while Zomato streamlined food deliveries across cities. While innovation can help one begin, it is equally important to continue innovating to ensure long-term survival.

Ensure constant skilling

In a rapidly changing work landscape, businesses must focus on building a dynamic workforce that has the right mix of skills.

Raise capital

Funding remains one of the top challenges for most startups. Even those who manage to secure the initial seed money often find themselves struggling to raise the additional funds necessary to scale up their operations. It is, therefore, imperative that entrepreneurs have a robust and well-considered strategy in place for securing further investments as they continue to grow.

Nurture open communication

In the era of remote working, com-



Anish Srikrishna
CEO, Times Professional Learning

munication has become the cornerstone of organisational efficiency. For bootstrapped startups, communication is essential for team building. Open communication creates transparency in decision-making, facilitates conflict resolution, garners employee and customer trust, and ensures that everyone stays on the same page.

Adopt technology

Technology has allowed startups to develop business models that facilitate maximum efficiency along with cost optimisation. However, as technology is subject to rapid evolutions, startups need to keep pace to ensure that they stay relevant.

Ensure sales growth

Ultimately, the success of any business depends on consistent sales growth. Apart from the innovations in products and marketing, a robust supply chain is critical for ensuring seamless delivery.

Leading a startup requires a long-term vision, commitment to quality and people, agility in evolving in response to the dynamic business environment, and the ability to maximise opportunities as they appear. The success of home-grown startups like Urban Company, Razorpay, Zomato, Swiggy, and PayTM shows that it is possible to build businesses from scratch, scale up from a bootstrapped venture to a large organisation, and ensure the longevity of the business in the face of cut-throat competition. The path lies in learning from success and failures and adapting quickly to changing circumstances.

The apparel and textile industry are one of the most booming industries. With Indian apparel and textile being among the world's largest producers, the country is also the sixth largest exporter of apparel and textile across the globe. The apparel and textile industry contribute five per cent to the country's GDP from the domestic sector, whereas seven per cent is contributed from the industry output in value terms and the export earnings of the country acquire a contribution of 12 per cent from the apparel and textile industry.

The investments in the textile and apparel industry have seen

a surge in the growth pattern in the past five years. So, here are the various emerging investment themes that are to keep a close eye on in 2022.

Themes in apparel industry hiring

The apparel and textile industry has seen an immense rise in investments in the year 2021 as compared to 2020 when industry hiring is into consideration and this rise is likely to pace in the ongoing year 2022.

The themes that have seen a rapid boost and had the highest investments which will follow in this ongoing year 2022 as well under the industry hiring factor are health and safety attaining a substantial investment

MIND IT

rise in rank by 25 spots ranking on 19 followed by sensory and indulgence with an increase in investment standing on fifth spot making its place with a 10 spots increment. The other theme that climbed the industry hiring investment rank chart was the smart and connected going up by two spots making its place on rank 2 compared to 2020 whereas social currency gained an increase in investment by having a boost of one spot placing it on rank 22.

Themes in apparel industry deals

Industry deals have seen an increase in investments in a variety of themes in the apparel and textile industry. The theme that got a lot of investments in the year 2021 is the e-commerce sector with a growth of nine spots making its position on the third rank and this sector is estimated to attract a rise in investments in the ongoing year 2022 as well. The next highest investment that got a major place in the industry deals were the

gen Z and the millennials.

Themes in apparel industry patent applications

The year 2021 has seen a lot of ups and downs, even after going through a downfall the investments in the industry patent applications in the textile and apparel industry has seen a positive spike in various themes of this industry. Remote patient monitoring topped the investment criteria with an increase in 44 spots making its place on 21st rank compared to 2020. Robotics also experienced a 44 spots growth rate boost in investments in the year 2021 creating its position on rank 21 followed by

virtual and augmented reality also acquiring a boost of 44 spots placing itself on rank 21.

Other themes that caught attention of the investors in the industry patent applications were the 3D printing attaining the 14th rank by having an investment growth rate by 26 spots followed by a 12 spots increment in composite materials placing itself on rank 28.

It is important to keep a watch on the above-mentioned investment themes that are vital for future growth, as they all have the potential to grow exponentially.

The writer is Aaliya Deeba, Founder, Ideebes London, a Couture Label

International Students at TU Dresden in Germany, 2022

The DAAD is providing scholarships for study completion as well as highly qualified international students for the academic year 2022-2023.

Awards: EUR 300 pm
Course Level: Diploma, Bachelor & Master

Supporting documents: Current list of examination results (transcript), Confirmation of the examination office stating the achieved credits as well as the overall average grade and CV with their application.

Admission requirements: Applicants with good and very good academic achievements (overall average grade of at least 2.5) and that obtain the final degree within one year.

Language requirements: If your education has not been conducted in the English language, you will be expected to demonstrate evidence of an adequate level of English proficiency.

How to apply: Applicants must complete and submit the application form. All candidates send their application using the following mailing address: TU Dresden, International Office, Division Scholarship-Programmes International Students, Ms. Hesse / Ms. Landgraf-Dietz, 01062 Dresden.

Application deadline: Mar 8 for the funding period Apr 1 – Sep 30 (summer semester), Sep 8 for the funding period Oct 1-Mar 31 (winter semester)

DAAD - STIBET Scholarships Programme for

SMART Scholarship for International Students at Staffordshire University, UK

The programme aims to encourage and support ambitious students from around the world, to come and study at Staffordshire University in the United Kingdom.

Award: £2000
Course Level: Undergraduate

Supporting documents: Must attach your personal statement, passport, reference letter, certificates and transcripts

Admission requirements: For being admitted at Staffordshire, applicants have to fulfil the admission requirements of the university.

Language requirement: Before taking admission, claimants have to check the English language requirements of the university.

How to apply: For empowering with this educational award, students have to take admission in the bachelor's degree coursework at the university. No separate application is required.

Application deadline: The application is open for the academic session 2022/2023.

REACTJS DEVELOPMENT AT MAVENAI TECHNOLOGIES

Location – Work From Home
Stipend – ₹4,000-8,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/fcb33c
Deadline – March 10, 2022

ILLUSTRATION AT ARCHIES LIFESTYLE

Location – Delhi
Stipend – ₹15,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/62e926
Deadline – March 9, 2022

OPERATIONS AT ISAK FRAGRANCES

Location – Lucknow
Stipend – ₹10,000/Month
Link – internshala.com//adeef3
Deadline – March 9, 2022

CA AT WEALTHEDGE FINANCIAL ADVISORY

Location – Ranchi
Stipend – ₹5,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/93aa79
Deadline – March 6, 2022

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (SALES) AT PRECISION COMPUTING SYSTEMS

Location – Bhubaneswar
Stipend – ₹15,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/e23fb5
Deadline – March 8, 2022

WEB DEVELOPMENT AT INNOVANTES IT SOLUTIONS

Location – Chandigarh, Shimla, Punjab
Stipend – ₹15,000/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/354b00
Deadline – March 9, 2022

BD (SALES) AT VPLAK

Location – Work From Home
Stipend – ₹15,000-17,500/Month
Link – internshala.com/i/e25431
Deadline – March 10, 2022

INBRIEF

ICANI A UNIQUE INDUSTRY MIXER

The Design Village (TDV) has organised ICANI Industry Mixer, 2 days flagship event that hopes to jumpstart the Creatives movement for the region. The event aimed to bring seasoned professionals and aspiring students together to establish an unbiased forum of discourse.

Tushar Kaladharan, mentor and facilitator at The Design Village, says "The developing world needs a new direction in design education and the seeds are being sown right here at this unique community of designers, makers and deliberators, for a brighter tomorrow. The ICANI Industry Mixer is an incubated effort to expand their avenues."

The two-day events featured a mix of multidisciplinary professionals from a variety of fields like advertising, mental healthcare and the diverse segments within the design industry. The students opened up to a more pragmatic dialogue on positioning, jobs, internships and fears of exploitation, choosing a stream or being interdisciplinary. Furthering the jubilation was a live performance by a music academy as an extension of our ethos.

Akarsh Goel, Alumni & UX Designer, says "The participation, spirit and energy was commendable. I loved coming back to my alma mater, watching it grow and flourish."

IIAD ORGANISES FOUNDATION CEREMONY

The Indian Institute of Arts and Design (IIAD), Delhi organised Foundation Ceremony at the campus to facilitate the students of batch 2019 and 2020 who successfully completed their foundation year. The ceremony was presided over by esteemed faculty members and administrators. The ceremony was organised to recognise the collective efforts of students and faculties to make this day happen.

NIU KICKSTARTS ADMISSIONS

The Noida International University has announced its admission process for School of Public Health & Human Development for the upcoming academic session 2022-2023. The UG and PG programmes offered by NIU aim to equip students with the knowledge and skills to enable them to address public health challenges through research and practice.

Before candidates apply for admission, they are advised to check the eligibility criteria.

TALK ON POST PANDEMIC PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

Shivani Wazir Pasrich, Director, The Study School, organised an open house to celebrate the 50th year of The Study School. The highlights of the programme were the Post Pandemic Protection tips given to parents as children return to school.

Motivated and driven towards providing children a beautiful present and a promising future, Shivani Wazir Pasrich (Director of The Study School) says

"The only way to teach children is by example. To have happy children, be calm and patient"

Given that the pandemic has had grave repercussions on adults and children, it is noteworthy to state that children have been deprived of what is called a normal childhood which has hampered their growth and mental development. Serving the cause of providing good health to children Dr Vidya Gupta, Paediatrician from Apollo Hospital, says "Children under two years of age do not need to be masked however children over two should wear masks to school to protect other children."

In the past two years many children sat at home and spent most of their time on screens. Parents had no options and many restricted children from going outdoors.

SU CONDUCTS FREE CHILD CARE CAMP

The Sanskriti Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital organised Swarna Prashan Sanskar — Child Care Camp for children from the ages 0 to 16 years. Swarna Prashan is an Ayurvedic immunisation programme. The child comes to the camp to get the consultant and check-up from the associates of the university. This camp focuses on monthly health

check-ups and diet modifications for children. The main purpose of organising the Swarna Prashan Sanskar Health camp for children is for boosting immunity, enhancement in memory, build digestion and absorption, and improvement in concentration. It also improves digestion and absorption, intellect/ mental growth, and builds physical strength.

VOCATIONAL COURSES IN DPMI

Nowadays, the field of Education has started adopting its attitude towards vocational education, because there is a lot of trend of vocational courses among the students. Students are taught such skills, which they need during the job. In view of the increasing inclination of students towards professional courses, many colleges and institutes in India take out applications for vocational courses. At the same time, applications have been started for 5 vocational courses in the Delhi Paramedical and Management Institute located in the capital city of Delhi.

It has several vocational degree courses for Paramedical Healthcare and Hotel Management sectors. The Walk programme includes courses in HM, Lab Technician, Medical

Laboratory Technician, Radiology and Medical Imaging Technology, Operation Theater Technology, etc. Poonam Bacheti, MD, DPMT Delhi said that in India, skill-based learning is considered a vocational skill that is not a part of the formal education sector through short-term training or courses and that provides employment in the informal sector.

Mithali Raj looking to finish journey with WC trophy

PTI ■ RANGIORA

Captaining the Indian women's team in the upcoming World Cup after first featuring in the showpiece 22 years ago, Mithali Raj feels her career has come a full circle with only the dream of holding the "elusive" trophy remaining unfulfilled.

Raj was a part of the Indian team that played in the 2000 World Cup in New Zealand and more than two decades later, she is returning to the same country, this time as the captain.

In between, she had also faced the heartbreak of losing in the summit clash to England in the 2017 edition, besides being a member of the team that ended second in 2005.

"I have come a long way from the 2000 World Cup, that also in New Zealand. I missed (matches of) that World Cup because of typhoid and here I am. It has come a full circle and I am looking forward to finishing the

"I HAVE COME A LONG WAY FROM THE 2000 WORLD CUP, THAT ALSO IN NEW ZEALAND. I MISSED (MATCHES OF) THAT WORLD CUP BECAUSE OF TYPHOID AND HERE I AM. IT HAS COME A FULL CIRCLE AND I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO FINISHING THE JOURNEY"

journey," Raj said in a video posted by the ICC.

"I would look forward to all my players doing well in the World Cup and that will give the Indian team the opportunity to get a hand on that elusive cup."

India had lost the recent ODI series against New Zealand 1-4 but the team was able to post 250-plus scores consistently. Raj said the side was looking to do better during the March 4 to April 3 World Cup.

"What we are looking at improving as a team for the World Cup is something we worked in the last series and before that.

"Yes, there was a bit of concern during South Africa and England tour. By the Australia and New Zealand series, the team has come around well to score above 250 consistently. We look forward to doing the same during the World Cup, probably much better than that."

The 39-year-old veteran batter said having a few left-handers

among the top and middle-order is an advantage for the team.

"It is good to have left handers in the playing XI, the advantage of having a left-right combination in the middle creates difficulties to the (opposition) captain, bowlers and the fielders."

Raj has been in good nick in the lead-up to the showpiece with nine fifties since the resumption of cricket last year.

"I always prefer sticking to the basics of the game because when you play a big game and high pressure situation, it is difficult to maintain composure. It is important to focus on the basic things you have worked on over the years and that comes to your help."

She said a strong performance in the World Cup would help in improving the fan base of the Indian

women's cricket team.

"I hope each and every player becomes a household name. Also, there are a lot many young girls who looked up to the players. I am sure they will idolise many more women cricketers."

"Not just girls, but also young boys should look up to the young girls because these girls have worked so hard, sacrificed so much to be at the spot where they are now."



India Women's beat WI by 81 runs in WC warm-up match



PTI ■ RANGIORA

India will enter the ICC Women's World Cup with their tails up after opener Smriti Mandhana's 67-ball 66 and the bowlers' disciplined show powered them to an 81-run win over West Indies in their final warm-up game here on Tuesday.

Kept under observation after taking a blow to her head during the team's first practice match against South Africa on Sunday, the elegant Mandhana was in her element within two days from the injury, laying the foundation for India's challenging total of 258 all out in the allotted 50 overs.

In reply, West Indies were stopped at 177 for nine at Rangiora Oval.

India, who will face arch-rivals Pakistan in their cam-

INDIA, WHO WILL FACE ARCH-RIVALS PAKISTAN IN THEIR CAMPAIGN OPENER ON SUNDAY, BEAT SOUTH AFRICA BY TWO RUNS IN THEIR FIRST WARM-UP GAME

paign opener on Sunday, beat South Africa by two runs in their first warm-up game.

BRIEF SCORES

India Women: 258 in 50 overs (Smriti Mandhana 66, Deepti Sharma 51)

West Indies Women: 177/9 in 50 overs (Shemaine Campbelle 63, Hayley Matthews 44; Pooja Vastrakar 3/21).

100th Test another feather in Kohli's cap: Bumrah

PTI ■ MOHALI

He made his Test debut under Virat Kohli and as the superstar-batter gears up for his 100th outing in the format, Indian pace spearhead and current vice-captain Jasprit Bumrah said the landmark game is a reflection of his former skipper's dedication towards the game.

Kohli's 100th Test would be against Sri Lanka beginning here on March 4. Bumrah made his Test debut under Kohli's leadership in 2018.

"It is always a special achievement for a player. You know it is a testimony to his hard-work, dedication," Bumrah said in an online press conference here.

"... (playing) 100 Test matches for your country is a great occasion and he has contributed a lot to the success of the Indian team and will contribute a lot more in the future as well," he added.

"It is another feather in his (Kohli's) cap. I just wish him the best



and congratulate him for the achievement."

Asked if he would like to gift Kohli something on the special occasion, Bumrah said, "If the Indian team wins, then there is no

best (better) present than that. But he (Kohli) as a cricketer would like to give his best."

"Whichever match we play, whether it is his 100th Test, yes obviously, (it is) a big achievement and

it is a testimony to his hard work, but India's main focus is on the series.

The Mohali test will be played behind closed doors and asked whether it was a bit of a downer, Bumrah said, "See, right now we are in the frame of mind, where we are focussing on what we can control."

"(If) the crowds come, it is good for the energy, but that is something that we cannot control, we don't have any power regarding that, we don't decide the rules," he made it clear.

"So, for us what we can control is our energy, so we are trying to focus on that, and that is the basic thing in everybody's mind right now, that how do we prepare.

"We are in the best frame of mind, even if crowds are not there, so how do we keep that energy up. And with that, obviously, as I said, it is a big, big day, a big match for Virat Kohli," added Bumrah.

So far, Kohli has scored 7962 runs from 99 Test matches after making his debut against the West Indies at Kingston in 2011.

Jason Roy pulls out of IPL citing bubble fatigue



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

England's flamboyant batter Jason Roy on Tuesday pulled out of the upcoming IPL citing extended stay in the tournament bubble, dealing a blow to his new franchise Gujarat Titans weeks before the event gets going.

The 31-year-old South African-

born English cricketer was signed by Gujarat Titans for his base price of Rs 2 crore at the mega auction.

"It's with a heavy heart I have decided to pull out of this year's tournament. I want to thank the management and the captain Hardik for putting your faith in me and picking me in the auction," Roy wrote on his Twitter handle on Tuesday.

"However, with everything going on in the world over the last 3 years it's added up and taken its toll on me. I feel it's only right I spend some quality time with my family."

"As well as spending time working on myself and my game over the next couple of months leading into a very busy year. I will be following each game of the Titans and backing them to lift the trophy in their first year of the tournament."

The development is a big blow to the Gujarat franchise as Roy was the only specialist opener picked by them apart from young Shubman Gill.

This is the second time the English player is pulling out of the IPL. He had earlier withdrawn from the 2020 edition due to personal reasons after being picked up by the Delhi Capitals for ₹1.5 crore.



SA beat Kiwis by 198 runs in 2nd Test

AP ■ CHIRSTCHURCH

South Africa outwitted and outplayed New Zealand in a crushing 198-run second Test victory in Christchurch on Tuesday to draw the two-match series 1-1.

New Zealand, set a record 426 target to win, were all out in their second innings for 227 eight balls after tea on the final day. It completed a remarkable turnaround for South Africa who read the conditions far better

than New Zealand after being thrashed by an innings and 276 runs in the first Test on the same ground.

Captain Dean Elgar demanded his side "front up" after that humiliation and they obliged.

A century by Sarel Erwee laid the base for a first innings 364, Kagiso Rabada took five for 60 as New Zealand folded 71 in arrears and an unbeaten 136 from Kyle Verreynne in the second innings tightened the clamp on New Zealand. New Zealand started

the final day at 94 for four and while Devon Conway and Tom Blundell were at the crease they held hope they could salvage a draw.

But it was a forlorn hope and their 85-run partnership ended shortly before lunch when Conway went leg before wicket for 92.

New Zealand hopes of salvaging a draw rose again at 227 for nine when rain forced the players from the field, but it was a brief respite.

Saurabh Chaudhary wins Gold in ISSF World Cup in Cairo

PTI ■ CAIRO

Indian shooting ace Saurabh Chaudhary won the Gold medal in the men's 10m air pistol event, opening the country's account in the year's first ISSF World Cup here on Tuesday.

The Asian Games Gold medalist shot 16 in the Gold medal contest to finish ahead of Germany's

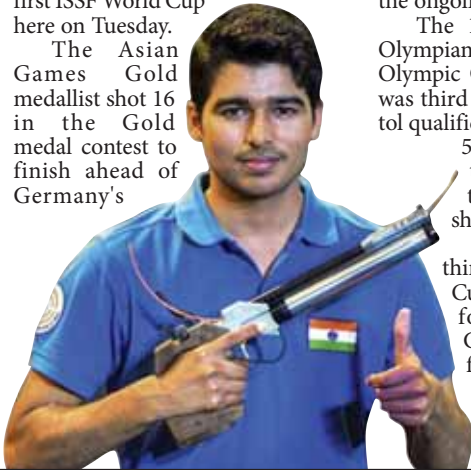
Michael Schwald (6).

The Bronze in the event was bagged by Tokyo Olympics Silver medalist Artem Chernousov of Russia, whose country's flag was removed owing to its involvement in the ongoing conflict with Ukraine.

The 19-year Chaudhary, an Olympian who also has a Youth Olympic Gold medal to his name, was third in the men's 10m air pistol qualification stage with a total of 584 points, making it through to the elimination as one of the top eight shooters.

This was Chaudhary's third individual ISSF World Cup Gold and first in the new format, dominating Germany's Schwald in the final.

Chernousov topped the 92-strong qualification field with 591 points.



India to play England in Women's hockey World Cup on July 3

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

India will open its campaign in this year's FIH Women's Hockey World Cup against England on July 3, two days after the marquee tournament opens in Spain and the Netherlands.

The schedule was announced by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) on Tuesday.

Placed in Pool B, India will next face China on July 5 and New Zealand on July 7.

India will play all their pool matches at the Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen, Netherlands in the event to be held from July 1 to 17.

Soon after the schedule was made public, India women's team halfback



Sushila Chanu said the team won't be intimidated by any opposition.

"It does not matter against which opponents we start our campaign. We are not afraid of our mentality and our mindset is to take each game as it comes and try and win every match," Chanu said in a virtual press conference.

"We have faced China recently in Muscat, Oman, in the Women's Hockey Asia Cup 2022, and in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22. And so it will be an advantage for us," she asserted.

"We will be playing the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22 matches against England next month. We had last played New Zealand in 2020. So we know these teams quite well and we know how we have to prepare for the upcoming challenges."

Dipa Karmakar identified as 'suspended' by FIG

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian gymnast Dipa Karmakar is currently identified as "suspended" in the International Gymnastics Federation's website, a development that has left the national body flummoxed which says there has been no official communication from the world body.

Among the various Indian gymnasts listed in the FIG website, the 28-year-old Karmakar is marked as "suspended" while the others are shown as "active" against their respective names.

The 'biography' section of the athletes in the FIG website also shows Karmakar as "suspended" gymnast.

There was no immediate



clarity on what the "suspended" status meant for Karmakar, who rose into limelight after her stupendous fourth-place finish in the vault event in the 2016 Rio Olympics. She has not been competing since 2019.

The Gymnastics Federation of India is clueless about the development.

"We have not received any communication from the FIG regarding Dipa's suspension. I don't know what is the reason or whether it is true. There has been no communication so let's wait," GFI president Sudhir Mittal told PTI.

"Unless there is any communication from the FIG I won't be able to comment anything."