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PUTIN WARNS 3RD PARTY AGAINST CREATING UKRAINE NO-FLY ZONE

SPORT 7
'ROCKSTAR RAVINDRA' PUTS INDIA IN DRIVER'S SEAT

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Enable evacuation corridor, India urges Russia, Ukraine

Govt asks stranded citizens to stay put indoors; at UNSC, Russia assures safe passage for Indians

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the situation worsened in Ukraine, India on Saturday advised its citizens to take all precautions and remain indoors in cities like Kharkiv and Sumy. New Delhi also appealed to both the warring nations to respect ceasefire to enable a safe evacuation corridor for its citizens.

Russia in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) said it will ensure the safety and security of all Indians and other foreign nationals. The Russian Embassy in India said, "Today, on March 5, from 10 am Moscow time, Russian side declared a regime of silence and opened humanitarian corridors for civilians to leave Mariupol and Volnovakha. Humanitarian corridors and exit routes have been coordinated with the Ukrainian side."

Airing India's anxiety, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "We are deeply concerned about Indian students in Sumy, Ukraine. We have strongly pressed Russian and Ukrainian Governments through multiple channels for an immediate ceasefire to create a safe corridor for our students." He said the Government has advised Indian students to take safety precautions, stay inside shelters and avoid unnecessary risks. The Ministry and our Embassies are in regular touch with the students, he said.

The Indian Embassy in Ukraine said it had arranged buses to evacuate 298 Indians from Pisochyn, in Kharkiv. This city in the east, along with another town Sumy, has borne the brunt of the Russian military offensive.

Giving the update, Bagchi said five buses are now in Kharkiv to bring out all the Indian citizens there. Each bus can accommodate 60 to70 people.

He said nearly all citizens from Kharkiv will be brought out by late Saturday.

As regards the other badly hit city of Sumy, he said the first priority is to ensure a safe route to bring out the students in buses as the rail line is disrupted due to shelling. Bagchi also said shelling is on in the north-eastern town, which is posing a challenge for the Indian authorities to plan an evacuation.

Continued on Page 2

A woman holds the hand of a child as she arrives at the Ukrainian-Polish border crossing in Korczowa, Poland, on Saturday
AP

3K more airlifted from Ukraine

India has brought back 13,300 citizens since Feb 24

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has brought back 13,300 people in 63 flights from Ukraine and its neighbouring countries since February 24 after the Russian military offensive. Nearly 3, 000 Indians were airlifted by 15 evacuation flights from Ukraine's neighbouring countries on Saturday. As many as 11 flights are expected to take off on Sunday from Budapest, Kosice, Rzeszow, and Bucharest to bring back more than 2,200 people."India hopes to evacuate its citizens from Kharkiv and Pisochyn in the next few hours. Our main focus is now on evacuating Indian students from Sumy. We are exploring multiple options for their evacuation," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at a media briefing.

On the overall evacuation mission, he said over 13,300 people have been brought back home in 63 flights. The Spokesperson said 13 flights are scheduled for the next 24 hours to bring back Indians under "Operation Ganga".

In a statement, the Ministry of Civil Aviation on Saturday said that 11 flights with more than 2,200 Indian evacuees will operate from Ukraine's neighbouring countries to India on Sunday.

"Today's (Saturday's) civilian flights included five from Budapest (Hungary), four from Suceava (Romania), one from Kosice (Slovakia), and two from Rzeszow (Poland)," the Ministry said. The civilian flights are being operated by Indian carriers such as IndiGo, Air India, Vistara, SpiceJet, and AirAsia India.

According to the Indian Air Force, three aircraft carrying 629 Indians from Ukraine's neighbouring countries landed at the Hindon airbase on Saturday morning. "Till date, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has flown 10 sorties to bring back 2,056 passengers, while taking 26 tonnes of relief load to these countries, as part of Operation Ganga," the IAF statement said. Three C-17 heavy-lift transport aircraft of the IAF, which had taken off on Friday from the Hindon airbase, returned on Saturday morning, it mentioned.

"These flights evacuated 629 Indian nationals from Romania, Slovakia, and Poland. These flights also carried 16.5 tonnes of relief load from India to these countries," it added. The IAF is conducting its flights using C-17 military transport planes.

An AirAsia India's first evacuation flight from Suceava in Romania carrying 170 Indian evacuees from Ukraine landed at Delhi early morning. The passengers were received by the Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan on their arrival in India, said the official.AirAsia India aircraft, an Airbus A320Neo, departed from Delhi at 8.30 am Friday for its destination via Dubai and departed from Suceava for Delhi at 6.45 pm (local time), he said.

Evacuation halts as shelling flouts ceasefire pledge

Indian students, evacuated from war-torn Ukraine, arrive at the IGI airport, in New Delhi on Saturday
PTI

AP ■ LVIV

What looked like a breakthrough ceasefire to evacuate residents from two cities in Ukraine quickly fell apart on Saturday as Ukrainian officials said the work to remove civilians had halted amid shelling hours after Russia announced the deal.

The Russian Defence Ministry earlier said it had agreed on evacuation routes with Ukrainian forces for Mariupol, a strategic port in the southeast, and the eastern city of Volnovakha. The vaguely worded statement did not make clear how long the routes would remain open.

"The Russian side is not holding to the ceasefire and has continued firing on Mariupol itself and on its surrounding area," said Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy head of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office.

"Talks with the Russian Federation are ongoing regarding setting up a cease-fire and ensuring a safe humanitarian corridor."

Continued on Page 2

BJP will get absolute majority in UP: Shah

Shah, Nadda address presser as campaigning for UP polls ends

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the campaigning for the bitterly-fought Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls ended on Saturday, the BJP leadership asserted that the party will get an "absolute majority" in UP and also return to power in Uttarakhand, Goa, and Manipur.

Addressing a press conference, BJP president JP Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the party will perform strongly in Punjab where for the first time it is contesting in 63-plus seats as against 23 seats it contested earlier.

"*UP main BJP prchand Bahumat ki sarkar bana rahi hain aur hamme kissi aur ke sahyog ki zaroorat nahin hai...*", Shah said answering question on the possibility of the party seeking support of others to form a Government.

Shah said he has been a witness to 2014, 2017, and 2022 elections in UP and his party would not need the support of any party to be in power for the successive second time in the electorally key State with 403 Assembly seats.

On his part, Nadda dismissed questions on the contest in UP being neck to neck. "It is a one-sided election in UP…no need for any alliance. NDA coming back to power with good majority," said the BJP president.

Shah said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath fulfilled over 92 per cent promises of "Sankalp part" in UP and implemented well all schemes of Prime Minister Modi as the latter held "historic rallies" and drew "huge public support from the public".

Both the BJP leaders exuded confidence that the party will return to power in Uttarakhand, Goa, and Manipur riding the wave of development and the effective implementations of the Prime Minister's pro-poor schemes and programmes.

Continued on Page 2

Milestone! 3 cr 15-18 years old fully vaccinated

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has achieved a new milestone in its Covid-19 vaccination drive. More than 3 crore youngsters between 15-18 of age group are now fully vaccinated against Covid-19 in the country, said Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Saturday.

"What a great feat by our young warriors! Over 3 crore youngsters between the 15-18 age group are now fully vaccinated against Covid-19. Young India is taking the world's largest vaccination drive to the next level!" Mandaviya said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 178.55 crore as on Saturday with the administration of more than 24.62 lakh doses in the last 24 hours. This has been achieved through 2,06,52,074 sessions.

With 5,921 fresh coronavirus cases, India on Saturday saw the lowest daily surge in nearly two months. The overall caseload stands at 4,29,57,477, the second-highest in the world after the United States. In the last 24 hours, 289 deaths linked to Covid were reported. A total of 5,14,878 people in India have died since the start of the pandemic. The number of active Covid-19 cases in India stands at 63,878, the health ministry has said. Currently, the active case comprises 0.15 per cent of the total cases.

A drop of 6,019 cases has been recorded in the active Covid-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours. The daily positivity rate has fallen to 0.63 per cent, while the fatality rate is at 1.20 per cent, the Ministry data also showed. The weekly positivity rate is at 0.84 per cent.

CAPSULE

SHIA MOSQUE BLAST: ISIS CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY

Peshawar: Pakistan's Interior Minister on Saturday vowed to arrest the masterminds behind a deadly suicide attack claimed by the Islamic State terror group on a crowded Shia mosque during Friday prayers here that killed at least 62 people and injured nearly 200 others.

PLAN TO HIKE 3RD-PARTY MOTOR INSURANCE

New Delhi: The Union Road Transport Ministry has proposed an increase in the third-party motor insurance premium for various categories of vehicles, which is likely to jack up insurance cost of car and two-wheelers from April 1.

OPS' BROTHER OUSTED AFTER MEETING SASI

Chennai: A day after he called on VK Sasikala to discuss with her party related matters, O Raja, AIADMK top leader O Panneerselvam's brother was on Saturday expelled from the party.

'Warne was watching cricket, not intoxicated when suffered attack'

IANS ■ SYDNEY

Details emerging about Shane Warne's death due to a suspected heart-attack on Friday reveal that he was watching cricket before a scheduled meeting with friends for dinner when he suffered the attack. A report in *Sydney Morning Herald* on Saturday said the legendary spinner's business manager performed CPR to save him.

"The 52-year-old's long-time manager told the *Herald* and *The Age* (that) Warne had not been drinking before he was found by his friend Andrew Neophitou, an executive producer on his recently released documentary, who had gone to Warne's Thailand hotel room before a planned dinner," the report said.

The reports added Warne was found unconscious "with the historic first Test between Australia and Pakistan playing on the television". It said the legendary spinner was holidaying at a resort in Koh Samui, Thailand "as part of a rare extended holiday" and was scheduled to travel to the UK on his commentating assignment.

"They were meant to meet some people at 5pm. Neo (Neophitou) was next door, he's always on time," Warne's long-time manager James Erskine said, adding, "He realised he wasn't well. He tried to give mouth-to-mouth, tried to resuscitate him, he had no heartbeat, the ambulance came 20 minutes later and an hour and a bit later he was pronounced dead (at the Thai International Hospital)."

Continued on Page 2

Rita Bahuguna's son joins SP after BJP denied ticket

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Mayank Joshi, son of BJP MP from Prayagraj Rita Bahuguna Joshi, joined the Samajwadi Party on Saturday. His induction in the party was announced by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav during an election meeting at Gopalpur in Azamgarh district.

After Mayank failed to secure a BJP ticket from Lucknow, talks of him joining the SP had been doing the rounds. However, Rita had dismissed the reports by saying, "The rumour of her son leaving the party was baseless."

Mayank had met Akhilesh in February. Akhilesh had then tweeted a photo of Mayank meeting him.

Rita is the LS member from Prayagraj and was trying to secure a ticket for her son from Lucknow Cantonment Assembly seat.

Continued on Page 2

Over 67% polling in 2nd phase polls in Manipur

Imphal: Manipur recorded 67.77 per cent polling till 3 pm on Saturday in the second and final phase of the Assembly elections across 22 constituencies, amid stray incidents of violence reported from some places before and after voting started, officials said.

Voting began at 7 am in 1,247 polling stations across six districts amid tight security and strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols. A total of 8.38 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in this phase.

Senapati district registered the highest turnout of 74.02 per cent, followed by Chandel at 70.30 per cent, an election official said.

Polling was marred to some extent due to violence in some places, as security forces deployed at Ngamju polling station under Karong assembly constituency in Senapati district allegedly shot at two people, police said, without elaborating.

In a complaint filed with the Returning Officer of the polling station, the election agent of a BJP candidate demanded a magisterial inquiry into the incident.

Voting has been halted at the Ngamju polling station, the election official said.

Violence also erupted in some places of Manipur hours before the second phase of assembly polls began, as a BJP supporter was gunned down allegedly by a Congress worker, while a crude bomb exploded outside the residence of an expelled saffron party leader, police said.L Amuba Singh, 25, succumbed to bullet injuries early on Saturday at a hospital here, a police officer said.

In Imphal West district, unidentified miscreants lobbed a crude bomb at the residence of expelled BJP leader Ch Bijoy in Lamphel area on Friday night, police said.

Nobody was injured in the blast triggered by two masked persons, who came in a two-wheeler, they said.

Among the early voters was Congress leader and former Chief Minister O Ibobi Singh in Thoubal district.

"Congress will definitely win with an absolute majority, but in case we fall short by one or two seats, the party is open for a coalition," he said after casting his vote.

The electoral fate of 92 candidates will be decided on Saturday, including 12 from the BJP, followed by Congress (18), National People's Party (11), Janata Dal (United) and Naga People's Front (10 each). ***PTI***

Modi attacks dynasts for negative politics

Such pessimistic thoughts do good neither to people nor society: PM

RAMESH K SINGH ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a scathing attack on the dynasts for always adopting negative politics, saying that with such pessimistic and narrow-minded thinking they could neither do good for the people nor for the country.

He was addressing his last election meeting just a few hours before the end of campaigning for the final phase of assembly elections at Khajuri in Mirza Murad area here on Saturday afternoon.

"They always see negativity even in the matters relating to the interests of the nation due to their anti-Modi approaches," the prime minister said and added that when the entire world was passing through century's biggest pandemic for almost two years and the country had decided to provide free indigenously invented vaccine to all the people, instead of praising the government, they often criticised the vaccination drive, raising their eyebrows.

"They even opposed our traditional knowledge of yoga and AYUSH, without worrying about the health of the people, only because I made sincere efforts to promote the same across the world," Modi said.

Going further, he said that the party which had used Khadi a lot for its political gains often showed its frustration through the reactions when I made efforts to establish Khadi as an international brand.

"Only in the Varanasi division, just five years ago, the Khadi business was of Rs 90 crore but now it has almost doubled and crossed Rs 170

crore, providing jobs to our poor villagers but these rival parties never hailed such initiatives," he said.

"Let us forget it, they did not even say anything when the country was celebrating the 75 years of its Independence," Modi said, adding that when the people were feeling proud recalling the contributions of our freedom fighters, these rival parties were busy making comments.

"Did I do anything wrong by giving the call for vocal for local?" he said and asked the people about his mistake by requesting the people to promote Banarasi sarees, toys and other traditional articles of the weavers and artisans of the area.

He also expressed concern over the silence of opposition parties when a nation-wide drive for construction of toilets and cleanliness was launched.

"Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas is not just our slogan, it is our commitment because right from distribution of tickets during the elections to the formation of ministries, the Bharatiya Janata Party always gives proper representations to all the sections," Modi said, and added that the party would continue to work with the same philosophy even after March 10 when it would return to the power in the state.

"Then the pace of our development work, providing pucca houses to the poor, construction of roads, bridges, flyovers and expressways and action against mafia would be intensified further," the prime minister said.

Targeting his gun on the dynasts, Modi said, "These leaders who were born with silver spoons and never saw poverty, cannot feel the pains of the poor and whenever they come to power they give patronage to the mafia to grab the land of the poor and Dalits. Besides, they also always do their own development, instead of looking after the people."

He further criticised the dynasts for doing everything else which was not in their poll manifesto and asked, "Did they ever tell the people that if they come to power they will put the state in the flames of riots."

The prime minister promised the people that if the double-engine government returned to power in UP, it would double its benefits to the poor and every needy people.

21 Indian sailors stuck at Mykolaiv port in war-hit Ukraine

Mumbai: As many as 21 Indian sailors on board a merchant ship are stuck for quite some time at the Port of Mykolaiv in war-hit Ukraine but all of them are "safe" and in "regular contact" with their families and the ship manning agency, according to the agency founder and CEO Sanjay Prashar.

Prashar said that 24 other ships are also docked at the port and have Indian sailors onboard as well. VR Maritime (the ship manning agency) is watchful of the developments and keeping all authorities concerned in the loop including the External Affairs Ministry, the Indian Embassy and sector regulator Director General of Shipping, he said.

DG Shipping Amitabh Kumar was not available for comments. The crew has not come out of the vessel since the war broke out between Russia and Ukraine late last month and a strict vigil is being maintained on the ship, Prashar said.

"Presently the vessel is berthed at Port Mykolaiv itself. There are a total of 25 ships, including ours. There are other ships which have got Indian seafarers. As far as our ship is concerned, both the crew and ship are presently safe. "The internet and satellite communication onboard are working. We are at present in touch with all the crew and their families. Also, the crew themselves are also in direct touch with their family members," Prashar told PTI.

He said that as per information available with the company, the Port is not working and the "Russian forces probably are very close to the Port on the Black Sea coast", he said.

"If the Russian forces come into the Port and they allow couple of ships to leave then it is fine. Otherwise, we would need some assistance from the port authority, including some tug boats and other kinds of services to allow the vessel to safely depart," he said.

Prashar said in an emergency, if the company have to evacuate its crew, the nearest Poland border is 900 km far and going to some safe location in Kyiv would mean a travel of 500 km from the port city, adding "so for them to reach any of these two places right now is not possible." ***PTI***

HP to meet total energy need through green, renewable energy

PNS ■ SHIMLA

The Himachal Pradesh Government has decided to move towards meeting 100 per cent of its energy requirement through renewable and green energy. If it is achieved, the State will become the first Green State in the Country.

This was the big takeaway of the budget presented by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Saturday.

Himachal consumes about 12000 MU (Million Units) of Power every year. Only 2000 MU of which is thermal power and rest is green/renewable power. The State has to use thermal power because of two reasons. First, because the State has entered into PPA (Power Purchase Agreements) long back with Thermal Power Stations. The obligations under these PPAs will end only by 2034. The obligations include paying for both fixed costs and actual consumption charges.

The second reason is that the State uses some thermal power as Round the Clock (RTC) power as it is cheaper than renewable power.

Mahila shakti to lead BJP to power again:Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Expressing confidence of returning to power again, riding on the `mahila shakti', Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that women had appreciated the good work done by the double-engine government and this was reflected in the voting pattern in 2022 assembly elections of Uttar Pradesh.

Yogi declared that the Bharatiya Janata Party will win 80 per cent of the assembly seats and other parties will share the remaining 20 per cent.

"Women gave good support to the BJP across the state because of the policies of the present government. The double-engine government ensured free houses and toilets to the women. Toilets are a testament of `nari garima' and then we introduced schemes like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Janani Suraksha Yojana and even ensured smoke-free kitchen by providing free LPG connections," Yogi said here on Saturday at the end of the election campaign for the seventh and the last phase of elections in the state.

The seventh phase election will be held on March 7 and the results will be out on March 10.

Elaborating on the two-month election campaign, Yogi Adityanath said that the biggest achievement of this election was that no violence had been reported so far.

"This is because of the crime-free atmosphere given by the BJP government. The peaceful elections in UP could be a surprise for many but it was the commitment of the double-engine government to ensure improvement in law and order and we fulfilled that commitment," he said and added: "The double-engine government's ideology of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas aur Sabka Vishwas was reflected in the election campaign".

Yogi Adityanath said before 2014, the political parties had run election campaigns on the basis of caste and language and no one highlighted the main issues.

UP needs stability, continuity: PM

PNS ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed that "UP needs stability and continuity".

Interacting with a section of intellectuals at Raman Niwas in Mammoorganj during his two-day stay in his parliamentary constituency and prior to addressing his last UP assembly poll meeting on Saturday, Modi said that UP had the strength to lead the nation.

Reiterating his commitment towards development, Modi apprised the local intellectuals of his mega projects in detail and said that the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, which should have been built earlier, had come into existence now.

Explaining his intention to build the tallest statue of Sardar Patel in Gujarat, Modi said that its only objective was to make the younger generation aware of the culture, civilization and freedom struggle of India.

According to him, with the development of railway stations and infrastructure, the economy of the city had become stronger and asked the participants about their experiences of travel in the Vande Bharat Express apart from facilities.

The prime minister said that the students of the country went to Ukraine to get medical education because during the previous governments did not try to provide them with sufficient medical colleges in the country.

He also highlighted the efforts being made in this direction, saying that the number of doctors produced in the country in several decades after independence would be produced within a few years now. Many eminent personalities from the fields of literature, art and culture were present.

Workers prepare colours meant to be used during the celebrations of the Holi festival, in Sambhal on Saturday PTI

'Warne was watching cricket, not intoxicated...

From Page 1

According to Erskine, Warne was off drinks as he'd been dieting.

"He was on holiday, having a lie down, siesta, he hadn't been drinking, he'd been on this diet to lose weight," he said.

"He didn't drink much. Everyone thinks he's a big boozer but he's not a big boozer at all. I sent him a crate of wine, 10 years later it's still there. He doesn't drink, never took drugs, ever. He hated drugs so nothing untoward," added Erskine.

"He was going to do the things he likes doing. He was going to play in one or two poker competitions, play a lot of golf, be with his kids; that was about it; (to) have time to himself."

Erskine said Warne's children Brooke, Summer and Jackson were "shattered" and the spinner's father, Keith, had visited his grandchildren on Saturday to "comfort them".

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison led his country's tribute to the cricketing legend, saying Warne was "one of only a few that could approach the extraordinary achievements of the great Don Bradman".

"But Shane was more than this to Australians. Shane was one of our nation's greatest characters. His humour, his passion, his irreverence, his approachability ensured he was loved by all. Australians loved him. We all did," Morrison said.

The Victorian government has announced that the MCG's Great Southern Stand would be renamed the SK Warne Stand in memory of the leg-spinner. Warne notched his 700th Test wicket at the MCG.

"The S.K. Warne Stand will be a permanent tribute to an amazing Victorian," Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews tweeted.

Former Australian wicket-keeper Ian Healy was shattered by the death but "unsurprised" his former teammate died young."An early passing didn't surprise me for Warnie," Healy told Nine's Today show. "He didn't look after his body that well. He yo-yoed up and down (weight gain).

"He didn't put much sunscreen on. I thought it would have become skin issues for him over time, but not at 52. And he would have been full of beans right to the end, I bet."

Rita Bahuguna's...

From Page 1

However, the BJP rejected the demand and gave the ticket to Cabinet Minister BrijeshPathak.

Rita was elected as MLA from Lucknow Cantonment on a Congress ticket in 2012. In the 2017, Assembly elections, she contested on a BJP ticket, and defeated SP candidate AparnaYadav, the younger daughter-in-law of SP patron Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Aparna recently joined the BJP.

BJP will get absolute majority...

From Page 1

Shah said under Modi the BJP has substituted the politics of "vikas" in place of "politics of caste, dynasty, and appeasement". The Home Minister asserted that the BJP will on its own form Government in Manipur and Goa.

As about Punjab, Shah said the party would "make strong performance in the State". When asked whether it means not forming Government in the border State, he said, " We are not claiming to form Government in Punjab … but strong performance also means forming Government…". Nadda said his party "will get more than expected results in Punjab".

As about the Government's role in bringing back Indian nationals from war-torn Ukraine having any impact on voting, Shah said, " Surely ...the Government issued timely advisory, setup monitoring cell…around 13,000 of 16,000 have come back and in next 24-hours 16 more flights are to come home."

He said Prime Minister has met children and people gave (us) blessing to form the Government. Shah did not agree that overall there has been a low turnout in the elections saying it could be true of some parts.

Enable evacuation corridor...

From Page 1

From the point of evacuation, the Russian border is close to both cities. India in the last few days is trying to have a safe corridor to bring out its citizens from these two cities into Russia. While Sumy has about 900 Indians, Kharkiv has more than 300 as of now.

Russia has informed the UNSC that its buses are ready at crossing points to go to the eastern Ukrainian cities of Kharkiv and Sumy to evacuate the stranded foreign nationals.

The 15-nation Council held an emergency session on Friday, called by Albania, France, Ireland, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States, following Russia's attack on Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, the biggest in Europe.

During the meeting, Russia's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said the Russian military is doing everything to ensure the peaceful evacuation of foreign nationals stranded in Ukraine. He alleged that Ukraine nationalists were keeping over 3,700 Indian citizens by force in Kharkiv and Sumy cities of eastern Ukraine.

"Terrorists do not let civilians leave cities. This impacts not only Ukrainians but foreigners as well. The number of foreign citizens whom Ukrainian nationals are keeping by force is shocking: Kharkiv 3,189 nationals of India, up to 2,700 nationals of Vietnam, 202 nationals of China; Sumy 576 nationals of India, 101 nationals of Ghana, 121 nationals of China," Nebenzia told the Council.

In the Belgorod region of Russia, 130 comfortable buses have been waiting (and standing ready) since 6.00 am today at the crossing points Nekhoteevka' and Sudja' ready to go to Kharkiv and Sumy to evacuate the Indian students and other foreign nationals, he said.

The Russian envoy said the checkpoints are equipped to provide temporary accommodation, space for rest, and hot food. There are also mobile medical stations with a stock of medications.

"Everyone evacuated will then be taken to Belgorod, and from there transported to their homeland by air," he said.

In New Delhi, responding to reports of Indian students being held hostage in Ukraine, Bagchi had said on Friday India has not received any reports of any hostage situation regarding Indian students.

Meanwhile, during the UNSC meeting, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador T S Tirumurti, said while the UN Security Council discusses the nuclear dimension of an unfolding conflict it must acknowledge that there is a pressing humanitarian crisis confronting us in Ukraine, where safety and security of innocent civilians including several thousand Indian nationals, in particular, students are at stake.

Ukraine's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya told the Russian envoy Nebenzia to make an appeal to the armed forces (of Russia) to ensure a safe corridor to allow foreign students to leave the areas of concern.

Nebenzia said it is not Russian troops that pose a threat to the people of Ukraine, but Ukrainian nationalists. They keep the population of some big cities as hostages, they carry out acts of sabotage and provocations and then afterward they attempt to blame Russia for that, he said. Nebenzia accused Western nations of giving protection and patronage to radicals and extremists in Ukraine.

In an apparent reference to those nations in the Council that abstained or did not vote against UN resolutions condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Ukraine Ambassador Kyslytsya said," Shamefully, there are a handful of those around us or among us rather, who do nothing. Act now or it might be too late not only for Ukraine but for all of you.

India abstained twice in the UN Security Council on resolutions on Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Evacuation halts as...

From Page 1

Russia breached the deal in Volnovakha as well, Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk told reporters. "We appeal to the Russian side to stop firing," she said. Meanwhile, Russian outlet RIA Novosti carried a Russian defence ministry claim that the firing came from inside both communities against Russian positions.

The struggle to enforce the ceasefire showed the fragility of efforts to stop fighting across Ukraine as people continued to flee the country by the thousands. "We are doing everything on our part to make the agreement work," Zelenskyy said. "This is one of the main tasks for today. Let's see if we can go further in the negotiation process."

Mariupol had become the scene of growing misery amid days of shelling that knocked out power and most phone service and raised the prospect of food and water shortages for hundreds of thousands of people in freezing weather. Pharmacies are out of medicine, Doctors Without Borders said.

A top official in Mariupol had said the evacuations were to start at 11 am (9 am GMT) and the ceasefire was to last until 4 pm. Pavlo Kirilenko, head of the Donetsk military-civil administration that includes the city, said the humanitarian corridor would extend to Zaporizhzhia, 226 kilometers (140 miles) away.

The head of Ukraine's security council, Oleksiy Danilov, had urged Russia to create humanitarian corridors to allow children, women and the older adults to flee the fighting, calling them "question No. 1."

Diplomatic efforts continued as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Poland to meet with the prime minister and foreign minister, a day after attending a NATO meeting in Brussels in which the alliance pledged to step up support for eastern flank members. Blinken would visit a border post to meet refugees later in the day.

As Russian forces batter strategic locations elsewhere, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has lashed out at NATO for refusing to impose a no-fly zone over his country, warning that "all the people who die from this day forward will also die because of you."

NATO said a no-fly zone could provoke widespread war in Europe with nuclear-armed Russia. But as the United States and other NATO members send weapons for Kyiv and more than 1 million refugees spill through the continent, the conflict is already drawing in countries far beyond Ukraine's borders.

Russia continues to crack down on independent media reporting on the war, also blocking Facebook and Twitter, and more outlets say they are pausing their work inside the country. And in a warning of a hunger crisis yet to come, the U.N. World Food Program says millions of people inside Ukraine, a major global wheat supplier, will need food aid "immediately."

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575 km sewer line in illegal colonies OK'd

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to turn Yamuna River pollution-free, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) on Saturday approved a project to lay 575 kilometres of sewer line in unauthorised colonies in the national Capital, said Satyendra Jain, Water Minister on Saturday. Sewer lines will be laid in Shahbad, Sangam Vihar, Jafarpur, Galibpur, Sarangpur, Goyal Vihar, Kilokri, Kanganheri and Dichaol group of colonies, it said.

There are 1,799 unauthorised colonies in the national Capital. While sewer lines had been commissioned in 685 of them by October-end last year, the Government plans to bring the rest under the sewer network by December 2024.

At a board meeting chaired by Delhi Water Minister Satyendra Jain, the utility also approved the construction of an "interceptor sewer" at the mouth of the Barapula drain, which is one of the four major drains falling into the Yamuna.

The wastewater will be trapped and diverted to the Okhla sewage treatment plant for treatment.

The meeting also approved the proposal to construct a sewage pumping station of 60 MGD (million gallons a day) capacity at Kilokari to resolve the issue of sewage overflow in many parts of Delhi.

The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) also approved the upgradation of an old STP of 10 MGD capacity at Yamuna Vihar to 15 MGD using a new technology. The Rs 78-crore project will be completed in a year

The Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government aims to connect all the colonies to sewage treatment plants to prevent the wastewater from falling directly into the drains, which fall into the Yamuna, Jain added.

Ex-AAP Councillor Tahir's bail plea in riot cases dismissed

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Saturday dismissed former AAP Councilor Tahir Hussain's bail plea in a money laundering case related to the February 2020 riots in the city's north-east.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat dismissed the bail plea, saying there was not enough ground to grant the relief to the accused.

The court accepted the arguments advanced by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) N K Matta that there was sufficient material on record against the accused and the case of money laundering was made out against him.

The SPP had also argued that there is sufficient evidence and witnesses to the effect that the accused was involved in the funding of riots.

The accused distributed money to other accused persons for rioting and procuring the weapons, Matta told the court.

The defence counsel had claimed in the bail application that no case of money laundering was made out against his client.

He had argued that the basis of the ED case was the alleged transaction of Rs 1.5 crore on fake and bogus invoices.

He argued that only a case of GST was made out against him for transaction through fake and bogus invoices.

The ED had registered the complaint against Hussain and others under the Prevention of Money Laundering (PMLA) Act based on a case filed by the Delhi police.

Hussain was one of the prime accused in connection with the northeast riots in February 2020.

Waste water treatment plant to clean 31.80 cr litre water/day

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the aim to clean the Yamuna river, Delhi's Water Minister, Satyendra Jain on Saturday inaugurated a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) at Delhi's Coronation Pillar site with a capacity of treating 31.80 crore litres of waste water per day. The Minister also laid the foundation stone of a 71.51 km long sewer line in Sangam Vihar and Deoli Constituency.

According to Jain, the newly built Coronation Pillar wastewater treatment plant will cater to the requirements of sewage treatment for the coronation pillar drainage zone.

"The wastewater that is generated from the areas of Shakti Nagar, Kamla Nagar, Roop Nagar, Delhi University Campus, Nehru Vihar and University area will be treated at this plant. Apart from this, the sewage generated from unauthorised colonies such as Saroop Nagar, Bhalswa, Sant Nagar and Wazirabad Group of colonies will also be treated here now," said Jain.

Jain said that the wastewater that is being discharged from these colonies will be treated at the coronation pillars WWTP, which will eventually lead to cleaning the river Yamuna, benefiting lakhs of people of the area.

"Presently, the sewage which directly falls into the Supplementary drain will now get trapped and treated at the Coronation Pillar WWTP through the pumping station available in Burari. The treated wastewater will then fall in the supplementary drain before getting merged with the river Yamuna," he said.

"In order to strengthen the existing sewerage system, the Delhi Government has also initiated the work of laying 71.51 km of sewer lines in 20 unauthorised colonies of Sangam Vihar and Deoli Constituency," said the Minister.

Inspired by YouTube video, two men try to uproot ATM, arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two men and a juvenile, who were inspired from a YouTube video, were nabbed by the Delhi Police for allegedly trying to uproot a private bank ATM in west Delhi's Nangloi area.

The accused have been identified as Kundan Kumar (22) and Papu (22), both residents of Bihar's Muzaffarpur district.

According to Sameer Sharma, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer district, on Wednesday, the Nangloi police station had received the information from a private bank headquarter around 2 AM that some people had entered the ATM booth at Rajdhani Park and their activities were suspicious.

"As soon as police got the information police teams rushed to the spot where the three suspects, who tried to flee in different directions, were chased down and caught," said the DCP.

"During initial investigation the trio disclosed that they are roommates and were residing in Prem Nagar area as tenants. They had planned to make off with the ATM after getting inspired by a YouTube video, said the DCP adding that the police have also recovered the tools including one drill machine, a hammer and a screw machine, used in commission of crime.

"An alarm had went off at the bank's headquarter, when they were cutting the ATM wires, following which the police was alerted," the DCP added.

MCD shutting 60-yr-old primary school on Tank Road, alleges AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) elections round the corner, senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and MLA, Vishesh Ravi, on Saturday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ruled MCD has gone as far as taking away the right to education of Dalit students by closing one school after the other in the city.

Ravi said the BJP-ruled MCD is so cruel that it is shutting a 60-year-old primary school on Tank Road forcing students to go two kms away for education in another school. "The school being shut caters to underprivileged and Dalit households; why does the BJP not want their children to study," said Ravi.

"For the last two months, we have been continuously exposing the distatorous state of the schools of MCD. Especially in Karol Bagh, MCD has sold several schools and given contracts to build parkings there," he said.

"After selling half the land of a school on Pusa Road, a parking project is being developed there. But their thirst for money knows no bounds. There is a place called Anandpuri Khan near Tank Road in Karol Bagh, where MCD runs a primary school which on 7 February received an order saying that this school will soon be shut and that the children studying in the school will be transferred to the school located about two km from there," said Ravi.

"I want to ask the BJP ruled MCD, why are you taking away the right to education from the children of poor downtrodden families? Why are you suddenly closing a 60 year old school which was built for the poor? We request the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi to take cognizance of this matter as well," Ravi added.

2 Govt schools get state-of-art swimming pools

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia on Saturday inaugurated two new state-of-the-art swimming pools in Delhi Government schools to prepare students for international swimming championships and provide free of cost swimming training to every student. These swimming pools were inaugurated by Sisodia, who is also Education Minister, at Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya (SKV) in Mayur Vihar and SKV in Mandawali on Saturday.

Sisodia said the Delhi Government school infrastructure and facilities in them are no less than that of any international universities like Harvard and Oxford. "Arvind Kejriwal's Government is committed to provide best of the world facilities to children in Delhi government schools. These buildings are even better than some of the premier institutions of India such as IITs and IIMs," said Sisodia.

"With the addition of these two new pools today, government schools now have 24 state-of-the-art swimming pools. Registration for these pools will open from April 1 and students will be given training for free. Continuing additions to sports infrastructure in our Delhi Government schools will set a fitness revolution in the national Capital," said Sisodia.

"We want every child in Delhi Government schools to learn swimming, as it not only prepares children for a particular kind of sport but also improves their physical and mental health in the long run. Now that we have a free of cost facility to learn swimming, students must take out time and register for that," said Sisoda.

"Students from all across Delhi, irrespective of their socio-economic background, will have equal and free access to these pools at Delhi Government schools and this is what Baba Saheb and Bhagat Singh always dreamt of. Every child is treated equally in our schools and we are committed to provide the best quality education to every child" said Sisodia while inviting students from private schools to swimming pools of Delhi Government schools.

2 women held for manhandling cop, creating ruckus inside police station in Rohini

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

Two women, who claimed to be married to the same man, were arrested for allegedly manhandling a sub-inspector and breaking the mobile phone of another inside a police station in northwest Delhi's Rohini, officials said on Saturday.

The incident took place on Friday evening. The accused were identified as Alka (29) and Hemlata (29), they said.

According to police, one Mahesh Barwa was taken to South Rohini police station for investigation in connection with a case. He was later arrested for misbehaving with police personnel.

Later, Alka and Hemlata, both claiming to be Barwa's wife, came to the police station for his release. Both of them created a ruckus, manhandled a sub-inspector and tore his uniform. They also broke the mobile phone of another sub-inspector when he tried make a video of the assault, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said.

A case was registered against the two women on Saturday under sections 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 34 (common intension) and 427 (mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees) of the Indian Penal Code at South Rohini police station, the DCP said.

The women were produced before the metropolitan magistrate and were later arrested, the police said.

A friendly cricket match between Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana-led team CP Delhi XI and Media XI was organised at New Police Lines Ground on Saturday. Cricketers Virendra Sehwag, Suresh Raina and Amit Mishra were also present on the occasion Photo | Ranjan Dimri

Business blasters events in pvt schools also from next year, says Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Saturday said the city Government's Business Blasters programme, which aims to encourage entrepreneurial mindset among students, will be started in private schools also from next year.

He was speaking at the Business Blasters Investment Summit and Expo at the Thyagraj Stadium here where over 100 business ideas of Government school students were presented to investors.

"The Business Blasters programme will also be extended to private schools from next year. A meeting will be held on March 7 to discuss how it can be rolled out in private schools," Sisodia said at the event.

Sisodia, who also holds the education portfolio, said that big global companies such as Facebook and Twitter should emerge out of India also.

He said that Business Blasters programme develops entrepreneurial mindset among students.

Business Blasters is the Delhi Government's start-up programme where students of Classes 11 and 12 propose business ideas and the Government helps them in giving these pitches a shape.

Delhi HC cancels bail to man accused of raping bipolar woman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has cancelled the bail granted to a man accused of raping a woman suffering from bipolar disorder by luring her on the pretext that there was an evil spirit of a dog in her body that needed to be removed by an occultist. Justice Mukta Gupta set aside the bail granted by the trial court and said the accused lives in the vicinity of the prosecutrix and is likely to intimidate or influence her again.

The judge, who was dealing with a challenge to the bail order filed by the father of the prosecutrix, directed the accused to surrender within a week and observed that the trial court order suffered from "gross illegality" as it ignored the woman's statement given to the magistrate, the seriousness of the offence and the fact that her statement was yet to be recorded for trial.

"The impugned order dated 7th September, 2021 is set aside. The bail granted to respondent no.2 (accused) is cancelled. Respondent no.2 will surrender to custody within one week," the court ordered.

The prosecutrix, a 37-year-old woman who suffered from bipolar disorder and was going through a divorce, was taken to Nainital instead of Vaishno Devi by the accused who put vermilion on her head to make her believe that they were married and then committed sexual intercourse with her.

Granting bail to the accused, the trial court had said bipolar disorder did not permanently affect the mental status and a video of the accused and the prosecutrix prima facie showed that the woman was conscious, oriented and aware of the nature of the act and that she could be seen voluntarily accompanying the accused. Justice Gupta opined that the trial court "failed to notice that consciousness and orientation are different from being able to exercise sound mental judgment and to realise that the victim is being enticed to fall prey to the accused".

"The learned Additional Sessions Judge failed to notice that the respondent no.2 was living in the neighbourhood of the prosecutrix, thus was aware of the mental faculties of the victim and taking advantage thereof, as her marriage was broken and she was eager to get married, he lured her stating that he would get the evil spirit out of her soul, get her married to a boy and called her on 21st July, 2021.

NIA arrests racketeer over seizure of fake currency, gold at IGI Airport

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA has arrested a suspected smuggler for his alleged involvement in smuggling gold and Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) in the country, an official said on Saturday.

Abdul Wahid of Uttar Pradesh's Sant Kabir Nagar who currently resides in Delhi's Bhajanpura was arrested Friday, the official of the premier investigation agency said.

The case pertains to the January 12 seizure of FICN of face value of Rs 10 lakh and 175 gms gold worth Rs 8.5 lakh at terminal-3 of Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport by Customs officials from Mohammad Shahjan, the NIA official said.

After forensic examination, it was found that the seized FICN was of high quality and subsequently sections of the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act were invoked, the official said.

Earlier, two accused were arrested by the NIA in the case.

Wahid has revealed that he is an active member of a gang involved in smuggling of FICNs and gold into India, the official said. He was produced before the special NIA court, Patiala House, on Saturday and taken on police remand, the NIA official said, adding that further investigation in the case continues.

City Govt OK's streetscaping 4 more sample stretches

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has provided administrative approval and estimate sanctions for streetscaping of four more sample stretches of Aurobindo Marg, Lodhi Road, Nelsan Mandela Road and Jagatpuri to Karkardooma stretch, officials said on Saturday.

According to Public Works Department (PWD) officials, these stretches are part of nine sample stretches on which Delhi's roads will be redesigned.

Officials said since the approval has been granted by the government, the streetscaping and beautification work of these sample stretches is likely to begin soon.

PWD officials said under the project, 600 metre stretch of Lodhi Road, 810 metre portion of Aurobindo Marg, 1km stretch of Nelson Mandela Road and 800 metre part of Jagatputi-Karkardooma road will be redesigned and beautified.

This sample stretch is part of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's ambitious "Redesigning and beautification of roads on European standards" project.

"…in pursuance to the proposal of Engineer-in-Chief, PWD titled 'streetscaping of 1000 Metre of Nelson Mandela Road to make it Model Stretch of streetscaping project' with an estimated cost of Rs 19.16 crore … I have been directed to convey the Administrative Approval & Expenditure Sanction of Competent Authority for carrying out the above work," PWD Deputy Secretary (Works) said in a circular.

Similar circulars have been issued for other model stretches, including Lodhi Road, Aurobindo Marg and Jagatpuri-Karkardooma road.

Officials associated with the project said the government has sanctioned Rs 15.62 crore for streetscaping of Lodhi Road.

"A sum of Rs 14.41 crore has been sanctioned for the beautification of 810 metre stretch of Aurobindo Marg, while Rs 15.55 crore has been set aside for streetscaping of Jagatpuri-Karkardooma stretch," a PWD official told PTI on Saturday.

Rare complication of Covid in kids found

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Though first detected in 2020, it is only now that a team of researchers has identified the unique features of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), a rare but potentially deadly complication of Covid in kids, that suggest how the syndrome gets started. The findings, published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, may lead to faster diagnosis and better treatment of MIS-C.

"One of the major unanswered questions about MIS-C is how, immunologically, the disease evolves from the initial infectious episode to the final, immune-mediated assault," said Mark Gorelik, Assistant Professor of pediatrics at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons.

MIS-C is a condition in which vital organs can become inflamed, often causing severe illness and hospitalization. The syndrome can be deadly, though most patients eventually recover.

The team compared eight MIS-C patients with 14 patients who had other febrile infections, by looking at the array of immune cells and responses in blood samples taken at the very first encounter with care in the emergency department, before treatments were initiated.

A clue to what causes MIS-C may lie in the different immune cells found in MIS-C patients compared with other patients, the researchers said.

"Only some cells were activated, which suggests that these cells are mistakenly directing the immune system to attack blood vessels in the body that had been damaged by the virus," said Robert Winchester, Professor at the varsity.

"These cells are drawn to the blood vessels because of the presence of the virus, but they appear to misidentify the culprit when they alert the rest of the immune system," he added.

MIS-C also appears to drive patients' natural killer cells — another type of immune cell – to exhaustion. "They get to the point where they are no longer able to carry out their function properly," Winchester said. "This is seen in some other inflammatory diseases and may offer a clue to treatment similar to those diseases."

India to send 3rd wheat shipment to Af

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is set to send the third batch of shipment of wheat to Afghanistan as part of its humanitarian aid. India has already shipped 4,000 tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan through the Pakistan border.

According to Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey, the next batch of shipment of 2,000 tonnes of wheat each is scheduled for March 8, 14, and 20 of this year to Afghanistan via the Pakistan border. A total of 50,000 tonnes of quality wheat worth Rs 125 crore grain will be delivered through the Pakistan border via the land route to Afghanistan in almost a month, Pandey said and added that more aid of wheat will depend on the government decision.

Asserting that Afghanistan has received "very well" the assistance provided by India, the secretary said the first batch of wheat was dispatched on February 22 and by the end of March, 10,000 tonnes will be delivered. The 40,000 tonnes will be delivered in batches of 2,000 each, he told reporters in a virtual press conference. "And, the response we got from the Afghanistan side is very overwhelming in terms of appreciation both of the quality and the nature of assistance at a critical time," Pandey said.

The quality wheat has been provided from state-owned Food Corporation of India (FCI). The grain has been checked in private labs as per the specifications required under the global norms, he added.

Pandey said India is providing wheat to Afghanistan at an economic cost of Rs 24,996 per tonne. Currently, domestic wheat prices are ruling around the same level and even the global rates have also gone up, hovering in the range of Rs 24,000 to 25,000 per tonne.

Wheat is delivered to international UN agency World Food Programme in Afghanistan, he added. Wheat production in India, the world's second-largest producer, is estimated to touch a new record 111.32 million tonne in the 2021-22 crop year (July-June) as against 109.59 million tonne in the previous year, as per the agriculture ministry's second advance estimate.

Wheat, the main rabi (winter) crop, will start hitting the market from March 15 onwards. The country also has a surplus stock of wheat in the Government godowns.

PM to inaugurate Pune Metro Rail today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 12 km stretch of the total 32.2 km Pune Metro Rail project on Sunday. PM Modi will also lay the foundation stone of various development projects in the city.

This project is being prepared at a cost of more than Rs 11,400 crore. The Prime Minister had laid the project's foundation stone on December 24, 2016. Modi will take a ride on the Pune Metro from Garware Station to Vanaz to launch the operations and open the service for citizens.

According to the Prime Minister's Office release, at around 11 am, the Prime Minister will unveil the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the premises of Pune Municipal Corporation. The statue is made up of 1850 kg gun metal and is about 9.5 feet tall.

"This project is an endeavour to provide world class infrastructure for urban mobility in Pune. Foundation Stone of the project was also laid by the Prime Minister on 24th Dec 2016. The entire project is being built at a total cost of more than Rs 11,400 crore. He will also inaugurate and inspect Exhibition at Garware Metro Station and will undertake a metro ride from there to Anandnagar Metro Station," the statement said.

The Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation (MahaMetro) has recently received safety clearance from the commissioner of metro railway safety (CMRS) for the 12 km route. By the end of December, Mahametro has set a target of spreading a network of 33.29 km in Pune city. Till now, the work of up to 11.97 km has been completed. The work of the remaining 21.32 km is to be completed in the next 10 months.

The Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone of rejuvenation and pollution abatement of Mula-Mutha River projects. Rejuvenation will be done in a 9 Km stretch of the river at a project cost of more than Rs. 1080 crores. It will involve works such as river edge protection, interceptor sewage network, public amenities, boating activity etc.

Mula-Mutha River pollution abatement project will be implemented on the concept of "One City One Operator" at a cost of over Rs 1470 crore. A total of 11 sewage treatment plants will be constructed under the project, with a combined capacity of around 400 MLD.

The Prime Minister will also launch 100 e-buses andan e-bus depot constructed at Baner and inaugurate the R.K Laxman Art Gallery-Museum constructed at Balewadi, Pune.

Mother Dairy to hike milk prices by ₹2/litre in Delhi-NCR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mother Dairy will increase milk prices by Rs 2 per litre in Delhi-NCR with effect from Sunday due to rise in procurement costs. The price hike comes soon after Amul, Parag and other leading dairy suppliers of India increased the price of milk by Rs 2 per litre across all its varieties from March 1.

"In view of the rising procurement prices (amount paid to farmers), fuel costs and costs of packaging material, Mother Dairy is compelled to raise its liquid milk prices by Rs 2/litre in Delhi NCR with effect from March 6, 2022," the company said on Saturday. The areas where Mother Dairy milk will be costlier from March 6 also include Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Mother Dairy had last raised the milk prices in July 2021.

Full cream milk will cost Rs 59 per litre from Sunday, up from Rs 57 per litre Prices of toned milk will increase to Rs 49, while double toned milk will rise to Rs 43 per litre. Cow milk prices have been hiked to Rs 51 per litre from Rs 49 per litre. Bulk vended milk (token milk) price has been raised to Rs 46 from Rs 44 per litre.

"In view of the rising procurement prices (amount paid to farmers), fuel costs and costs of packaging material, Mother Dairy is compelled to raise its liquid milk prices by Rs 2/litre in Delhi NCR with effect from March 6, 2022," the company said on Saturday.

The company said it has been experiencing a surge in varied input costs which have increased multifold. The procurement prices (amount paid to farmers) have alone firmed up by about 8-9 per cent since July 2021. The other costs have also gone up, it said.

"The surge in farm prices is only being partially passed on to the consumers, with an effective revision of only 4 per cent, which is lower than the increase witnessed in the farm prices and overall food inflation, thereby securing the interests of both the stakeholders," the company said.

"As a responsible organization, Mother Dairy has consistently worked towards providing remunerative prices to milk producers, thereby ensuring the sustainability of dairying and availability of quality milk," the statement added.

Modi hails contribution of Sulabh International to cleanliness drive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday hailed the contribution of Sulabh International to the cleanliness movement in the country as the organisation celebrated its 52nd foundation day. Sulabh founder Bindeshwar Pathak began the celebrations by honouring Arunoday Sharma from Himachal Pradesh with "Dr Bindeshwar Pathak Sulabh International Sanitation and Human Rights Prize for Excellence" which carries a prize money of Rs 12.50 lakh. Sharma shot into limelight following his outstanding performance on the television show Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC) last year.

Sulabh, on its foundation day, also felicitated some other children and awarded them with awards and scholarships.

"The contribution of Sulabh towards broad-basing Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has been admirable. May the Foundation Day's celebrations inspire every member to work with renewed vigour to serve various segments of the society, particularly the poor and the marginalised. Best wishes for all success of the 52 Foundation Day. I am sure that the photo exhibition will renew old memories of the organisation's admirable voyage," Modi said in his message to Sulabh.

The programme titled 'Swachhta & Swadhinta' was organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture.

It was attended by a large number of scholars from various universities of the country. Vice Chancellor of Central University of South Bihar, Professor Kameshwar Nath Singh delivered the key note address on the occasion.

Yoga guru Baba Ramdev joined the event virtually from Haridwar and lauded the ongoing Swaachta campaign and the efforts taken by Pathak.

Meanwhile, the Sulabh founder appreciated the efforts of the prime minister for all-round development of the country, particularly in the field of sanitation.

"The Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav is about the prime minister's grand vision of India 2.0 as Aatmanirbahar Bharat that we all take pride in, and as Sulabh family, we affirm our faith in and resolve to work for, as also the profound vision and dream of Mahatma Gandhi for Swachh Bharat," Pathak said.

Since its inception in 1970, Sulabh has spearheaded a movement for restoration of human rights and dignity to the former untouchables as well as for providing safe and hygienic human waste disposal system to millions of Indians, who had no access to safe sanitation facilities.

Pathak also invented the Sulabh two-pit pour-flush on-site ecological compost toilet, recognised by UNDP and WHO as one of the best global technologies for disposal of human waste, and construction of 1.6 million household toilets as well as more than 10,000 pay-and-use toilet complexes being used daily by 20 million Indians, to name just a few.

Director of Amrit Mahotsav, Ministry of Culture, Priyanka Chandra, in her address highlighted the initiatives of the government at 75 Azadi ka Mahotsav.

Phase-3 clinical trial of Sputnik Light gets DGCA panel's nod

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An expert panel of the central drug authority of India (DCGI) has recommended the permission for conducting phase-3 clinical trial of single-dose Covid-19 vaccine 'Sputnik Light' as a booster dose, official sources said on Saturday. Now the ball lies in the court of the DCGI to whether or not to approve it

The recommendations have been sent to the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for final approval.

The DCGI had on February 4 granted emergency use permission to Sputnik Light vaccine in India, subject to certain regulatory provisions.

Hyderabad-based Dr. Reddy's Laboratories had presented its proposal to DCGI for conducting the phase-3 trial of Sputnik Light vaccine as a booster dose.

Sputnik Light is the same as component-1 of Sputnik V.

"The Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on Covid-19 of the CDSCO, which reviewed the application on Friday after detailed deliberation, recommended granting permission for the phase-3 clinical trial with condition to initiate the trial with Sputnik Light vaccine for which the firm is holding emergency use authorisation permission in the country subject to certain regulatory provisions," an official source said.

Sputnik Light vaccine is approved in 29 countries, including Argentina and Russia.

Last month, the DCGI had granted emergency use authorization (EUA) to Sputnik Light vaccine in India, subject to certain regulatory provisions. With this, Sputnik Light has become the ninth COVID-19 vaccine that has been granted EUA in the country.

An independent comparative study conducted by the Spallanzani Institute in Italy earlier this year showed that Sputnik V demonstrates strong protection against the Omicron variant, with over two times higher virus neutralising activity compared to the Pfizer vaccine.

The data supports the results of the recent laboratory study by the Gamaleya Center demonstrating that Sputnik V induces robust neutralising antibody response to the Omicron variant, further strengthened by Sputnik Light as a booster.

Buses arranged to evacuate stranded Indians: Indian Embassy in Kyiv

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Embassy in Kyiv on Saturday said buses have been arranged to evacuate 298 stranded Indian citizens from Pisochyn. The shift of focus to North Eastern Ukraine came even as reports came in about students alleging that the Indian Embassy there was not helpful and the education agents were asking for USD 500 from each student for evacuation.

Indian students in Sumy also posted videos, saying they have decided to leave for the Russian border and that the Indian government and the embassy in Ukraine will be responsible if anything happens to them.

Following this, Indian envoy to Ukraine Partha Satpathy said no stone will be left unturned for the safe evacuation of Indian students from the conflict-stricken eastern Ukrainian city of Sumy as he hailed the unparalleled strength and fortitude displayed by the young citizens in dealing with the adversities.

After the embassy's assurance, the students did not leave the eastern Ukrainian city that has been witnessing intense fighting between Russian and Ukrainian troops.

"The last two weeks have been extremely harrowing and challenging for all of us. Hardly anyone would have ever witnessed such pain and disruption in our lives," Satpathy said.

"Nonetheless, I am proud of the maturity and fortitude displayed by our Indian nationals, especially young Indian students, in continuing to stay brave during these difficult times," he said. His message was posted on Twitter by the Indian embassy in Kyiv.

As for evacuation from Pisochyn, the late evening announcement came from the Indian Embassy in Kyiv. The embassy said the buses will soon reach Pisochyn to evacuate the stranded Indian students and urged them to follow safety instructions and precautions.

"Reaching out to our 298 students in Pisochyn. Buses are enroute and expected to arrive soon. Please follow all safety instructions and precautions. Be Safe Be Strong. @opganga @MEAIndia," the Indian Embassy in Kyiv tweeted.

"From Pisochyn and Kharkiv, we should be able to clear out everyone in the next few hours, so far I know no one left in Kharkhiv. Main focus is on Sumy now, challenge remains ongoing violence & lack of transportation; best option would be ceasefire," the MEA said here.

According to a stranded Indian student Prabal Gautam, "The education agents are saying that Edupedia, which is an agent of Bobtrade, is asking for 500 USD/person from students to get them evacuated as no help is being rendered from the Indian embassy,"

While the group of 500 Indian students stuck in Kharkiv has reached the location designated by the Indian embassy, none of the officials of the embassy were available on the ground, he alleged.

SC stays Delhi HC order on feeding of stray dogs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has stayed a Delhi High Court order which laid down guidelines regarding feeding of stray dogs while observing that citizens have the right to feed community canines.

A bench of Justices Vineet Saran and Aniruddha Bose issued notices to the Animal Welfare Board of India, Delhi government and others on an appeal filed by an NGO against the High Court order.

"Issue notice, returnable in six weeks. Meanwhile, operation of the impugned order shall remain stayed," the bench said.

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by the Humane Foundation for People & Animals challenging the June 24, 2021 order of the High Court.

The NGO contended that the High Court's directions can lead to an increase in the menace of stray dogs.

"A dog under human supervision and control and dependent on its human caretakers for all of its needs can be prevented from biting and attacking people and other animals by physical restraint, confinement to private property and suppressing aggressive tendencies with care and training. This is not the case with stray dogs, therefore feeding in societies, streets or at any public places is a direct risk to citizens," the NGO said.

The High Court had said stray dogs have the right to food and citizens have the right to feed community canines while observing that in exercising this right, care and caution should be taken to ensure that it does not impinge upon others and causes no harassment or nuisance.

The High Court, while laying down guidelines regarding feeding of stray dogs, had said every dog is a territorial being and it has to be fed and tended to at places within their territory which is not frequented by the general public.

Any person having compassion for stray dogs can feed them at their private entrance or driveway of their house or any other place not shared with other residents but no one can restrict the other from feeding dogs, until and unless it is causing harm or harassment to them, it had said.

"Community dogs (stray/street dogs) have the right to food and citizens have the right to feed community dogs but in exercising this right, care and caution should be taken to ensure that it does not impinge upon the rights of others or cause any harm, hindrance, harassment and nuisance to other individuals or members of the society," the High Court had said.

It had said that street dogs perform the role of community scavengers and also control rodent population in the area, thus preventing spread of diseases like leptospirosis and they also provide companionship to those who feed them and act as their stress relievers.

Putin warns 3rd party against creating Ukraine no-fly zone

Says it will be considered as participation in armed conflict

AP ■ LVIV

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Saturday that Moscow would consider any third-party declaration of a no-fly zone over Ukraine as "participation in the armed conflict."

Speaking at a meeting with female pilots on Saturday, Putin said Russia would view "any move in this direction" as an intervention that "will pose a threat to our service members."

"That very second, we will view them as participants of the military conflict, and it would not matter what members they are," the Russian president said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has pushed NATO to impose a no-fly zone over his country, warning that "all the people who die from this day forward will also die because of you" as Russian forces were battering strategic locations in Ukraine.

NATO has said a no-fly zone, which would bar all unauthorised aircraft from flying over Ukraine, could provoke widespread war in Europe with nuclear-armed Russia.

Russian attack on Ukraine attack on security of Europe, global peace: US Prez Biden

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is not only an attack on that country, but also on the security of Europe and global peace, US President Joe Biden has said, underscoring America's commitment to the security of all NATO allies as Moscow's offensive against the East European country intensifies.

In an interaction with reporters during a bilateral meeting with Finland President Sauli Niinistö on Friday at the White House, Biden said the two nations have been in regular touch for some time now.

He said the two countries have coordinated on a united, transatlantic response to the Russians and holding them accountable for their unprovoked and unjustifiable aggression against Ukraine.

"And we agreed it's not only an attack on Ukraine, it's an attack on the security of Europe and on global peace and stability," Biden said.

A White House readout of the meeting said that Biden and Niinisto discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations and ensure strong defence and deterrence in northern Europe.

"The leaders also discussed ongoing transatlantic coordination to impose costs on Russia for its unprovoked and unjustified military invasion of Ukraine, and their respective efforts to provide security and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.The Presidents also discussed the importance of NATO's Open Door policy. In addition, they discussed energy security and efforts to address climate change, according to the readout.

Earlier in the day, Biden spoke with President Andrzej Duda of Poland to discuss their countries' response, and those of allies, to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including ongoing efforts to impose severe consequences on Russia.

"Biden underscored the United States' commitment to the security of Poland and all of our NATO Allies," the White House said in a statement of the call.

UN: Ukraine exodus reaches 1.45 million

AP ■ GENEVA

The International Organisation for Migration says the number of people who have left Ukraine since fighting began has now reached 1.45 million.The UN migration agency, citing figures from Government Ministries in countries where they have arrived, said Saturday that 787,300 of them went to Poland. Some 228,700 fled to Moldova, 144,700 to Hungary, 132,600 to Romania and 100,500 to Slovakia.The IOM said that nationals of 138 countries have crossed Ukraine's borders into neighbouring nations.

UK fast-tracks law for quicker sanctions on Russian oligarchs having close links with Putin

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK Government is in the process of fast-tracking laws to make it easier to execute sanctions against Russian oligarchs, most of whom are known to have close links with President Vladimir Putin.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday vowed to ramp up pressure on rich elites who try to launder money through the UK.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) confirmed that emergency legislation will be introduced in Parliament next week to allow the government to move "faster and harder" in sanctioning oligarchs and businesses associated with the Putin regime.

"The UK has led the way with our toughest ever sanctions package against Putin's regime and we're bolstering this with new powers in our arsenal to go further and faster," said Johnson.

"We will ramp up pressure on criminal elites trying to launder money on UK soil and close the net on corruption," he said.

The Economic Crime Bill, which has cross-party support, is expected to be sped through the UK Parliament on Monday and become law by mid-March.

Outlining its amendments, the FCDO said the "appropriateness test" – a threshold that needed to be met when imposing sanctions on individuals – would be removed.

It is also speeding up the deadline for overseas companies to declare their true owners, from 18 months to six months.

Maximum fines for non-compliance with this rule are set to increase from 500 pounds to 2,500 pounds per day.

"The world is turning its back on Putin and his regime," Johnson said in a video message on Twitter.

Mariupol Diary: Scenes of despair, resolve in Ukraine city

AP ■ MARIUPOL

A pale, bloodied child, her pajama pants adorned cheerfully with unicorns, is rushed into a hospital, her mother wailing in terror.

New mothers nestle infants in makeshift basement bomb shelters. A father collapses in grief over the death of his teen son when shelling ravages a soccer field near a school.

These scenes unfolded in and around the Azov Sea port of Mariupol in southern Ukraine over the past week, captured by Associated Press journalists documenting Russia's invasion.

With nighttime temperatures just above freezing, the city was plunged into darkness late in the week as the battle knocked out most phone services and raised the prospect of food and water shortages. Without phone connections, medics did not know where to take the wounded.

Russia has made significant gains on the ground in the south in an apparent bid to cut off Ukraine's access to the sea. It also has taken the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, about 270 kilometers (168 miles) northwest of Mariupol. Capturing the city could also allow Russia to build a land corridor to Crimea, which it seized in 2014.

China seeks to unify public in support for Russia

AP ■ SINGAPORE

As the West condemns Russia, President Vladimir Putin has vocal supporters in China, where the ruling Communist Party tells its people they are fellow targets of US-led harassment.

"If Russia is destroyed, we will be next. This is for sure," said Wang Yongchun, a retiree in Beijing. "The United States wants to dominate the world." Such comments reflect the stance of a ruling party that is the closest thing Putin has to a major ally: The war should stop but the United States is to blame.

President Xi Jinping's government has tried to distance itself from Russia's offensive but avoided criticising Moscow. The government has offered to act as mediator and denounced trade and financial sanctions against Russia.Ruling party control of all Chinese media and intensive internet censorship make it hard to gauge public opinion. But what the party allows online and requires media to publish make clear what it wants the public to think.

Media outlets were told last week to post only pro-Russian content and to censor anti-Russian or pro-Western views, according to a copy of instructions posted on the social media account of the newspaper Beijing News. The post was later deleted.In a live broadcast of the Winter Paralympics opening ceremony in Beijing on Friday, state broadcaster CCTV did not translate portions.

Myanmar military council revokes citizenship of Opposition members

AP ■ BANGKOK

Myanmar's ruling military council has announced the revocation of the citizenship of top members of the main group coordinating resistance to army rule.

The announcement broadcast on state-run MRTV television on Friday said 11 leaders of the opposition to military rule have had their citizenship terminated because they had allegedly fled the country and harmed the national interest.

It targeted eight members of the shadow National Unity Government, which views itself as the country's legitimate ruling authority, and three prominent activists.

The NUG was established by elected legislators who were barred from taking their seats when the military seized power in February last year, ousting the civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Resistance to the takeover has now led to what some U.N. Experts have characterized as a civil war.

At least two members of the NUG Cabinet named in the announcement responded on Twitter on Saturday.

Aung Myo Min, the human rights minister who has been traveling in Europe to seek support for Myanmar resistance movement, said the announcement was illegal because the military council is not the legitimate government.

"Ceasing citizenship of Cabinet members by terrorist military junta is just a joke. Nothing can stop our love to our country," Aung Myo Min wrote.

The group's foreign minister, Zin Mar Aung, wrote that "Just because coupmakers pretending to be a government and strip away my citizenship does not make me love Myanmar less. They do not have the rights to strip people's citizenship away."

Iran may answer UN nuclear questions as deal talks near end

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran on Saturday suggested it could supply answers long sought by the United Nations' nuclear watchdog toward the end of May as talks in Vienna over its tattered atomic deal with world powers appear to be reaching their end.

The comment by Mohammad Eslami, the head of the civilian Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, came as Rafael Mariano Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency visited Tehran.

While Grossi did not directly confirm that timeline, he described his visit as meant "to address outstanding questions" as negotiators back in Europe appear to be reaching a deadline to see if the 2015 accord can be revived.

He planned to address journalists in Vienna late Saturday about his trip."It would be difficult to believe or to imagine that such an important return to such a comprehensive agreement like the (nuclear deal) would be possible if the agency and Iran would not be seeing eye to eye on how to resolve these important safeguards issues," Grossi said in Tehran. Safeguards in the IAEA's parlance refer to the agency's inspections and monitoring of a country's nuclear programme.

Grossi for years has sought for Iran to answer questions about man-made uranium particles found at former undeclared nuclear sites in the country. U.S. Intelligence agencies, Western nations and the IAEA have said Iran ran an organized nuclear weapons programme until 2003.

Pakistan remains on FATF's grey list for failing to meet some of its targets

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

The global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog FATF has retained Pakistan on its terrorism financing "grey list" for failing to meet some of its targets under the additional criteria.

Pakistan has been on the grey list of the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) since June 2018 for failing to check money laundering, leading to terror financing, and was given a plan of action to complete it by October 2019.

Since then, the country continues to be on that list due to its failure to comply with the FATF mandates. Reacting to FATF's decision on Friday, Energy Minister Hammad Azhar said Pakistan will fulfill both the remaining FATF action plans soon. Azhar took to social media announcing that Pakistan had addressed seven money laundering-related "Action Plan" items within an unprecedented timeframe while fulfilling 26 out of 27 terror financing-related targets.

Anti-money-laundering body puts UAE on global 'gray' list

AP ■ DUBAI

A global body focused on fighting money laundering has placed the United Arab Emirates on its so-called "gray list" over concerns that the global trade hub isn't doing enough to stop criminals and militants from hiding wealth there.

The decision late Friday night by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force puts the UAE, home to Dubai and oil-rich Abu Dhabi, on a list of 23 countries including fellow Mideast nations Jordan, Syria and Yemen.

While not expected to dent business in the Emirates, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula home to a multitude of economic free zones and real estate ventures, it could strike at the country's carefully managed business-friendly image.

Ratings agencies and other financial institutions also consider such a listing as a risk, which can affect interest rates for loans.

While praising the UAE's "significant progress," the body known as FATF said more needed to be done.

Already, the UAE has established a corporate registry and signed extradition agreements with other nations.

However, the UAE long has been known as been known as a place where bags of cash, diamonds, gold and other valuables can be moved into and through.

In recent years, the State Department had described "bulk cash smuggling" as "a significant problem" in the Emirates.

A 2018 report by the Washington-based Center for Advanced Defense Studies, relying on leaked Dubai property data, found that war profiteers, terror financiers and drug traffickers sanctioned by the US had used the city-state's boom-and-bust real estate market as a safe haven for their money.

Islamic State claims responsibility for Shia mosque attack in Pakistan

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

Pakistan's Interior Minister on Saturday vowed to arrest the masterminds behind a deadly suicide attack claimed by the Islamic State terror group on a crowded Shia mosque during Friday prayers here that killed at least 63 people and injured nearly 200 others.

A suicide bomber, belonging to the ISIS-Khorasan, blew himself up inside a mosque in Qissa Khwani bazaar in Peshawar, capital of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province on Friday, in one of the deadliest attacks in the restive region, bordering Afghanistan.

The death toll on Saturday rose to 63 after five more people injured in the explosion succumbed to their wounds, a hospital official said.

"The death toll from the mosque blast has touched 63 after five more people injured in the explosion succumbed to their injuries. The numbers might go up, " Muhammad Asim, the spokesman at Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar, where the injured are being treated, said.

The Islamic State affiliate in the region known as Islamic State in Khorasan province and headquartered in Afghanistan claimed responsibility for the devastating attack on the imambargah in Koocha Risaldar, a largely Shia neighbourhood in the old city of Peshawar.

Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police and investigation agencies have identified all three suspects connected to the attack and have closed in on them.

In a video message shared on Twitter, Ahmed said the police and investigation agencies would reach those suspects in one or two days.

Peshawar SSP (Operations) Haroon Rasheed Khan said the explosion was a suicide blast.

There were two attackers but only one of them was a suicide bomber, he said. An eyewitness identified a person as dressed in black as the suicide bomber, saying he entered the mosque, shot and killed the security guard first and then fired five to six bullets.

"After that, he quickly entered the [mosque's] main hall and blew

himself up in front of the pulpit. Following this, there were bodies and injured people lying everywhere," the eyewitness told Geo News.

Soon after the news of the bomb blast spread, many people, including women, rushed towards the mosque to inquire about the well-being of their family members, who had gone there to offer Jumma prayer, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Every house located in the vicinity of imambargah and in the nearby streets was in mourning as the residents either lost one or two members or had members seriously injured in the bomb blast.

Taliban official wanted by US makes rare public appearance

AP ■ KABUL

The Taliban acting interior minister — designated a terrorist by the US — said in a rare public appearance Saturday that security police guilty of misconduct in Afghanistan were being penalised after a string of abuse allegations.

For the first time, photos showing Sirajuddin Haqqani's face were published by official Taliban government channels.

That contrasted with an October appearance, when photos of the influential and reserved figure were blurred.

Haqqani was photographed attending the Saturday graduation ceremony of the first class to complete police training since the Taliban assumed control of Afghanistan.

Around 377 personnel, both male and female, graduated during the ceremony.

The event marked the first time Haqqani has given statements to the media since being named interior minister.

Haqqani said in a speech at the ceremony that Taliban security personnel who committed crimes against Afghan civilians were undergoing criminal proceedings.

Civilians have complained of abuse by Taliban militants in house-to-house raids and at checkpoints.

In January a young woman was shot to death by a Taliban security police at a checkpoint. He was later arrested.

White House: Congress must act soon to replenish COVID funds

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The U.S. Will soon begin to run out of money to bolster COVID-19 testing supplies and to guarantee that uninsured Americans keep getting free treatment for the virus unless Congress swiftly approves more funding, the White House warned.

Nearly a year after passage of the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, the administration says the federal government has nearly used up the money dedicated directly to COVID-19 response. More money from Congress is urgently needed to buy antibody treatments, preventative pills for the immunocompromised and to fund community testing sites, officials say.

"From the COVID side, the bank account is empty," said COVID-19 deputy coordinator Natalie Quillian. "We're in conversations with lawmakers about how to secure the funding, but it's urgently needed." Some of the consequences could be felt later this month.

The White House last month told Congress it was preparing to seek $30 billion for the virus response, but cut that to $22.5 billion in a formal request earlier this week that officials said includes only the most critical needs. It's being coupled with a $10 billion request to provide support to Ukraine and its people after Russia's invasion.

"This is an urgent request and this is what is at stake in our fight against COVID," press secretary Jen Psaki said on Friday. This month, the White House warns, COVID-19 testing manufacturers will begin to slow production of at-home rapid tests unless the federal government signs contracts to buy more. Officials say that could result in a supply crunch should there be another surge in cases.

They also said the Health Resources and Services Administration will be forced to begin winding down claims for COVID-19 treatment for uninsured people this month if Congress doesn't provide more money. Moreover, the U.S. Government supply of monoclonal antibodies would run out in May.

And in July, supplies of the AstraZeneca prophylactic pill that can prevent serious illness in immunocompromised individuals would go dry. By September, the U.S. Would run out of supplies of an oral antiviral pill.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement System)

1	**Name of work with its location**	Strengthening of heavily corroded/perforated of X- girders at Br. No. 233 UP(5X30.5m) on DUK section, 148 (1x76.2m) & 161 (2x45.7m) on SIR-DLPC section and strengthening of heavily corroded/perforated X- girder at Br. No. 140(10x30.5m) on SIR-NLDM section on UMB Division in the jurisdiction AXEN/BL/UMB.
2	**Approx. Cost of work**	**Rs. 85,97,183.57**
3	**Completion period of the work**	**06 (Six) Months**
4	**Date & time for submission of tender & opening of tender**	Up-to 15.00 hrs on **29.03.2022** Opening of tender after 15:00 hrs on same day
5	**Website particulars where complete details of Tender can be seen & downloaded**	Above tender available on **IREPS** site i.e. **www.ireps.gov.in**

Tender Notice No.: 32-W-233-148-140-MB-UMB Dated : 05.03.2022 477/2022

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PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price / Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Mr. Rajesh Kumar (Borrower), Mrs. Ratnavali (Co-Borrower) LBBWD00002987335	Plot No-178, Plot-S Khasra No-556 557 558 559, Shree Paras Residency Vill Patan Kala Teh Tijara, Bhiwadi, Rajasthan. area: 908.55 Sq.ft	Rs.6,38,294/- as on February 22, 2022	Rs. 7,20,000/- / Rs. 72,000/-	March 14, 2022 From 12 Noon to 1:00 PM	March 29, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
2.	Naresh Sharma (Co-Borrower), Dinesh Kumar Sharma (CO-Borrower) LBBWD00001489600	Flat No. 601, Tower C,6 Floor, Sky View Apartment, Situated at Plot No. GH-02, Vasundhara Nagar, Bhiwadi. Area of 1638 Sq. Ft..	Rs. 27,18,897/- as on February 24, 2022	Rs. 20,25,000/- / Rs.2,02,500/-	March 14, 2022 From 12 Noon to 1:00 PM	March 29, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards

The online auction will be conducted on website **(URL Link- https://disposalhub.com)** of our auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited.** The Mortgagors/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **March 28, 2022** before **05:00 P.M** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi-110005** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **March 28, 2022** before **05:00 P:M** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh. Delhi-110005** on or before **March 28, 2022** before **05:00 P:M.** Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of **"ICICI Bank Limited"** payable at **Delhi.**

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited** on **8657476284** or **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited** on **9710029933/ 9810029926/ 01244233933**

Please note that Marketing agencies **1. M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. 2. Augeo Asset Management Pvt Ltd have** also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit **www.icicibank.com/n4p4s**

Date: March 05, 2022 **Authorized Officer**
Place: Delhi NCR **ICICI Bank Limited**

Secy: Govt revised OMSS policy, restored transportation charges

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has revised the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) of foodgrains for bulk consumers and private traders by restoring transportation charges that were waived last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said on Saturday.

Under the OMSS policy, the government allows state-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) to sell foodgrains, especially wheat and rice, at predetermined prices in the open market from time to time to bulk consumers and private traders.

The policy aims to enhance supply of grains especially during the lean season and thereby to moderate the general open market prices, especially in the deficit regions.

"In the revised OMSS policy, only one change has been made and restored the transportation charges which was borne last year by the Government of India due to the COVID-19 pandemic," Pandey told reporters in a virtual press conference.

That was an aberration and a departure from the normal policy. This year, the transportation charges have been "restored back" and buyers will have to pay as per ex-Punjab or Haryana wherever the commodity is transported, he said.

The Secretary also mentioned that the sale of grains under the OMSS this year has been the highest ever and crossed the target of 75 lakh tonne. Total sales have reached 85 lakh tonne, he said.

The revised OMSS policy is a stable policy and will help considering the rise in global prices in the coming months, he added.

For transparency in operations, the FCI has switched over to e-auction for sale under the OMSS to bulk consumer and private traders. It conducts a weekly auction and even state governments are allowed to participate in the e-auction if they require the grain.

Wheat production in India, the world's second largest producer, is estimated to touch a new record 111.32 million tonne in the 2021-22 crop year (July-June) as against 109.59 million tonne in the previou year, as per the Agriculture Ministry's second advance estimate.

Wheat, the main rabi (winter) crop, will start hitting the market from March 15 onwards. The country also has a surplus stock of wheat in the government godowns.

China cuts GDP growth to 5.5% to target slower growth

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Saturday cut its GDP target to 5.5 per cent to focus on slower growth to stabilise its economic fundamentals this year, as the world's second-largest economy beefed up supportive measures to shore up growth against strong headwinds.

In his annual work report submitted to the opening session of the National People's Congress, (NPC), the country's parliament, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang announced the lowering of the GDP target from six per cent to 5.5 per cent amid uncertain global recovery due to COVID-19 and Ukraine turmoil as well slump in China's vast property sector rising concerns of its impact on the economy.

In 2021, China's economy grew by 8.1 per cent to about USD 18 trillion-stated to be the best in a decade.

The pace of the growth was well above the government target of above six per cent in 2021.In his work report, Li said China plans to create more than 11 million new jobs in 2022.

The government has set the deficit-to-GDP ratio for 2022 at around 2.8 per cent in a move to boost fiscal sustainability, while the special-purpose bonds for local government will total 3.65 trillion yuan (USD one trillion).

The fundamentals of China's economy remain unchanged, and they will maintain long-term growth, he said.

"We must make economic stability our top priority," Li said in an apparent explanation for lowering the GDP target."The world economic recovery lacks drive, and commodity prices remain high and are prone to fluctuation. All of this is making our external environment increasingly volatile, grave and uncertain," Li said.The exchange rate of the yuan will be maintained generally stable at an adaptive, balanced level, he added.He also announced a new package of tax refunds and cuts this year to support enterprises, including a temporary exemption on value-added tax payments to small taxpayers.

With over 10 million college graduates expected to enter the job market this year, Li said that the government will provide them with stronger policy support and uninterrupted services.

Jaypee Infra insolvency: NCLT to hear Suraksha resolution plan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) will hear on March 7 and March 9 matters related to approval of the Suraksha group's bid to acquire debt-ridden realty firm Jaypee Infratech Ltd.

In a regulatory filing, Jaypee Infratech Ltd (JIL) said the listing of matter of resolution plan, along with related pleas, is listed for consideration before the National Company Law Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi, on March 7 and March 9.

In June last year, Mumbai-based Suraksha group received the approval of financial creditors and homebuyers to take over the JIL, raising hopes for around 20,000 homebuyers of getting possession of their dream flats.

Suraksha group got the approval of the committee of creditors (CoC) to acquire JIL, after the 10-day-long voting process.

Suraksha group won the bid with 98.66 per cent votes and it got 0.12 per cent more votes than NBCC.

As many as 12 banks and more than 20,000 homebuyers have voting rights in the CoC.

Homebuyers and creditors have 56.63 per cent and 43.25 per cent voting rights, respectively. Fixed deposit holders have 0.13 per cent voting rights.

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Bank | **Branch Office:** ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Prabhjit Singh, Harpreet Kaur, 50 B Ayodhya Enclave, Sector 13 Rohini, Delhi, A/c No:- LBNOD00004928477	Flat No-B-2403, 24th Floor, Tower-B, Ajnara Panorama, Plot No-Gh-04, Sector-22A, Yamuna Expressway, Gautam Budh Nagar, Greater Noida, Noida	02/02/2022 Rs. 39,36,384/-	04-11-2021
2.	Nemi Chand Jat, Rajendra Kumar, W-z 209 A Third Floor Basai, Darapur Ramesh Nagar West Delhi, Delhi, New Delhi 110015 A/c No:- LBGUR00004844773	Flat No. Am-E-12A06, 12A Floor, Tower E, Ajnara Ambrosia, Plot No. Gh-01, Sector-118 Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar	02/02/2022 Rs. 60,99,820/-	04-11-2021
3.	Neelu Sharma, Rahul Sharma, D-11/10 2nd Floor, Arbee City Sec 52, Wazirabad Chakarpur (74), Haryana, Gurgaon, Gurgaon A/c No:- LBDEL00003362984	Plot No-10, Second Floor (Without Roof Rights), Road No D-11, Ardee City, Sector 52 Gurgaon	02/02/2022 Rs. 25,17,190.6/-	04-11-2021
4.	Naveen Arya, Meenakshi Arya, Flat No 113, Neelgiri Apartment Sec-9 Rohini, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00004899302	Flat No:- A-13 Third Floor, Plot No-45, Sector-9 The, Neelgiri Apartment, CGHS Ltd, Rohini Delhi	02/02/2022 Rs. 95,54,188.39/-	31-07-2021
5.	Narinder Sethi, Rajni Sethi, Bhanu Sethi, H No 2752 Zorawer Singh Marg Mori Gate G P O, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00003702443	Cottage No-22, Plot No-4 Muncipal No-1, Ram Kishore Road Civil Line, Delhi:-110054	04/02/2022 Rs. 52,36,584/-	04-11-2021
6.	Narinder Sethi, Rajni Sethi, Bhanu Sethi, H No 2752 Zorawer Singh Marg Mori Gate G P O, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00003793030	Cottage No-22, Plot No-4 Muncipal No-1, Ram Kishore Road Civil Line, Delhi:-110054	04/02/2022 Rs.22,96,519/-	04-11-2021
7.	Narinder Sethi, Rajni Sethi, Bhanu Sethi, H No 2752 Zorawer Singh Marg Mori Gate G P O, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00005324906	Cottage No-22, Plot No-4 Muncipal No-1, Ram Kishore Road Civil Line, Delhi:-110054	04/02/2022 Rs.9,41,950/-	04-11-2021
8.	Nand Lal Riar, Geeta Devi, A-17004 16th Avenue, Gaur City-2 Greater Noida, Noida, 201308 A/c No:-LBGUR00004844191	Flat No-E-12A05, 12a Floor, Tower- E, Ajnara Ambrosia, Plot No-Gh-01, Sector-118 Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar	02/02/2022 Rs. 43,88,057/-	04-11-2021
9.	Mukul Gupta, Nirmal Gupta, H No.117 118 3rd Floor Blk C Pkt 11, Sector 3 Rohini Tpddl Shakti, Deep Building Delhi, Delhi, A/c No:- LBNOD00004953316	Flat No-J-204, 2nd Floor, Tower-J, Ajnara Ambrosia, Plot No-Gh-01, Sector-118 Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar	02/02/2022 Rs. 75,40,805/-	04-11-2021
10.	Mukesh Kumar Singh, Nikita Singh, Plot No 330 Flat No 201, Sector 4 Vaishali, Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad, A/c No:- LBDEL00002464153	Flat No-A1-2605, 25th Floor, Tower A1, Victory Ace, Plot No-Gh-02, Sector-143 Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar	02/02/2022 Rs. 50,29,731.6/-	04-11-2021
11.	Mohit Gupta, Shelly Gupta, Future Tech Polymers, M-25 Guru Harkishan Nagar, Paschim Vihar, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00001959525	Flat No-1102, 11th Floor, Tower-T-06, Green Parc- Crescent Parc, Village- Wazirpur and Mewka, Sector-92 Gurgaon, Gurgaon	02/02/2022 Rs. 19,50,749.79/-	31-10-2021
12.	Mohd Aftab Ansari, Tahira Aftab, L-162 Nai Basti Okhla Makki Masjid, Jamia Nagar New Friends Colony, South Delhi, Delhi, A/c No:- LBNOD00005075239	Flat No C-002, Ground Floor, Tower-C, Spls Aawasiya Yojna, Jal Nigam Road, Govind Puram Extension, Nh-24, Ghaziabad	02/02/2022 Rs. 24,32,625.99/-	04-11-2021
13.	Mohammad Imran Shamsi, Farheen Imran Shamsi, 1670 3rd Floor Dakhni Rai Street, Delhi Near Moti Mahal Resturant, Darya Ganj Central Delhi, Delhi, A/c No:- LBNOD00004919119	Flat No-B-206, 2nd Floor, Tower B, Ajnara Ambrosia, Plot No Gh-01, Sector-118 Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar	02/02/2022 Rs. 45,47,213/-	04-11-2021
14.	Manish Kumar, Rekha Rani, Bb-27 D, East Shalimar Bagheast Shalimar Bagh, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00005123296	Dda Lig Flat No-27 D, Third Floor Block Bb Shalimar Bagh East, Delhi:- 110088	04/02/2022 Rs.28,29,418/-	09-11-2021
15.	Manish Kumar, Rekha Rani, Harish Kumar, Bb -27 D, East Shalimar Bagheast Shalimar Bagh, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00005332921	Dda Lig Flat No-27 D, Third Floor Block Bb Shalimar Bagh East, Delhi:- 110088	04/02/2022 Rs.5,66,097/-	09-11-2021
16.	Kiran Bansal, V Care Real Infra Pvt Ltd, Yogesh Bansal, Lokesh Bansal, 189 Bharat Apartment, Sector 13 Rohini, Delhi, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00002138920	Flat No:-182, 3rd Floor, Bharat Apartments, Dda Hig, Bharat Cghs Ltd, Plot No.20, Sector 13 Rohini, Delhi	02/02/2022 Rs. 60,88,583.3/-	09-11-2021
17.	Kamlesh Chandra, Flat No 506, Hindon Heights Appartments, Sector 4, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, A/c No:- LBNOD00001498847	Flat-no-506, 5th Floor, Hindon Heights, Plot-No-21, Sector-4 Vaishali, Ghaziabad	02/02/2022 Rs.12,71,220/-	09-11-2021
18.	K Mani Kumar, K Sai Varalarshmi, H No 838 Osimo, Tower Mahagun Moderne, Sec 78 Noida, Noida, A/c No:- LBNOD00002342765	Unit No 838, 8th Floor, Tower- Osimo, Mahagun Modern, Noida	02/02/2022 Rs.23,52,417/-	02-10-2021
19.	K Mani Kumar, K Sai Varalarshmi, H No 838 Osimo, Tower Mahagun Moderne, Sec 78 Noida, Noida, A/c No:- LBNOD00004683990	Unit No 838, 8th Floor, Tower- Osimo, Mahagun Modern, Noida	02/02/2022 Rs.14,05,633/-	02-10-2021
20.	K Mani Kumar, K Sai Varalarshmi, H No 838 Osimo, Tower Mahagun Moderne, Sec 78 Noida, Noida, A/c No:- LBNOD00003118896	Unit No 838, 8th Floor, Tower- Osimo, Mahagun Modern, Noida	02/02/2022 Rs.7,88,963/-	02-10-2021
21.	Hitesh Nandal, Ruchi Dabas, House No-13 Block Gh 1 Archanaa Partments Paschim Vihardelhi, Delhi, Delhi A/c No:- LBDEL00002139103	Flat No- 3B- 101, 1st Floor, Big Sky Tower, Tower- 1, Golf View Apartment, Sector- I, Pocket- D, Sushant Golf Citysultanpur Roadlucknow, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	01/02/2022 Rs. 86,55,566/-	04-10-2021
22.	Harsh Kumar, Harish Kumar, Balaji Tours & Packages Pvt Ltd, Hansu, Bina Devi, Flat No- 9515 Ff S/F Duplex Sec-C Pkt-9, Vasant Kunj, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00002009026	Flat No- 9515 Duplex Ff & Sf, Block-C Pkt-9 Catego, Vasant Kunj Delhi, Delhi	04/02/2022 Rs. 1,31,16,363/-	31-07-2020
23.	Harsh Kumar, Harish Kumar, Balaji Tours & Packages Pvt Ltd, Hansu, Bina Devi, Flat No- 9515 Ff S/F Duplex Sec-C Pkt-9, Vasant Kunj, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00002009029	Flat No- 9515 Duplex Ff & Sf, Block-C Pkt-9 Catego, Vasant Kunj Delhi, Delhi	04/02/2022 Rs. 46,55,592/-	31-07-2020
24.	Gita., Manish Kumar, House No-225 Sainthli Jarcha Gautam Buddha Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh A/c No:- LBNOD00004918731	Flat No-12A03, 13th Floor Sun-5 Migsun Vilaasa Plot No. Gh-1B(2) Sector Eta-2, Greater Noida, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	04/02/2022 Rs. 5,05,733/-	30-09-2021
25.	Gita., Manish Kumar, House No-225 Sainthli Jarcha Gautam Buddha Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh A/c No:- LBNOD00004975492	Flat No-12A03, 13th Floor Sun-5 Migsun Vilaasa Plot No. Gh-1B(2) Sector Eta-2, Greater Noida, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	04/02/2022 Rs. 75,482/-	30-09-2021
26.	Gayatri Yadav,ramanand., 1st Floor Plot No-475 Shakti Khand-3, Indirapuram, Uttar Pradesh, Ghaziabad, A/c No:- LBGHZ00005052082	Plot No-475, Floor 1 Shaktikhand-3, Indirapuram Near Gd Goenka School, Ghaziabad:-201001, Uttar Pradesh	04/02/2022 Rs. 30,90,837/-	04-11-2021
27.	Gayatri Yadav,ramanand., 1st Floor Plot No-475 Shakti Khand-3, Indirapuram, Uttar Pradesh, Ghaziabad, A/c No:- LBGHZ00005052088	Plot No-475, Floor 1 Shaktikhand-3, Indirapuram Near Gd Goenka School, Ghaziabad:-201001, Uttar Pradesh	04/02/2022 Rs. 4,69,579/-	04-11-2021
28.	Fauzia Farooqui, Motasim Billah Farooqui, Plot No- 02 6th Floor Flat No-601, Jamia Apartments, Sec- Pc-1 Greater Noida Kasana Gautam, Noida, Vuddha Nagar Kasana Noida A/c No:- LBNOD00004363896	Flat No.12122, 12th Floor Tower 12 La Grandiose Plot No SC 01/C A1 Sector 150 Noida Gautam Buddha Nagar	02/02/2022 Rs. 33,47,678.98/-	30-10-2021
29.	Dilip Kumar Thakur, Pushpa Thakur, Flat No-304, Plot No-148, Sec-4, Vaishali, Uttar Pradesh, Ghaziabad, A/c No:- LBDEL00000803932	Flat No.304, Sf (Rear LHS), Plot No.148, Sector- 4, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh	01/02/2022 Rs.3,89,663/-	09-11-2021
30.	Dilip Kumar Thakur, Pushpa Devi, Flat No-304, Plot No-148, Sec-4, Vaishali, Uttar Pradesh, Ghaziabad, A/c No:- LBGUR00001398836	Flat No.304, Sf (Rear LHS), Plot No.148, Sector- 4, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh	01/02/2022 Rs.2,78,151/-	09-11-2021
31.	Dhananjay Kumar Sinha, Nivedita Sinha, 506, B2 Shivalik Apartments, Sec 1 Manesar, Gurgaon, A/c No:- LBDEL00004033759	Flat No.518, Block B- 5 Shivlik Apartment Imt Manesar Sector 1 Gurgaon	02/02/2022 Rs.41,21,704/-	04-10-2021
32.	Chiradeep Kabiraj, Kajari Kabiraj, T4/ 602 Parsvnath Green Ville, Sector 48, Sohna Road, Gurgaon, A/c No:- LBDEL00002342575	Flat No 503, 5th Floor, B1 Building, Rose Parade, S.no. 21/2/1A (Part),18/7+8A/1 & 18/7+8A/2/4, Mouze Kondhwa Khurd Pune, Pune	02/02/2022 Rs. 2,26,180/-	04-10-2021
33.	Chaudhary Ventures Private Limited,aspek Media Pvt Ltd, Dharamvir Singh, Harish Choudhary, Chaudhary Ventures Private Limited, 3rd Floor, 803 Arjun Nagar, Kotla Mubarakpur Delhi, Delhi, Kotla Mubarakpur Delhi A/c No:- LBDEL00004914894	Plot No- 803, 3rd Floor Arjun Nagar Kotla Mubarkpur Delhi	02/02/2022 Rs. 42,98,292/-	04-10-2021
34.	Brij Mohan, Tara Sharma, Gg II 3C Near Pvr Cinema, Vikas Puri, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00005263087	Dda Lig Flat No-3-C Second Floor Pocket-2, Vikas Puri, Delhi:- 110018	04/02/2022 Rs.19,54,991/-	06-11-2021
35.	Bhupinder Singh, Balvinder Kaur, 2-B Dda Flats Mansarover Park, Sahadra Near Dda Community Centre,sahadara, Delhi, 110032 A/c No:- LBGUR00004898466	Flat No-B-2203, 22nd Floor, Tower-B, Ajnara Panorama, Gautam Budh Nagar, Gh-04, Sector-22A, Yamuna Express Way, Noida	02/02/2022 Rs. 33,05,555.01/-	04-11-2021
36.	Basant Lal, Punita Lal, Flat No-202 Plot No-334,gyan Khand-1 Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad, A/c No:- LBDEL00005044105	Flat No-2508, 24th Floor, Plot No-Gh-05B, Sector 16B, Ska Greenarch, Greater Noida, Noida	02/02/2022 Rs. 31,03,642.04/-	04-11-2021
37.	Azaad Babu, Anuradha Kumari, 2546, 2nd Fl0or Dlf Phase-4, Haryana, Gurgaon A/c No:- LBNOD00004865120	Flat No.1707, 17th Floor Tower G, Ajnara Ambrosia, Plot No. Gh-01 Sector-118, Noida Uttar Pradesh	04/02/2022 Rs. 54,21,371/-	04-11-2021
38.	Azaad Babu, Ashok Kumar, 2546, 2nd Fl0or Dlf Phase-4, Haryana, Gurgaon A/c No:-LBNOD00002360143	Flat No-1108, 11th Floor Plot No-02 Logix Blossom Zest, Sector-143, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	04/02/2022 Rs. 16,10,155/-	04-11-2021
39.	Asif Iqbal Salim, Tariq Salim, Habiba Khatoon, Naya Quilla, Assinnagar, Siwan Bihar, Siwan, A/c No:- LBDEL00002927323	Flat No.2304, 23th Floor, Tower-K Ajnara Le Garden, Plot No Gh-02, Sector-16. Greater Noida Noida	02/02/2022 Rs. 38,15,817.32/-	31-10-2021

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : March 05, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

HDIL insolvency: Financial creditors to meet on March 9-10

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Financial creditors of HDIL will meet on March 9-10 to discuss bids for acquiring the crisis-hit realty firm through insolvency proceedings.

In a regulatory filing on Saturday, HDIL's Resolution Professional Abhay N Manudhane informed that the "Twenty-Third meeting of Committee of Creditors will be held on 9th March 2022 and shall continue on 10th March 2022."

The filing did not mention about the agenda of the meeting.

Last month, HDIL had informed that its resolution professional has received 16 bids from nine applicants to acquire the company."The Resolution Professional of the company has received sixteen resolution plans from nine Prospective Resolution Applicants (PRAs), HDIL had said.Housing Development and Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL) is under Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) pursuant to the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

Hiring will not be impacted by any new coronavirus variant: Survey

PTI ■ MUMBAI

As the country is recovering from the pandemic, a majority of C-Suite executives and employees (73 per cent) across sectors feel hiring will not be adversely impacted due to any new wave of COVID-19, according to a survey.

As COVID-19 cases continue to decline across the country, 73 per cent respondents believe that the new wave will not have an adverse impact on the hiring trends across sectors, while 27 per cent are unsure about the situation in the future, according to the survey by Genius Consultants.

The survey was done among 1,468 C-Suite executives and employees online across sectors including banking and finance, engineering, education, FMCG, hospitality, HR solutions, IT, ITeS and BPO, logistics, manufacturing, media, oil and gas, and pharma.

Further, the survey showed that over 69 per cent respondents are not anticipating a rise in job insecurity with the advent of the new variant.

The remaining fear that state-imposed restrictions and lockdowns could again halt businesses and possibly could result in salary cuts and layoffs, it noted.

When asked if the fear of the new variant could be more detrimental, over 71 per cent said it will not be as serious as hospitalisation had been low during Omicron and had a high recovery rate, which was encouraging.

Meanwhile, 64 per cent respondents feel that most companies will encourage 'hybrid work models' if there is a surge in COVID-19 cases, to ensure the safety of their staff and for uninterrupted business operations."The new variant causing the sudden rise in cases had been an extremely worrisome subject for industries across. The industries were slowly recovering and were performing quite satisfactorily.

"However, the new surge did not hamper and put any hurdle in the pathway of this growth. We hope that this variant is not as severe as the previous ones and that people recover quickly and remain safe," Genius Consultants Chairman and Managing Director.

Joint study on India-Bangladesh trade pact to be finalised soon: Comm Min

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and Bangladesh will soon finalise a joint study on the prospects of entering into a bilateral free trade agreement, which aims at further strengthening economic ties between the countries, the commerce ministry said on Saturday.

The issue was discussed during a meeting between Commerce Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam and Bangladesh's Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Tapan Kanti Ghosh on March 4.

Both sides held extensive discussions on a variety of issues including the development of railway infrastructure, port infrastructure, joint study on Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), Border Haats, regional connectivity through multi-modal transportation, harmonisation of standards, mutual recognition agreement.

"CEPA study to be finalized at the earliest," the ministry said.

CEPA is a kind of comprehensive free trade pact under which two trading partners significantly reduce or eliminate customs duties on the maximum number of goods traded between them. They also liberalise norms to facilitate trade in services and boost investments.

Bangladesh is the sixth largest trade partner of India.

To facilitate bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh, several steps are underway including approval of a Detailed Project Proposal for developing container handling facility at Sirajganj Bazar.

Other steps include construction of a new 900 meter siding line at Benapole for running freight trains between India-Bangladesh; completion of construction of a loading and unloading platform at Darshana for allowing import of all commodities from India by rail, it said.

Besides, there was a consensus over the use of returning empty railway wagons/containers by Bangladesh as this would reduce overall logistics cost of India's exports to Bangladesh.

Closed Border Haats due to COVID restriction would be opened soon and 24x7 operationalization of Petrapole-Benapole Integrated Check Post (ICP) would be implemented soon.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General public on behalf of Fullerton India Home Finance Company. That Mrs. Rajindri is claiming owner /attorney of Property bearing No. RZ-14A/1, area measuring 50 sq., Yds., out of total area measuring 100 sq., Yds., out of Khasra No. 645/1, Situated in the area of Village Nasir Pur, abadi Indra Park, New Delhi. "the said property", by virtue of GPA, Agreement and will all dated 30.01.1981, executed by Mrs. Imrati Devi. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned claiming owner/attorney holder want to sell the said property to Mr. Chhote Lal Meena who is taking Loan from Fullerton for purchase of the said property, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner /attorney Holder over the said property, its sale /Mortgage/litigation, and 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, IInd Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N. Delhi-15
Ph : 011-41112527-28 kumarassociates.advocate@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General public on behalf of Fullerton India Home Finance Company. That Mr. Hafeez Ahmed Khan is claiming owner /attorney of Property No. 1/7654/1, area measuring 82 sq.,Yds., out of Khasra No. 251, Situated in the area of Village Badarpur, in the abadi of East Gorakh Park, Illaqa Shahdara, New Delhi "the said property". by virtue of GPA, Agreement and will all dated 11.06.2001 executed by Mrs. Shakuntala Rani. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned claiming owner/ attorney holder want to sell the said property to Mr. Kali Charan who is taking Loan from Fullerton for purchase of the said property, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner /attorney Holder over the said property, its sale /Mortgage/litigation, and 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, IInd Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N. Delhi-15
Ph : 011-41112527-28 kumarassociates.advocate@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General public on behalf of Fullerton India Home Finance Company. That Mrs. Bindu Rani is claiming owner /attorney of Third floor, with roof rights "said floor" part of Property bearing No. 80, area measuring 100 sq., Yds., out of Khasra No. 19/19, Situated at abadi of Rashid Market, in the area of Village Khureji Khas, Illaqa Shahdara, Delhi "the said property". by virtue of Regd. GPA, Notarized Agreement and regd. will all dated 06.08.2008, executed by Mrs. Sandhya who was owner of Second floor with roof rights, of the said property by virtue of sale deed dated 21.06.2007, All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned claiming owner/attorney holder want to sell Entire Third floor with roof rights of the said property to Mohd. Salman who is taking Loan from Fullerton for purchase of the said floor, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner /attorney Holder over the said floor, its sale /Mortgage/litigation, and 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)
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Ph : 011-41112527-28 kumarassociates.advocate@gmail.com

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता, लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खंड–बिलासपुर (छ0ग0)

–:: ऑन लाईन द्वितीय निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना ::–

जिला जल एवं स्वच्छता मिशन बिलासपुर की ओर कार्यपालन अभियंता एवं सदस्य सचिव, जिला जल एवं स्वच्छता मिशन द्वारा एकीकृत पंजीयन व्यवस्था के अन्तर्गत उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नांकित कार्य हेतु प्रपत्र "अ" (प्रतिशत दर) ऑन लाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

सिस्टम क्रमांक	निविदा क्र दिनांक	कार्य का नाम	अनुमानित लागत (रू. लाख में)	धरोहर राशि
93689	253 / 25.02.2022	बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड तखतपुर के ग्राम चनाडोंगरी में जल जीवन मिशन (द्वितीय निविदा)	63.43	48000.00
93690	254 / 25.02.2022	बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड बिल्हा के ग्राम पिरैया (द्वितीय निविदा)	84.34	64500.00
93692	255 / 25.02.2022	बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड बिल्हा के ग्राम मुरकुटा , खैरखुंडी एवं मोहतरा(द्वितीय निविदा)	122.74	93000.00
93693	256 / 25.02.2022	बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड बिल्हा के ग्राम कुंआ(द्वितीय निविदा)	76.57	58000.00
93694	257 / 25.02.2022	बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड तखतपुर के ग्राम छतौना(द्वितीय निविदा)	62.70	48000.00
93695	258 / 25.02.2022	बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड बिल्हा के ग्राम बोड़सरा–खुड़ियाटीह(द्वितीय निविदा)	129.07	97000.00
93696	259 / 25.02.2022	बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड बिल्हा के ग्राम कया(द्वितीय निविदा)	79.61	60000.00
93697	260 / 25.02.2022	बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड बिल्हा के ग्राम सेंदरी(द्वितीय निविदा)	154.79	117000.00
93698	261 / 25.02.2022	बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड बिल्हा के ग्राम पासीद(द्वितीय निविदा)	76.44	58000.00
93701	262 / 25.02.2022	बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड मस्तूरी के ग्राम चिल्हाटी(द्वितीय निविदा)	94.10	71000.00

अन्य विवरण एवं विस्तृत निविदा छ.ग. शासन के ई–प्रोक्योरमेंट वेबसाइट **https:\\eproc.cgstate.gov.in** पर दिनांक 04.03.2022 सुबह 10.30 बजे से उपलब्ध है तथा दिनांक 21.03.2022 समय 17.30 तक बीड डाले जा सकते है एवं अन्य विवरण कार्यालयीन समय पर लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खड़ बिलासपुर (छ.ग.) में देखे जा सकते है।

R.O.No - 68361/4
R.O. Date - 03/03/2022

हस्ता/–
कार्यपालन अभियंता
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड बिलासपुर (छ0ग0)

BSE joins hands with Tamil Nadu Govt's M-TIPB to promote listing of MSMEs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Stock exchange BSE on Saturday announced its collaboration with the MSME Trade and Investment Promotion Bureau (M-TIPB), Government of Tamil Nadu, for promoting awareness among micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) of the state about the benefits of listing.

Through this association, M-TIPB will provide support in mobilising the SME representatives through district industries centres and will also help in mobilising state or regional associations to encourage their SME members to attend capacity building programmes, the exchange said in a statement.

While, the BSE will provide the capacity building and soft support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Tamil Nadu for fulfilling listing requirements.

Further, the BSE will also provide all intellectual and manpower support to create awareness among SMEs across Tamil Nadu, about benefits of listing.

"Through M-TIPB's deep reach and network, we aim to further increase awareness amongst MSMEs about the benefits of listing. The BSE will also appoint a nodal person as single point contact in Tamil Nadu for providing end-to-end solution and facilitating SMEs with respect to registration/ listing on the platform," Ajay Thakur, head (BSE SME and Start-up), said.

Sakthivel S, general manager of M-TIPB, said the BSE has played a prominent role in developing the Indian capital markets. Tamil Nadu SMEs will get opportunity to raise funds through IPOs by listing in the BSE SME platform.

The BSE was the first stock exchange in the country to launch the SME platform. The SME platform started its journey in March 2012. Since then, over 363 companies have listed on the BSE SME platform and raised over Rs 4,000 crore.

'Rockstar Ravindra' puts India in driver's seat

PTI ■ MOHALI

Ravindra Jadeja paid a fitting tribute to one of his earliest mentors Shane Warne with a majestic 175 not out as India took complete command of the opening Test against Sri Lanka with a mammoth first innings total of 574/8 declared on the second day here.

Jadeja or the Indian team management didn't feel that the all-rounder needed to go for a double hundred as hosts declared their innings after quite literally batting Sri Lanka out of the game.

In the final session, Ravichandran Ashwin (61 off 82 balls, 2/21), having nicely warmed up with his 12th half-century, removed Lahiru Thirimanne and Dhananjaya De Silva to go past Sir Richard Hadlee's 431 victims.

Jadeja (1/30) later celebrated his hundred once again by trapping Sri Lanka's best player and skipper Dimuth Karunaratne (28) leg before.

Jasprit Bumrah (1/20) disposed off Angelo Mathews to leave them tottering at 108 for 4 as a three-day finish looked imminent. Sri Lanka still needs 267 runs to avoid follow-on.

Jadeja's career-best knock, his second ton in Test cricket, came less than 24 hours after the cricket world tried to come to terms with Warne's tragic end.

It was Warne, who first realised Jadeja's untapped batting potential during Rajasthan Royals' 2008 Indian Premier League campaign, where it was his late hitting that earned him the 'Rockstar' moniker from his mentor-captain.

Jadeja, over the years, has been one of the indispensable all-format players for India in Test cricket and more so for his batting abilities that make him a better package than Ashwin in overseas conditions.

On the day, he was at his imperious best as India scored 217 runs in two sessions because of his attacking batting.

It did help that Sri Lanka were a pacer short with their fastest bowler Lahiru Kumara left indisposed due to a hamstring injury. He failed to complete his 11th over and over dependence on inexperienced Lasith Embuldeniya (46-3-188-2) also harmed their cause.

JADEJA'S CAREER-BEST KNOCK, HIS SECOND TON IN TEST CRICKET, CAME LESS THAN 24 HOURS AFTER THE CRICKET WORLD TRIED TO COME TO TERMS WITH WARNE'S TRAGIC END.

Jadeja, in all, batted for five and half hours, faced 228 balls and by the time he walked back to the pavilion, he had hit 17 fours and three sixes.

A partnership of 130 with Ashwin for the seventh wicket and another 103 runs with Mohammed Shami (20 not out) for the unbroken ninth wicket basically nailed Sri Lanka.

However, Karunaratne's captaincy and his field placings left a lot to be desired as not for once during the course of the two days, did it look that the islanders want to compete.

It was a very defensive game and the gulf between India and Sri Lanka was so evident in the manner, the two teams approached the match.

Jadeja and Ashwin made India look proactive while Sri Lanka despite the hammering that they received weren't even reactive.

Bowling to Jadeja with a deep mid-wicket, long-off/on, deep extra cover and deep fine leg with an aim to stop the boundaries was a negative approach and it didn't really make much of a difference.

The 58 boundaries and seven sixes conceded during the course of the innings tells a story.

Save veteran seamer Suranga Lakmal (2/90), none of the other bowlers pitched it in the right areas. The ones on the hips were tucked fine enough to beat the fielder stationed at mid-wicket boundary and half volleys were dispatched through the right of mid-off.

The short balls were pulled fine enough and when it was tossed up, he lofted it straight into the stands.

In between, he refused the singles to shield Shami from strike. The customary sword celebration at 50, 100 and 150 brought a round applause from the crowd.

Such was the plight of the Lankan fielders that Embuldeniya couldn't even pick up and throw the ball to keeper Niroshan Dickwella when Mohammed Shami had literally come down to the non-striker's end.

Dickwella was angry and he let the bowler know about his frustration. In general, the Lankans never looked competitive with India scoring runs at 4.43 runs per over during the entire course of 129.2 overs.

India women begin elusive trophy search with World Cup opener against Pakistan

PTI ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

The Indian women's cricket would hope that its bowlers find top form to complement a solid batting unit's efforts when it begins its quest for an elusive ICC World Cup trophy with the opening match against arch-rivals Pakistan here on Sunday.

Runners up in the 2017 and 2005 editions, India are eager to go one step ahead and claim the title that has eluded them, especially skipper Mithali Raj and veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami, who will be playing their last World Cup.

The Indian team reached New Zealand a month earlier in order to acclimatise to the conditions.

However, the bowlers struggled compared to the batting unit, which managed to score in excess of 250 runs five times in the seven 50 over outings, including two warm-up matches. The bowling unit let the team down throughout the series against New Zealand, which India lost 1-4. It failed to defend 270 plus targets in two games while conceded a mammoth 191 in 20 overs in a rain curtailed match of the ODI series. They did put up a much

improved performance in the fifth ODI and the two warm-up games and Raj will hope that bth the batting and bowling units can fire in unison.

"From the past series or the warm up games, all we can take is confidence, and how you negotiate the conditions in the middle, how you play according to the situation is just very important," Raj in the pre-match press conference.

The pace department will be led by the ever-reliable Goswami, who has continued to pick wickets for India regularly while the likes of Meghna Singh, Pooja Vastrakar and Renuka Singh would need to do more to complement the veteran quick.

Spinner Deepti Sharma was the leading wicket taker in the bilateral series while Rajeshwari Gayakwad looked good in the warm-up games but consistency will be the key.

However, it remains to be seen if Raj hands the ball to Harmanpreet Kaur.

The team would have breathed a sigh of relief after Kaur, a vital cog in the side and regarded as a big-match player, found herself among runs after a prolonged rough patch.

The pressure will be on opener Shafali Verma, who has seemed off colour, to provide a solid start alongside Smriti Mandhana, a batter in fine touch.

Raj, who continues to anchor the Indian innings, has hinted that Deepti, who has been in good nick with the bat and ball, will be batting at the top at either number 3 or 4 while Kaur is expected to bat at five. Young Rich Ghosh, who scored back-to-back half-centuries against New Zealand, is expected to start ahead of Taniya Bhatia. Pakistan, on the other hand, are the lowest ranked team in the tournament. They qualified for the World Cup owing to their ranking after the qualifiers were cancelled midway last year due to COVID-19.

Haas terminates Mazepin's contract

AP ■ KANNAPOLIS (US)

The Haas Formula One team has terminated Russian driver Nikita Mazepin's contract "with immediate effect" following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Mazepin tweeted he was "very disappointed" at the outcome.

The decision comes on the back of F1's decision to terminate its contract with the Russian GP. That contract had been until 2025.

Haas also ended its sponsorship with Russian company Uralkali, owned by Mazepin's father.

"As with the rest of the Formula 1 community, the team is shocked and saddened by the invasion of Ukraine and wishes for a swift and peaceful end to the conflict," Haas said in a statement Saturday. The 23-year-old Mazepin did not score a point in his debut F1 season last year alongside Mick Schumacher, the son of seven-time F1 champion Michael Schumacher.

"I will have more to say in the coming days," Mazepin said in his tweet.

Last week, Haas removed Uralkali sponsorship and ran plain white cars on the final day of pre-season testing in Barcelona, instead of the typically red, white and blue with a livery that resembles the Russian flag.

Pre-season testing continues in Bahrain next week before the season-opening race there on March 20.

Australia trails Pakistan by 471 runs

AP ■ RAWALPINDI

Azhar Ali hit his fourth test hundred against Australia as Pakistan piled on 476-4 before declaring its first innings on the second day of the first test on Saturday. Ali missed out on a double century and got dismissed for 185 with Pakistan declaring under overcast conditions late in the final session.

Australian openers Usman Khawaja (5 not out) and David Warner (0 not out) survived the only over from offspinner Sajid Khan to take Australia to 5-0 before umpires ended the day's play due to bad light with 15 overs still remaining.

Australia is playing its first test in Pakistan in 24 years.

Players from both teams wore black armbands in memory of spin wizard Shane Warne. They lined up before the start of play and observed a minute of silence to mark their respect for Warne,

who died of a suspected heart attack in Koh Samui, Thailand at the age of 52. Offspinner Nathan Lyon bowled the bulk of the overs on a slow wicket devoid of grass but finished with 1-161 off his 52 overs. However, Lyon's only wicket came in the first session on Day 1 when the veteran offspinner had dismissed opening batter Abdullah Shafique for 44 in his 11th over. Skipper Pat Cummins took 1-62 while part-time legspinner Marnus Labuschagne had Ali dismissed off a top-edged sweep shot in the last session to finish with 1-53.

Ali shared a 208-run second wicket stand with Imam-ul-Haq (157), whose wicket was the only one to fall in the first two sessions on Saturday when the left hander was trapped leg before wicket by Cummins after lunch.

Ali and Imam frustrated Australia with their snail-paced batting by adding 57 runs in the first session after Pakistan resumed at the overnight 245-1 and reached 302-1 without further damage.

Ali, 64 overnight, reached his century off 257 balls when he lofted Lyon over mid-on for his eighth boundary after lunch.

Cummins went for an unsuccessful caught-behind television review soon after Ali had completed his century before Imam, resuming on 132 overnight, played across the line in the same over and was adjudged lbw.

Afghanistan beats B'desh to draw T20 series

AP ■ DHAKA

Opener Hazratullah Zazai hit a half-century as Afghanistan beat Bangladesh by eight wickets in the second and final cricket Twenty20 to draw the series 1-1 on Saturday.

Zazai struck an unbeaten 59 runs off 45 balls and shared a 99-run partnership with Usman Ghani for the second wicket to help Afghanistan race to victory with 14 balls to spare.

Darwish Rasooli (9 not out) wrapped up the game, pulling left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed for a six over deep mid-wicket as Afghanistan finished on 121-2 in reply to Bangladesh's 115-9.

Afghanistan lost the first match by 61 runs. Both teams lined up before the start of play and observed a minute's silence in memory of Shane Warne and Rod Marsh.

Ghani, who survived twice on 39 and 41, scored 47 runs off 48 balls with five fours and one six.

Zazai and Ghani's match-defining partnership came after Afghanistan lost Rahmanullah Gurbaz (3).

Zazai's innings was almost chanceless. He slog-swept left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan for six over deep square-leg to reach his third 50 off 37 balls and hit three fours and five sixes.

Playing his 100th T20 game for Bangladesh, Mushfiqur Rahim top-scored with 30.

Captain Mahmudullah scored 21 and in the process became the first Bangladeshi batter to reach 2,000 runs in this format. Liton Das and Mohammad Naim both made 13.

Fast bowlers Fazalhaq Farooqi and Azmatullah Omarzai ripped through Bangladesh, claiming three wickets each after the hosts opted to bat first.

Haynes, Lanning power Australia to 12-run win over England

PTI ■ HAMILTON

Opener Rachael Haynes smashed a scintillating 130-run knock as Australia rode on a brilliant batting performance to eke out a 12-run win over defending champions England in a high-scoring ICC Women's World Cup match here on Saturday.

In another match, South Africa handed a 32-run defeat to Bangladesh in Dunedin.

A minute's silence was observed before the start of the play to honour the memory of Australian legends Shane Warne and Rodney Marsh, who died on Friday within hours of each other.

Put in to bat, Australia posted a daunting 310 for 3 courtesy a 196-run stand between Haynes and skipper Meg Lanning (86). It was the highest total England had conceded in World Cups.

Haynes blazed away to almost a run-a-ball 130 off 131 balls, hitting the ball 14 times to the fence and once over it, with Lanning complementing her perfectly. Nat Sciver, who remained unbeaten on 109, and star opener Tammy Beaumont (74) tried to rally England to victory but the defending champions fell short in an exciting match.

England snared Australia opener Alyssa Healy early on

with Sciver dismissing her for 28 as the Aussies slipped to 35/1.

Lanning joined a cautious Haynes at the crease, and the duo went about building a partnership, scoring at a steady rate.

England bowled well for most part, although there were slip-ups in the field. The Australia pair did well to squeeze singles, even as they employed caution.

As the innings progressed and the pitch eased out, the duo gradually abandoned caution, although after 35 overs, Australia were still at 172/1.

With 10 overs to go, Haynes and Lanning began playing their shots.

Australia added 100 runs in the final 10 overs, and the fall of Lanning in the 43rd over didn't arrest the flow of runs as Beth Mooney (19-ball 27) came in and provided good support to Ellyse Perry (14 off 5)

Defending the mammoth target, Megan Schutt, dented England early in the innings with the wicket of Lauren Winfield-Hill for a duck.

Captain Heather Knight and Beaumont took some time to settle but made up for it.

Beaumont raced to a fifty but Knight fell 10 runs short of the milestone, ending a brilliant 92-run partnership.

Sciver and Beaumont then began the repair work. However, the former was stumped off Alana King's bowling in the 28th over. Australia picked two more wickets in quick succession but Sciver kept going, hitting 13 boundaries.

Sophia Dunkley and Katherine Brunt provided Sciver some assistance but without power hitters at the other end, the total proved too much to handle for them.

Ayabonga Khaka's superb seam bowling helped South Africa win their opening match.

Put in to bat, the South Africans were bundled out for a below-par 207 with Marizanne Kapp (42), Laura Wolvaardt (41) and hard-hitting Chloe Tryon (39) lifting them to a competitive total.

Priyanka Goswami, Eknath Turambekar set 35km race walk national records

PTI ■ MUSCAT

Olympian Priyanka Goswami and Eknath Turambekar set national records in the women's and men's 35km events respectively in the World Athletics Race Walking Team Championships, although they finished way below the medal bracket here on Saturday.

Goswami and Turambekar finished 20th and 27th respectively in hot conditions that added to the challenge of the 2km loop near the Oman Convention Centre.

Goswami clocked 3 hour 13 minutes and 19 seconds in her maiden appearance in a 35km event, while Turambekar clocked 2:45:17s in his second competition over the distance.

Glenda Morejon of Ecuador won the women's event in 2:48:33s while Perseus Karlstrom of Sweden took the gold in men's race with a timing of 2:36:14s. The previous men's and women's 35km race walk national records were in the name of Ram Baboo (2:46:31s) and Ramandeep Kaur (3:15:17s) respectively, set during the National Open Championships in September 2021.

Goswami, who had competed in 20km event in Tokyo Olympics last year and had finished 17th, set a scorching pace early in the race, leading through 16.5km. But she conceded the lead after completing 17km mark in 1:23:21s.

Bopanna-Sharan pair keeps India in World Group I

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan saved three match points in an edge-of-the-seat thriller to prevail against a fighting Danish pair of Frederik Nielsen and Mikael Torpegaard as India kept its place in the Davis Cup World Group I by winning the Play-off tie 4-0, here on Saturday.

Sharan, playing his first Davis Cup tie since February 2019, and Bopanna came from behind to win 6-7 (4) 6-4 7-6 (4) in one hour and 58 minutes.

Yuki Bhambri and Ramkumar Ramanathan had given India a 2-0 lead on the opening day of the tie on Friday.

The tense win ensured that India will stay in World Group I for the 2022 season, while Denmark will now again go back to World Group II.

Serving to stay in the match in the 12th game of the decider, Sharan faced three match points but the Indian team held nerves to save all, two of them on second serves, to force a final tie-breaker, in which they raced to a 4-1 lead and sealed the win when Torpegaard could not make a return on Bopanna's serve.

It was such a close match that only one break of serve featured when 2012 Wimbledon Champion Nielsen got broken at the beginning of the second set.

Later in the first reverse singles, Ramkumar beat Joahhnes Ingildsen 5-7 7-5 10-7. The fifth match was not played.

Bopanna praised his partner Sharan for serving big under pressure.

"We missed two volleys and that put us under pressure but with lefty serve when there is not enough space is tricky to return. Credit to Divij, he pulled off those second serves and than I had that reflex volley (executed)," Bopanna said of the crucial hold in the 12th game of the third set.

talktime

VIKRAM MONTROSE

Composer, singer, songwriter and record producer, who is known for his songs like Kar Har Maidaan Fateh, Baba Bolta Hai, Tera Baap Aaya, speaks with SUPRIYA RAMESH about his new song for Bachchhan Paandey, his journey and future projects

'I FEEL THAT THE THEME SONG ALWAYS PREPARES THE BED FOR A MOVIE'

How did you come up with Maar Khayegaa?

For *Maar Khayega* the brief was from our music supervisor Azeem Dayani with whom I have previously worked on the movie Shershah, the song was *Jai Hind Ki Senaa*. For this, we wanted to create a song as lethal and menacing as Akshay sir's character in Bachchhan Paandey. I had an idea that I played for Azeem and he instantly liked it. And then he was thoroughly involved in the making of the song and also a major portion of the lyrics are written by him including the superhit dialogue, *mujhe bhai nhi godfather bolte hai* is penned by him.

And the ideas he gets on the table when it comes to the creatives are amazing. Farhad Bhiwandiwala is the lead singer and the writer in *Maar Khayega* who previously sang and penned *Tera Baap Aaya* for me.

How long did it take for you and the team to come up with the composition?

It took a week to complete the intial draft of the song in totallity. But then again it differs from song to song. Some take lesser some take more time. What takes time is the idea, the hook and the soundscape. I want to get it right. Once I am clear about that then its an easy ride.

You have composed, sung and written the song, tell us something about the process.

For every song there is a different process that I try to incorporate, because for me it is always the movie and the character. I wanted to create a song which can showcase Akshay sir's character and make people ready for what magic they are about to witness on screen. I feel that the theme song always prepares the bed for a movie.

The bigger and closer it is to the character, the more it appeals to the masses and is better for the film. So, I went with a fast pace, larger than life song approach. And this genre is something that comes naturally to us and its our signature style. I also wanted to get more heroism back in Hindi film music so I knew this could be that song. I tried that in the song *Tera Baap Aaya* and this was yet another chance.

I try my best to have my own approach for a song and every song I make has a different process behind it. For me, composing, writing, music production and at times singing makes it much more easier, faster and effective. Because I only start a song when I can think of a hook and if I am totally convinced with that then I go for it. Moreover, as I do my own music production it becomes easy for me to translate the song the way I want to and stylise it in my own way.

> FOR ME, COMPOSING, WRITING, MUSIC PRODUCTION AND AT TIMES SINGING MAKES IT MUCH MORE EASIER, FASTER AND EFFECTIVE. BECAUSE I ONLY START A SONG WHEN I CAN THINK OF A HOOK AND IF I AM TOTALLY CONVINCED WITH THAT, I GO FOR IT

How has the journey from your first song with Sanjay Dutt to your current song with Akshay Kumar been?

It has been a blessing. Sanju sir has an impeccable taste in music. I am glad that my first movie was Sanju and my first hindi film song was *Kar Har Maidaan Fateh*. You know when you start your career with the likes of Mr Sanjay Dutt and Mr Rajkumar Hirani, your half the battle is won. Though it took almost 13 years to reach there, I got to learn so much about the creative process and that knowledge will help me always. Later I met Mr Eric Pillai, he has been an inspiration to many musicians like me. The support and guidance that I got from him changed everything for me.

I wanted to do songs with Akshay sir for the longest period of time because what he gets on screen is beyond imagination and the heroism, style, swag and attitude would only be best translated by him. I am thankful to Mr Eric Pillai and Mr Azeem Dayani for making this possible for me. One great thing that happened with *Maar Khayega* is that now people know that *Kar Har Maidaan Fateh* and *Tera Baap Aaya* are my songs.

Tell us about your future projects?

There is an interesting line up in place. I am eagerly looking forward to introducing a totally different soundscape in the Hindi film music scene. There is also a different style of music that I love doing and I really want to present it to people through my own company. So yes, there are some interesting songs on the way.

Plan Your Day

BEHEN NATION QUIZ

IWTK is delighted to present the long awaited third edition of The BehenNation Quiz, Women's day special!! — a quiz for women, by women, and celebrating women.

Join for a fun evening of pun, fun and trivia with fellow women!

Why you should attend the quiz:

❖Crack all the puns and bad jokes you want, get points for that too.

❖Get to know some amazing women and share what you know about them.

❖0 mansplaining guaranteed. No men allowed.

Bring along a friend or come on your own for an evening of girl talk.

What: Games & Quizzes
Where: Online
When: March 6, 2022
Time: 3:55 pm

CURTAIN CALL - DOLL'S HOUSE

At Curtain Call, create intimate virtual spaces are created to read different thematic plays.

Each reading is followed by an in-depth, guided discussion on the various themes. You do not require any prior experience in theatre or acting.

Nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature thrice, Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen is the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare. One of his most popular works — Doll's House, held the distinction of being the world's most performed play in 2006, the centennial of Ibsen's death.

The play is significant for the way it deals with the fate of a married woman, who at the time in Norway lacked reasonable opportunities for self-fulfillment in a male-dominated world.

What: Theatre & Arts
Where: Online
When: March 14, 2022
Time: 4 pm

Masterstroke

This women's day let's appreciate the ladies for their achievements and constant support to brighten our lives each day. Women love to decorate their homes and Women's day is a perfect occasion to surprise them with the luxurious collection of sustainable rugs, poufs, and accessories from The Rug Republic -India's leading homefashion brand with presence in more than 90 countries worldwide. Discover the best buys for beautiful home décor for the most thoughtful gifts to celebrate womanhood.

Be it your lovable mother, dearest sister, or gorgeous wife all will instantly fall in love with the statement home décor throw pillows, poufs or soft rugs. The décor ensemble will brighten their rooms or their favorite spots of the home. Make them feel extra special with footstools to rest after a tiring day. Invest in the sustainable décor assortment by The Rug Republic to be cherished by them forever. The intricate work and details of the rugs will transform the space and make a classy statement.

Our Colwyn seating features a stylish circular pattern that works seamlessly with any modern or traditional room design. Hand-made in jodhpuri dori with extra small polystyrene beans for long-lasting softness and malleability, this seating is ready for anything.

DELIGHT FOR CINEMAGOERS

From screening award-winning movies to celebrating Indo-Japan's biggest movie collaborations, three-day-long theatrical edition of JFF comes to an end today. SUPRIYA RAMESH tells you more

It is not just K-pop that people are obsessed with these days. Over the years, more Indian viewers have taken a liking to international cinema. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and OTT platforms garnering more demand, people now have the luxury of choosing from among several good options of movies, TV shows, documentaries and watching them from the comfort of their homes. It has brought the audience closer to understanding world cinema. From DC to Marvel to Anime, a six-year-old to an adult, everyone seems to enjoy and relate with these films.

However, Indian viewers, overtime, have developed a great interest in Japanese films as well. Viewers can now see more of these films at the Japanese Film Festival (JFF). Unlike any other submission-based film festival, JFF, since its inception in 2017 in India, has annually curated a selection of the best of contemporary Japanese films to be showcased either theatrically or via streaming.

Koji Sato, Director-General, The Japan Foundation, tells us that there has been a remarkable expression of interest and enthusiasm by Indian audiences for Japanese culture and their content. "JFF is honoured to receive this sheer enthusiasm from the people of India and continues to bring more and better experiences to the audience here," he says.

This year the online festival was held in 25 countries with 20 films presented with subtitles in 15 languages for two weeks. With 11 films slated for screening, a three-day-long theatrical edition is also being hosted at PVR Select Citywalk, New Delhi.

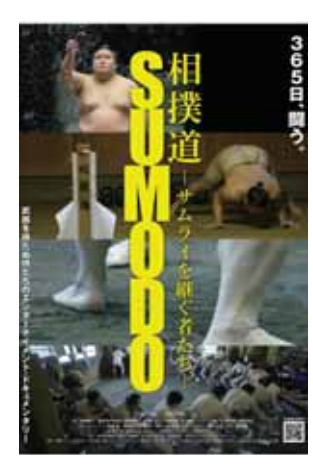
The JFF journey started in 2016 when The Japan Foundation, as part of the JFF Asia-Pacific Gateway Initiative, established the film festival with the aim of sharing Japanese cinema with 10 ASEAN countries, including Australia. "Starting in 2017 with China and India, the festival expanded to Russia in 2018. In 2019, the festival was held in 12 countries and 56 cities, attracting over 170,000 visitors over the course of the year. In 2020, it was held both physically and online, and the first JFF Plus 2020-2021 recorded a total of more than 220,000 views from 20 countries around the world," Sato tells us.

Over the last five years, the festival has evolved from being showcased at theatres to including a streaming platform. Restricted not just to Delhi or Mumbai, the festival has been organised in multiple cities to reach the fans. "With the online edition we have achieved national accessibility. We expect that once the pandemic is over, the festival will re-emerge on a larger scale with steady growth in our theatrical reach across India," Sato adds.

Since JFF is a curated festival, the lineup for the festival is finalised by the central festival team in Tokyo, with feedback loops from their offices in host countries. Sato tells us that the curation of JFF is based on the idea of exhibiting an eclectic yet intimate experience of life in Japan, their culture, aesthetics and everyday lives. They visualise the curation as a whole and choose films that fit this mosaic of experiences that their audience can encounter and enrich.

Shalu Sabharwal, Satoshi Suzuki and Koji Sato

> WITH THE ONLINE EDITION WE HAVE ACHIEVED NATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY. WE EXPECT THAT ONCE THE PANDEMIC IS OVER, THE FESTIVAL WILL RE-EMERGE ON A LARGER SCALE WITH STEADY GROWTH IN OUR THEATRICAL REACH ACROSS INDIA



When you have an array of fantastic options, choosing an opening and a closing film can be a task. Having said that, this time, the opening film was Wife of Spy, chosen for its award-winning reception globally. Today, the festival will close with two films. The Night Beyond The Tricornered Window, a live-action mystery-horror adaption of a famous manga of the same name and Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama, an Indo-Japanese production directed by Yugo Sako. It will receive its first ever theatrical screening in India. "The closing films have been selected for their status as an iconic young adult genre entertainment that J-fans love to watch and an exclusive theatrical throwback to one of the biggest collaborations between our industries," says Sato.

The online festival which was held from February 14 to 27, 2022, didn't have a dedicated opening or closing film.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Japan. Perhaps, says Sato, there's a lot more to look forward to. "I can't reveal the details yet, but we have something in store that we hope will please the people in India. For the past two years we have had very few face-to-face events, so we hope that things will settle down and we will have the opportunity to meet in person," Sato tells us.

"We have had a lot of internal discussions and postponements because of the pandemic. So, we have substantially scaled down the scale of the event this year and limited it to Delhi," says Sato, adding that the festival will run at 50 per cent capacity and bookings are only available online.

SHIVAM BHAARGAVA, who is known for Ghost, The Trip and It's complicated, speaks with SUPRIYA RAMESH about his latest song, why he chose acting and upcoming work

'I would love to be a part of a rom-com'

❖**Tell us about your latest song Prem Deepak.**

The song is an out and out romantic number, sung by Amey Date, written by Deepak Jeswal and music by Arnab Chatterjee. The video is directed by Ajinkya Deshmukh and features Pallavi Singh and me.

It is about a man's feelings towards his beloved. Prem Deepak is a commitment from a boy to his beloved to be there forever. He promises her that she will always have a place in his heart, that he could give his life for her, and that their Prem Deepak or their lamp of love will continue to burn bright and beautiful forever.

There are little moments in the song that are cute and endearing, as it depicts the growing relationship, but there is one big twist in it, which I cannot disclose now. You will have to see the song to realise it. That moment, when the boy finds out a secret, is a small touching scene, and I loved expressing the emotions there.

❖**How did acting happen to you?**

I've been passionate about acting since I was a child. Like any child, there were many things I wanted to be, an army man, a scientist, an archaeologist, and I realised if I became an actor I could live many lives in one.

❖**Your career started as an assistant casting director. What were the challenges you faced?**

Being an outsider, when I came to Mumbai to act, I had no idea how to go about it, where to go or whom to meet. So assisting, to begin with, gave me time to understand the industry a bit and gain some confidence to start acting myself.

❖**How have OTT platforms brought a transition in the world of movies and Bollywood? Which one do you prefer and why?**

I think OTT platforms have made the consumption of movies and shows way easier, as easy as just turning on your smartphone. There are a plethora of platforms available now and all kinds of content. It gives a lot of freedom to storytellers while telling their stories, which was not the case with movies. I wouldn't say I prefer anyone over the other but we're in a time where I'd be very happy to be a part of a good project, be it for cinema or OTT.

❖**Which is your favourite genre or a role that you would love to take any time?**

I thoroughly enjoy comedy. I think I'd love to be a part of a rom-com or an out and out action film!

❖**What are your upcoming projects?**

I have completed a few projects that are yet to be announced, but one that is announced is Cold Messy Lonely, which should be out on MX player and Alt Balaji in a few months.

Sound of music

Music is the best medicine. Here are the top 10 songs of the week that will lift up your weekend mood

Bollywood vibes

Meri Trah (Jubin Nautiyal)
Soch Liya (Arijit Singh)
O Aasman Wale (Amar Biswas)
Uff (Shreya Ghoshal)
Yaad Na Aaye (Akull)

English Vinglish

Toxic (BoyWithUke)
Light Switch (Charlie Puth)
Face To Face (Don Diablo)
Lost On Me (Eric Nam)
Don't Wake Me Up (Jonas Blue)

sunday magazine
New Delhi, March 6, 2022

the pioneer
agenda

Bullies generally were bullied and are hurting inside much more than you could ever imagine
— Zoey Deutch

FROM THE INSIDE

What the doc ordered 10
Sometimes a distraction is just what you need to heal. A writer's story of how Clooney brought hope

12 **Patient handling can bring change**
Sometimes, time alone can bring about necessary change. All one has to do is stay positive and hopeful

THE UKRAINIAN CONUNDRUM

The Russia-Ukraine war is changing the very foundations of the global order. As the debris settle, we will see a more militarised Europe & a more multipolar world with repercussions for India's interests as well, writes DR. SWASTI RAO

Moscow's invasion of Ukraine is likely to be a hinge point in contemporary history. It has shown that brute power politics and the threat of war can very well be unleashed in the most developed, democratic and industrialised parts of the world.

The concomitant background of the rather overdone 'conflicting sphere of influence' debate does not explain the unfolding ground situation. The key lies in deconstructing West's support to Ukraine followed by the real question — is it enough? The short answer is — No. NATO and the West know that they are pumping Ukraine with weapons and ammunitions to fight a losing battle. The analysis also needs to delve into the impact this crisis on the security imperatives within Europe which is witnessing an uncontrolled surge of refugees alongside foreign policy shifts in industrial giants like Germany and the officially neutral countries like Sweden and Finland.

DECONSTRUCTING WEST'S SUPPORT TO UKRAINE

● **Limits to West's support:** The weapons that the West is helping Ukraine with may broadly be classified into three types — Stinger missiles, Javelin Missiles and the ATGMS. The problem is that Ukraine doesn't have a potent air force system. The West is merely helping Ukraine spread out a tactical air defence with the Javelin and Stinger missiles (more than 200 stingers were given to Ukraine on Monday alone). In absence of a potent air force, these missiles enable a spreading out of tactical air defence as they can be operated by less training by an array of non-military personnel like the voluntary fighters and militias. Hence, they are effective for a country like Ukraine where brave people have picked up arms and thousands are signing up to defend their country against the aggressor. Having said that, they are no match for the Russian advanced air assault system with their barrage of S-400s, sophisticated Ballistic and Cruise missiles that Russia hasn't activated till now. When they do (and signs have started to emerge), Ukraine's tactical air defence posturing would crumble.

Regardless of US's $350 mn and EU's $500mn promised for support, Ukraine cannot be given advanced fighter planes right now because it simply doesn't have the required background infrastructure to deploy them. Unless the NATO sends their troops on the ground, or they let the air defence be launched from NATO's territories with adequate infrastructure like the hangars and the fuel, there is no way Ukraine can be saved with javelins and stingers. The only expected outcome has been buying time for themselves by putting up unreal bravery and resistance to Russia and perhaps delaying the ground offensive.

The third type of weaponry that the West is giving Ukraine (or have promised to give as the battle intensifies) are the ATGMs (Anti-Tank Guided Missiles) which can prove to be extremely effective against the Russian tanks and bunkers but require specialised and skilled manoeuvring. While Ukrainian army has had a few joint military drills with NATO and there may be some trained military personnel within the army to operate the ATGMs, their number is not satisfactory. Again the unnerving realisation — the West knows it.

● **Western Military Industrial Complex:** The other aspect that reeks of West's calculated strategising is that these ammunitions come with a shelf life which if not used in time, need to be junked. The same applies to Javelins and Stingers. The self-perpetuating logic of the military industrial complex cannot be overlooked in the West's supply of these weapons to Ukraine to supposedly 'liberate' Ukraine from the evil occupation by Russians. The Ukrainian crisis may just be helping the West to utilise their close to expiry missiles to the maximum optical and moral advantage. The clarity on these matters will emerge slowly but steadily.

The sad part of the story is that the West knew all the above mentioned factors all along. If they really wanted to bolster Ukrainian defence against the mighty Russian army, the steps should have been taken right from the immediate aftermath of the Crimean annexation in 2014. Eight years would have been a decent time to modernise Ukraine militarily. Perhaps then the steady incremental advance in military capabilities of Ukraine may have worked in 2022. The Ukrainian demand for joining the NATO is nothing new. It has merely given a perfect alibi to the Russians to invade them. Ukraine has been expressing this desire openly (unlike its other neighbour Moldova that, for its own survival, has only expressed the desire to join the EU but not the NATO.) West's 'unified and unflinching' support to Ukraine does seem like a well-orchestrated bluff.

● **Analysis of the Russian Ground Offensive:** The next question is how far can Ukraine pull off its heroic resistance? So far the way Russians have manoeuvered, it appears they have not faced either any real terrain-friction or any force-friction from the Ukrainians. The standalone pictures of ambushed Russian tanks circulating in social media serve as great morale boosters but are misleading for understanding the ground situation. The purpose is to pitch favourable optics for propaganda which have little significance in real operations. It needs to be remembered that Russians have not yet started a real ground offensive. To illustrate how war strategy works, the US ground offensive in the Iraq war in 1991 was initiated after six weeks of air offensive establishing their complete superiority in the air. Compare that with the ten days of the Special Military Operation in Ukraine.

> CALLING FOR ESCALATION AND DIALOGUE, INDIA HAS FOR THE THIRD TIME ABSTAINED FROM UN (TWICE AT SC AND ONCE AT GA). INDIA'S RESPONSE TO UKRAINE IS A PRODUCT COMPLEX GEOPOLITICS OF ITS DISPUTED BORDERS AND ITS AMBITION TO COUNTER ITS KEY ADVERSARY CHINA THROUGH ITS MARITIME STRATEGY ALONG WITH THE 'QUAD'

Despite readiness, what has been done so far qualifies more as strikes, manoeuvres and probing and not the savage ground war itself. The latter may or may not happen depending upon how far the Ukrainians are prepared to fight or resist a losing battle.

The bad news is, the more heavy weaponry is deployed for ground offensive, the bigger the warhead and larger the destruction capabilities. And when that lethality is unleashed, the west will only watch Ukraine fight this battle from afar supporting them with more 'aid' 'weapons' and social media propaganda.

● **The complexity of Urban Warfare:** It is argued how the Russians are 'unable' to enter Kyiv as a 40 mile long convoy of tanks, armoured vehicles and towered artillery positioned north of the city is 'stalled'. Once again, these are statements that are carefully crafted to boost the morale of a people fighting for their very lives but offers little insight into how real wars are planned and fought by great powers. There are two reasons that are keeping the Russians waiting even if their attacks are getting intensified by the day. One is the complexity of 'Urban Warfare' which is easier to understand. Urban warfare is combat conducted in urban areas such as towns and cities. It is very different from combat in the open at both the operational and tactical level. Complicating factors in urban warfare include the presence of civilians and the complexity of the urban terrain. Putin is aware of this complexity. The outcome of the latest negotiations suggest so. The second is a more complex reason that hinges on Putin's psychological fatiguing of the Ukrainians.

Then what does Putin want? Putin wants to fatigue the fighting Ukrainians and raise the cost for them to rely on the notion that West will save them. Putin wants a pro-Russian leader in Kyiv. He doesn't want to annihilate the entire city or kill all its people. He wants them to realise that it was a mistake on their part to aspire for a military alliance with the West that could not even step in to save them.

Had mass killing s been the aim, the first step would have been closing down the western borders from where people are fleeing Ukraine. Already about a million people have fled since 24 February. The fact that the second round of negotiations have reached a deal on humanitarian corridors is evidence enough that Putin does not want to kill the same people he wants to rule via a proxy.

● **Putin's Objectives:** Putin wants the following objectives met that are an amalgamation of his military and political aims guiding the Russian invasion.

1. He wants Ukraine divided along the River Dnieper that provides a geographical boundary between the east and the west. He has already cut off ports along the border of the Sea of Azov. Those are regions where Putin has already established Russia's overarching dominance after annexing Crimea which headquarters the Russian black sea fleet. Starting from Odessa (Ukraine's only major port in the Black sea), all the way to Mariupol (Ukraine's only major port in the Sea of Azov) and Donbas ahead of it, inching up to Kherson, Dnipro and all the way up to Kharkiv. The outcome is, he is cutting off the crescent of land along the sea, all the way up to Donbas and Kharkiv. Putin will slice off eastern Ukraine and make it into an independent territory like he did in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia in 2008.

2. **Regime Change:** He will put a pro-Russian leader in Kyiv. Yanukovych's name has started to surface as a potential replacement for Zelensky. Thereby, a demilitarised and divided Ukraine with a pro-Russian president will be a perfect buffer strip for Russia along with Belarus, Moldova and Georgia, against NATO's eastern flank.

WHAT DOES THE WEST WANT?

The West knew all along that in case of a Russian invasion, with no NATO troops on the ground, and with a rudimentary air defence, Ukraine, despite heroic resistance, would fall in a matter of a few days. The West is chasing four objectives — 1. Putin's isolation and condemnation which has been flowing from all quarters all over the world. 2. The cycle of western Military Industrial Complex running. 3. Fuelling an insurgency that will precipitate once Putin instates a pro-Russian Yanukovych in west Ukraine. Data and research shows that great powers fare badly in asymmetric warfare like a protracted insurgency — Vietnam, Cambodia, West Asia, Iraq, Afghanistan in 1979 and 2001. Hence, West will support and fuel the low grade insurgency against Russia that will bleed Russia and be Putin's real defeat. 4. Hitting Russia with unprecedented sanctions to weaken the Russian war machinery in the long run.

Irony is, none of the aforementioned are going to help Ukraine today.

THE FAR-REACHING IMPACTS OF THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE IN EUROPE AND BEYOND

● **EU's response:** Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has met with European Union announcing ⊠500M million in arms and other aid to the Ukrainian military. It is a first time for the EU to finance the purchase and delivery of weapons and other equipment to a country that is under attack. It reflects a change in EU policies because the EU's treaties bar the bloc from using its normal budget to fund operations with military or defence implications. The European Union has closed its airspace to Russian airlines including the private jet of the Russian oligarchs. The US has also decided to join the EU by deciding to close its airspace to Russian aircrafts.

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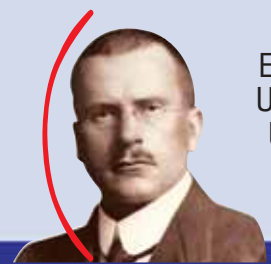

EVERYTHING THAT IRRITATES US ABOUT OTHERS CAN LEAD US TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF OURSELVES
— CARL JUNG

WHAT THE DOC ORDERED

Sometimes a distraction is just what you need to heal, writes MONICA BHIDE, as she shares how Clooney turned her saviour

It seemed like the hundredth time I'd been in the same doctor's office. As I stared at the stark white walls and mass-market art, I knew what my doctor would say about my severe chronic pain before he even opened his mouth: "I am so sorry. There isn't much more I can do," he said as I whimpered with pain and squirmed in the chair. "Why don't you try to distract your mind? It may help" Then, he wrote me yet another prescription for painkillers.

I left his office frustrated, irritated, and deflated. Just get my mind off if it, I thought. Sure. As if ignoring the pain and stress that came with it was so easy to do. I got into my car and looked at my phone. I saw a tweet that George Clooney was in Washington, DC working to help refugees. One of my favorite actors was practically in my neighborhood. It was the first time I'd smiled all day.

Then, my food-writing persona seemed to take over. "I may or may not be making lunch for George Clooney." I tweeted. The response was immediate-and delightful. My friends chimed in with questions and jokes. Within minutes, I received an email from a major publication. "If you are cooking for George, can we come in and do a story about it?" That response made me laugh. Who was crazy enough to think I, a half-baked food writer, would ever cook a meal for a magical creature like George! Yet the tweet did what the doctor had suggested: It distracted my brain from my chronic pain. For a few minutes, I actually felt like my (pain-free) self again.

From then on, every time I struggled with pain, I headed to *Facebook*. I would post an update about my George Clooney delusions. My online friends were only too happy to play along. "I tried to contact Clooney. I was told to put my people on it. I said yes, of course. Now I need people. Who's in?" I wrote.

"I have been informed that hoping Clooney will randomly pick up my novel and love it and tell everyone to buy it isn't a realistic book marketing plan. Damn. Now what?!"

Prior to my Clooney obsession, I posted mostly about food, my kids, and my life as a mother and writer. These off-brand posts surprised and delighted my friends and soon began to have a following. Other women writers and readers began to respond in jest to what I posted. In his own way, through my friends, George was giving me the very distraction the doctor had prescribed.

Then my entire world crashed, and life became what can only be described as a country music song: My husband had a massive medical crisis and was in a coma for a couple of months. I cared for him 24/7, focusing on nothing else, spending terrified nights in the ICU. By the grace of God, when he woke up he wasn't paralysed, and he was transferred to a rehab facility to begin the long process of recovery.

But the Universe wasn't done with me quite yet. One night while I was returning from the hospital, the car I was in crashed and was totaled. Once I realised that I was okay, I sat down on the sidewalk and wept. I had never imagined this for myself. Who does? But the crash made me realise how fragile life is and this was not how I wanted my story to end. I sobbed for not feeling grateful enough for what I had, and yet not being brave enough to go for the life I wanted.

He recovered, but my life, as I knew it, fell apart. My marriage of twenty-four years heartbreakingly ended in a collaborative divorce. My finances crumbled under the pressure of unending bills, and a bare bank account stared me sharply in the face. My freelance business of 15 years dried up as I could pay no attention to it while I tended to my top priority: my family. I could literally feel everything I had known and held true as the foundation of my belief system being ripped apart. Some days the sheer exhaustion of just having to wake up every morning was taking its toll.

My Facebook tribe noticed-and how. Little did I realise that what had started as a joke would become a lifeline. I hadn't mentioned the divorce anywhere, but they could sense from my posts that something was off. And they knew exactly what I needed to feel better again. "Hey, did you see George became a dad?" "Hey, I went to Lake Como and took pictures for you of this potential villa that George MAY or MAY NOT live in."

> GEORGE (CLOONEY) WAS JUST THE DISTRACTION I NEEDED TO DEAL WITH THE PAIN. HE GAVE ME STRENGTH BY CREATING THIS "LANGUAGE" WITH ME AND MY COMMUNITY

Now, instead of crying and worrying whenever it all seemed too much, I turned to George: This pie-in-the-sky fantasy of a movie star crush, which everyone around me was so willing to indulge, was not only a distraction, but a running joke with my friends. It was a way for them to make me laugh and let me know they were thinking of me and that they cared without the seriousness of the pain-physical and emotional I was feeling. Every "George joke" was a little lifeline that showed me people cared and gave me strength.

In real life, I began to look for a job, and found one with a great tech company. I thought maybe, just maybe, we would be okay. Then the pandemic hit.

Suddenly, I was a divorced 50-year-old single mom with two children, a brand-new corporate job, and a broken heart, isolated in a townhouse, without close friends or family nearby.

At first, I tried to reason with my panicking brain. But, truth be told, I was even more terrified than before. I was a newly single person anxious about what the future held.

Finally, I posted on *Facebook*: "I feel scared and alone." And the floodgates opened. Now it wasn't just friends, but many times people I did not know-readers of my books-posting images and stories about George Clooney on my wall. "Hey, did you see your boyfriend is on the cover of AARP magazine?"/"Andy Borowitz must've posted his picture just for you."/"I can't watch a George Clooney movie without thinking of you."

People photoshopped images of me and George. Movie poster stars were replaced with George and me. A reader sent mea book about Clooney. A National Press Club picture of me holding my novel and standing next to a male colleague became a fake image of me and my celebrity crush.

I got daily messages about his twins, his wife, his interview in GQ, his Nespresso ads, his tequila, his surgery, his well, you name it. Every time he made a move, my *Facebook* tribe needed to inform me. "George is shooting here in Boston. Come visit!"

Of course, no one sending me the messages actually believed that George and I would ever meet. So, what was this deep "George has your back" vibe that was pouring in at me at internet speed? Then it dawned on me: This was love in the time of COVID-19. My tribe was showering me with love in the only way they knew how: by teaching me through their posts, their tweets, their emails, the fake images, the books, the texts, to keep believing in fairytales. The fantasy I had created to take away my physical pain was now distracting my brain from the mental exhaustion of feeling alone.

And it wasn't about just giving me love and solace; I know the posts were also helping those who posted. As much as it was a distraction for me, it was a distraction for them, too. They poured love and thought into each post — my birthday posts had Clooney, my happy posts had Clooney emoji responses.

Then my older son read all the posts about George and said, "Mom, we need to talk about all this George Clooney stuff." At first, I felt so embarrassed, and braced myself for a rather unpleasant conversation. Perhaps he was ashamed of the silliness in which his mother was indulging. "Mom, you really have to pick someone else. George Clooney is way too old for you." I laughed so hard! George was just the distraction I needed to deal with the pain. He gave me strength by creating this "language" with me and my community. In a way, George was just what the doctor ordered.

The writer US-based award-winning author of 10 books with international publishers and writes culture driven articles for the New York Times and Washington Post among others

HIDDENSOULS
PRAMOD PATHAK

Reinventing the state

In classical political theory the word state has many definitions. But the basic concept is that it is a community or society politically organised under one independent government within a given territory exercising its own control over that territory. A country also comes under the idea of a state and it's supposed to be governed by a legitimate authority. Legitimacy, however, is acquired through some rational legal means. The state is governed buy a machinery created for orderly and proper management of its affairs. The basic requirements of orderly functioning are legal, social and moral codes as enshrined in the framework of governance called constitution. The state is thus the ruling entity run by an independent, objective and responsive machinery consisting of humans. The catch lies in in two words responsive and human. Being responsive and being human are two sides of the same coin. If state machinery is responsive it will naturally be human having a head, a heart and a soul. The head gives objectivity, the heart emotion and the soul morality. Combination of the three makes the machinery responsive. This machinery is run by a bureaucracy which is the main apparatus of the state. This apparatus is supposed to be independent and neutral, free of outside influences and biases. In Management theory, doubts have been raised about the independence and neutrality of the bureaucratic apparatus and a term bureaupathy has been given to describe a bureaucracy that is not neutral and independent. It was Max Weber who first visualised the idea of bureaucracy as the apparatus to run the government of a state. But he was unmindful of the fact that bureaucracy in due course can acquire beauropathic tendencies. It is against this backdrop that there is need to examine what is the state of this apparatus. Not just in India but elsewhere too. For many serious observers beauropathic tendencies are on the rise making the state unfair and partisan. Though e-governance was introduced to make the state fair and responsive, things do not have improved much. Rather, it has given a reason to be more callous. Responsiveness is an attribute of humanness and technology can only help if the human element is fair. But if technology drives humans, a Frankenstein like monster is in the making. Faceless doesn't mean headless and heartless. That is what excessive technology intervention has become. Human intervention has to be given the primary role. But in a mad rush to digitise too much intervention of artificial intelligence has made the system alien and indifferent. It is time to take stock of the situation and let technology be what it is. An aid and not a substitute of humans. But what is happening is that technology is becoming replacement of human beings. The purpose of digitisation has to be responsiveness. Trust and empowerment are the two key concepts that can make digitisation achieve its objectives. For a country like India where both the physical and psychosocial ecosystem is still in a formative stage digitisation has to hasten slowly. And more importantly, digitisation is not about data, social media and *Netflix*. It is something entirely different. To create a responsive state that delivers, it is important to ensure that the digital interface allows for more listening rather than following the commands of the algorithm in the system blindly. Let humans be driving the machine and not otherwise.

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FROM PAGE 1

The far-reaching impacts

● **Shift in Germany:** The Russian onslaught has triggered a shift in the geopolitical and geo-economic calculus in Europe. Germany has shifted its position on major foreign and defence topics, ranging from arms deliveries, defence spending, sanctions and diplomacy. So far, Germany had been the key player in co-opting, often to the disapproval of other NATO allies, its transatlantic ties and its business interests alongside a massive reliance on Russia's gas. Under the Normandy Format, it was also a keen supporter of sustaining dialogue as the best means to resolve the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Germany refused to deliver defensive weaponry to Ukraine due to its "peace policy" and restrictive stance on arms and even blocked weapons shipments from its ally Estonia to Ukraine. Changing its previous course, Germany has announced sending 1000 anti-tank weapons and 500 missiles to Ukraine.

● **Sweden and Finland:** The public opinion in Sweden and Finland has also, for the first time since the WW-2, started swinging against their alleged neutral status in favour of joining NATO. A recent survey operated by the Novus agency revealed that 37% of Swedish citizens are in favour of the country's entry into NATO, while only 35% take the opposite position 28% are undecided. This reflects changing attitudes with far reaching implications for the security architecture of Europe. In lockstep with

Sweden, a similar survey done in Finland showed its drift towards NATO. A poll released by the Finnish Broadcasting Company showed that for the first time a majority of Finns, about 53%, supported joining the alliance, up from 19% in 2017. A full 66% would support NATO membership if neighbouring Sweden, which has also long maintained a nonaligned status, joins at the same time. This has been touted as yet another sign of the fundamental shifts in Europe's security landscape.

WILL SANCTIONS WORK?

Russia has been preparing for the SWIFT sanctions in two ways: by setting up Russia's System for Transfer of Financial Messages (SPFS) as an alternative to SWIFT and by building a large $ 640 bn foreign reserve (Putin's Insurance Policy). The problem is that a big chunk is held overseas. The strongest weapon in the West's financial arsenal has been the cutting off a G-20 Central Bank of Russia from SWIFT system. Freezing the overseas held foreign reserves will prevent the Bank of Russia from using them for currency interventions or transfers to the Russian treasury to spend. As a result inflation will shoot up and the Ruble will tank further.

However, the EU sanctions exclude banks like VTB(Largest bank of Russia), Bank Rossiya. Gazprom bank also has been excluded from SWIFT because they are main channels for payments of Russian oil and gas which EU countries are still buying despite the war. SWIFT is still being used for some 70% of transfers within Russia. Despite China and Russia setting up their own systems of payments that will be developed faster in current circumstances.

India is also exploring ways to set up a rupee payment mechanism for trade with Russia. Vital supplies of fertiliser from Russia could be disrupted as sanctions intensify, threatening India's vast farm sector.

INDIA'S PRECARIOUS POSITION

Calling for escalation and dialogue, India has for the third time abstained from UN (twice at SC and once at GA). India's response to Ukraine is a product complex geopolitics of its disputed borders and its ambition to counter its key adversary China through its maritime strategy along with the 'Quad'.

The weakening of the U.S.-led global order manifested in the US withdrawal from Afghanistan has complicated India's position and options in regional geopolitics.

We need Moscow for our huge defence supplies to the tune of 60-80%. We also need them to secure our outreach to central Asia, for the North South Maritime Corridor (that includes India, Russia , Iran and Central Asians but neither Pakistan nor China) and for retaining our relevance in the Taliban controlled Afghanistan. As far as these corners stretch, India could only bank upon Russia.

This story changes with our maritime domain. That is where we need the Quad. IOR is a crucial maritime space which lies at the heart of America's strategy for the Indo Pacific. The US would like India to buy less defence equipment from Russia but wouldn't offer comparable, top of the line technology like the SSN (nuclear powered sub marine), S-400, Brahmos etc. One can understand why Indian leaders are refraining from taking sides. India's current challenge is to evacuate its thousands of students stranded in Ukraine under 'Operation Ganga'.

The Russia-Ukraine war is changing the very foundations of the global order as we know it. As the debris settle, we will see a more militarised Europe. Globally, we are likely to encounter a more multipolar world with repercussions for India's national interests as well.

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Dreamlike existence

To attain a dreamlike existence, a lot must be done to get to that state, writes AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Don't we all dream for a dreamlike existence? I do too. But, then, it will be termed daydreaming, if it is not backed by what is needed to get that dream state.

The first question we should ask ourselves is what we consider dreamlike existence and then, what are difficulties in achieving this dreamlike state? First of all, I have to be very determined; my willpower must not be lacking in anyway. These desires are very difficult to get fulfilled, if at all. Even one of them will be a tall order. And one of the main difficulties will be to give up '*ahankar*' (ego). Hardly anyone succeeds in doing that, because '*ahankar*' is what defines most of us.

It is no wonder that Lord Krishna has spoken about giving up *ahankar* multiple times in the *Bhagavad gita* including the last time in the verse *#18.58*, when He warned Arjuna of being destroyed, if he continued to act under its influence. God has to help. There is no way that such desires can be self-fulfilled. And of course, we have to be deserving.

So, how does one go about achieving this almost impossible goal? The first requirement has to be willingness to change. We are never going to get to the dreamlike state if we continue the way we are going. Changing is not rejecting self; it is improving self. Believe me, we all need to make/accept lots of changes to get to a superior position. Our determination/willpower will help. Good health is another prerequisite, because '*tapasya*' required is unthinkable in poor health. All sacrifices need to be made in this direction. We must be dutiful, because all of us have been created to be dutiful. These are determined by time, place and circumstances and will be always within our abilities/capabilities. As a matter of fact, we, human beings, are limited to doing duties only. Nothing more can be done or is expected from us.

God loves those who are dutiful in the right way, which is: I must do what I must. This attitude also takes away the harmful *ahankar*, which gives us wrong impressions about ourselves. God loves those even more who follow '*dharma*'; who agree to abide by limits sets for all of us, i.e. always to be guided by '*maryada*'.

We must become good in every sense, including seeking company of good people, and we know what it means to be good. Sure enough, our relationships with family members will become good, because what we sow we reap. Understanding others, appreciating them, forgiving minor offences, accepting others as unique packages just as we all are will help greatly. We need lots of assistance from experts in different fields because we are limited in what we know or can know. And in the matter of spirituality, we must refer to a bona fide scripture like the *Bhagavad Gita* in order not to stray away from God, who is absolutely essential, if we have to achieve the dreamlike state. Why? Because He is the controller.

You think you are upto the challenge? I do. Therefore, I am trying. I know that it will take me several lives to achieve this goal, but I will keep on getting glimpses of the same as I progress. Will you believe that my fears have reduced? I feel so much better sans debilitating fears.

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West unsuspected villain of Ukraine war

Who has benefitted from the bloodshed in Ukraine, apart from the military industrial complex of West (and China)? Neither Ukraine, nor the West (unless it was still stuck in the 20th century). Russia might create a buffer of broken down or destabilised Ukraine with NATO, but at a great cost — something Russian President Vladmir Putin described as having left with no other option. In foreign policy, the only moral liability a nation has is securing its national interest. What is Ukrainian national interest: to become a NATO member or adopt neutrality and cooperate with both rival camps?

Ukraine and Russia have historical, cultural, linguistic, family and blood ties; but having such a mighty power next door on hostile terms is not a desirable scenario. If Ukraine's sole purpose of getting close to NATO was ensuring its territorial integrity from Russia, it could have been achieved by entering into an agreement to that effect with Moscow in Normandy format, with Kiev pledging neutrality. Truth is, Ukraine would not have been averse to neutrality, unless it was pumped up by the West, with funds, intelligence, weaponry and political support against Russia.

By continuing its focus on China following the Trump administration, the Biden administration for once showed promise in foreign policy arena. Securing "strategic stability" with Russia — to focus at its 21st century challenge, the rising and revisionist China — America finally seemed capable of moving beyond Euro-centrism: its age-old emotional biases and historic fixations. However, even before it could gather steam, the gauntlet was thrown and plan was sent gathering dust. Everyone knows that the present crisis was avoidable. However, it seems the world is going to be forever stuck in the unending obsessive feud between the Russia and the West. Ironically, Moscow and Washington, the two great powers in decline are still fighting for heft.

An old woman holds on to a walking stick as refugees, mostly women with children, arrive at the border crossing in Medyka, Poland, on March 5 AP

Chain of events

Ukraine is a fairly new country and is divided between the Russian-speaking East and Ukrainian-speaking West, and so are the loyalties. Corruption and authoritarianism have been major problems with Ukraine and continue to be so (Zelenskyy, for all his heroism and poignant speeches, had shut down three critical media outlets and arrested Opposition leaders; Pandora Papers revealed his connections with offshore entities engaged in shady financial dealings). Its leadership hasn't evolved enough to understand statecraft requires compromises between different sections and different neighbours.

Post 2014, since western backed Governments took over, the minority linguistic rights have been abolished and Ukrainian has been enforced as the language in public sector, education and professional fields, bringing up charges of discrimination. The UN endorsed Minsk Agreements for resolution of conflict with Donbas region, but it was not implemented because they grant too much autonomy to the provinces.

Ukraine has been a "partner country" of NATO since 2008 when it applied to begin a NATO Membership Action Plan, but plans for joining were shelved following the victory of Viktor Yanukovych in 2010 presidential election. However, after the Euro-Maidan Revolution in 2014, joining NATO was made a priority. Accordingly, the Constitution was amended in 2019. In June 2021 NATO Summit, the decision about Ukraine's NATO membership was reiterated, refusing Russian concern. In September 2021, NATO undertook military exercises in Ukraine.

Putin claims twenty such drills were planned this year and Ukraine's territory, air space and naval bases were being used by western intelligence agencies to spy on Russia. If Ukraine had to be neutralised the time was now. Assumably, he would have undertaken preparation for invasion, in all realms including economic, since 2019-20. Seeing no progress on the security guarantees proposed by him in December 2021, especially due to US, and threats of deterrence to intimidate him into submission, for Putin the die was cast.

Western action defies logic

The US enforces Monroe Doctrine in the entire Western hemisphere, but denies Russia such a right even in its immediate neighbourhood. NATO ensured peace in Europe during the Cold war by the "balance of power"; now its existence, more so its eastward expansion, is a threat to peace and security in the continent, by creating unnecessary pressure and suspicion in Moscow. The thinking that Russia can be pushed into a corner by encircling it and creating extraordinary force against is unrealistic, and rather it results in unpredictable and aggressive behaviour by Moscow. Unsurprisingly, the American foreign policy doyens like Henry Kissinger and John Mearsheimer have been against the NATO expansion and suggest neutrality for Ukraine and non-interference by Washington in Russian "core strategic interest" areas.

The West sees Russia as a spent force, which in effect is a "persistent power" of a considerable weight and would continue to shape geopolitical events for the immediate future. The fact that western sanctions might dim the Russian lights but only at a cost is being completely overlooked in the usual noise of demonising Putin. Can the West challenge Russia and China together? The Western sanctions will not sink the Russian ship, but the resultant Sino-Russian convergence, effect on its own economy and military buildup in Europe will make containment of Beijing extremely difficult.

The Putin problem

In popular western thinking, Putin is the cause of problem between Russia and the West, and present mess in Ukraine. If he's replaced, a more pliable leader would take over and bow to the Western power is just wishful thinking. Firstly, many political scientists state that in most authoritarian regimes, one autocrat is replaced by another. Samuel Huntington had proclaimed that all former Soviet states are destined to have authoritarian government as it is intrinsic to their culture. In fact, starting from the Arab Spring and similar orange revolutions, West-backed regimes changed in Iraq and Afghanistan. This hypothesis can be seen very much in action here. Western style democracy doesn't survive at such places, it turns into a corrupt oligarchic system and soon falls back to dictatorial regimes. Second, maintaining a "sphere of influence" is always going to be an important pillar of Russia's foreign policy, regardless of who is at the helm, therefore it will always be in conflict with the West.

Those surprised by the Russian invasion or are laughably questioning Putin's psychological state have forgotten the fate of Georgia in 2008, when it tried to join NATO. Those who can't reconcile Putin's cool, calculative and master strategist image with the present boldness forget he's calm when needed, aggressive when required. The fall of Soviet Union and injustice and humiliation of Russia have been the themes close to his heart since he was the KGB head. To allow the West to completely encircle Russia, placing it at the target of Western missiles, will not only be foolish, it would be an existential threat.

War cannot be the solution to anything, and undeniably Russia is an aggressor, but the blame for creating the conditions for the war falls on the West. Ought not every nation be free to join military alliance of its own choice? Military alliances only create rival alliances, and the outcome of that has been witnessed twice in the history. A military alliance of most advanced nations is more like an elite club of the rich and the powerful and it might guarantee their security, but not world peace. Nothing stops nations to undertake collective security on case-to-case basis.

(The author is a foreign policy analyst and a lawyer)

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SONAL SHUKLA

PERSPECTIVE

Tech will decide banking direction

Customer interaction and transactions with banks will be all-way instead of multi-way. With India having a large number of mobile customers, there is great potential for technology to be widely used in the delivery of financial services

BRAJESH KUMAR TIWARI

Banking system is the backbone of any economy and banks are the trustees of public money. In the last few years, the banking sector is undergoing a structural change. The immediate impact of the Union Budget is always on the financial markets and the banking sector. Although there was no direct announcement for the banking sector in the Budget, there are many points that will affect the banking sector in the coming days, more credit lines for small businesses, introduction of digital currency by the central bank and amendments to strengthen bankruptcy laws are among the major focus areas for the banking sector in this year's Union Budget.

The Budget is growth oriented both directly and indirectly, with 35 per cent increase in capital expenditure for infrastructure development and 65 per cent defence capital expenditure for local companies, tax incentives for start-ups and the banking sector benefiting from PM Gati Shakti.

The Budget emphasises on fintech and digital banking. On the completion of 75 years of India's Independence, 75 digital banking units will be set up in different districts by scheduled commercial banks. With the digitisation of banking services operated by the post office, it is a clear indication that the Government is looking to promote digital banking in rural and semi-urban India. More than 35 crore post office deposit accounts will now be linked to the core banking system. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced to link 1.5 lakh post offices with the core banking system, this will enable people to access their accounts online and transfer money to post office accounts and other banks, which will help farmers and senior citizens in rural areas, as well as promote interoperability and financial inclusion. Being a part of core banking, it will facilitate fund management, a major effort for the digital economy in rural India.

Last year, Sitharaman allocated ₹1,500 crore to promote digital transactions and digital modes of payment in rural and under-served areas. The Indian market's fintech adoption rate is 87 per cent, which is much higher than the global average of 64 per cent. Bad Bank was announced last year. This Budget talks about expediting the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code resolution process and reducing its time from two years to six months.

The introduction of Sovereign Green Bonds will also help the banking sector. In this new idea, the Government will borrow through such specified bonds for green projects. One more year extension of ECLGS scheme will strengthen the business of MSME as well as banking sector. In addition, the guarantee cover for ECLGS will also be increased by ₹50,000 crore to a total of ₹5 lakh crore. The additional amount will be focused on hospitality and related enterprises.

The Government proposes to introduce a digital rupee using block chain and other technologies to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India from 2022-23 for a more efficient and affordable currency management system. With this, India will join the ranks of countries to issue their own Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). A central bank digital currency would be a legal tender issued by the RBI in digital form. It can be exchanged face to face with the notes issued by the Government.

The emphasis on digital economy and introduction of fintech innovation will give impetus to the fintech sector. Technology will decide what is the way of banking. This includes huge data, cloud computing, smart phones and other similar inventions. Customer interaction and transactions with banks will be all-way instead of multi-way. With India having a large number of mobile customers, there is great potential for this technology to be widely used in the delivery of financial services. At present, about 93 crore people in the country have mobile phones. But only 4 crore people use mobile banking. Digital banking will lead the economy in the near future and fintech is the way forward for the Indian banking and payment system.

Also, it is essential that the payment systems operating in the country are good and secure. The central bank is making constant efforts to prevent incidents of fraud. Despite this, the incidents of card fraud and online transactions are increasing day by day. However, to secure digital channels, additional authentication has been made mandatory by banks for all online, IVR, recurring transactions based on the information available on credit, debit, prepaid cards. Aadhaar based biometric authentication can also improve the situation.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Atal Bihari Vajpayee School of Management & Entrepreneurship, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and author of 'Changing Scenario of Indian Banking Industry')

IT IS IN YOUR MOMENTS OF DECISION THAT YOUR DESTINY IS SHAPED
— TONY ROBBINS

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA

ARIES March 21-April 19

This week your health will be good. You are outgoing and energetic, and some quick movements will make you busy and you enjoy doing so. You will have the drive and determination to move forward. Do not force things, as that is likely to backfire on you. On the professional front, this is not the right time to take important decisions. You may feel as if your energy is blocked. Secret motives, undercover information could make you tense. There is a need to go deep into the matter and find a solution for your anxieties, fears, and psychic blocks so that they will no longer haunt you. On the personal front, this week will be filled with romance and passion. The time and energy you have invested in the past will now give you rich dividends.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Wednesday

TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week you will easily overcome past problems, and it will soothe tensions in your relationships. On the career front, a little sorrow arises but you will overcome the situation and understand the necessity for that brief sorrow. As peace and joy enter your career sector, you'll see that the previous change simply energised you to enter a more profitable phase. The week looks promising in terms of finance. The money will be coming your way through different sources. Your dream may come true, maybe not in the form you expected. On the personal front, events are likely to happen that will guide you in a direction that is most auspicious for you. Don't lose hope when things do not go as planned. Destiny knows best.

Lucky number 7
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday

GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week your health is good. Be careful when exercising; there could be a minor injury or sprain. If you are in the process of healing from an injury, don't overdo it, or you could end up in worse shape than you were earlier. On the work front, use your energy in creative pursuits. There may be some constraints in the workplace. You will experience stagnation/retirement, or the job is very demanding which you find difficult. Worrying about your job is not going to help matters. Focus on what you can control and try to leave your anxiety by the wayside. On the personal front, conflicts, a difference of opinions are foreseen in the relationship area. There are restlessness and unreliability. Learn to value others' opinions and words.

Lucky number 2
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Friday

CANCER June 21-July 22

This week your life is likely to get affected by worry, stress, and anxiety. Be sure that you are taking good care of yourself and to the best of your capabilities. Balance in exercise, food, and water intake, and getting adequate rest is a must. Breathing exercises and meditation are particularly useful for you now. On the career front, some unexpected event may surprise you. You may decide to leave your job if you are currently working, even if it's a good job because your heart is no longer in it. You want to follow your dream, no matter what it is. On the personal front, you will be able to establish a solid family line and become a pillar of a wide network of family members. You are practical and grounded.

Lucky number 8
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Saturday

LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week you may be suppressing your emotions. This may impact your body adversely. Be careful about how, when, and where you vent your emotional reactions. Anything that reduces your stress level will be helpful now, even a five-minute walk. Your emotions are the gateway to opening your spiritual life. Professionally, this is a great time to take some time off from work, if you can, to relax. Meditation, solutions, commitments, and confrontations can and should be made now. This will bring positive changes in your career. On the relationship front, those committed will enjoy a happy and balanced relationship for a while. You and your partner should have a fair contribution to the relationship.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Thursday

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week health issues may bother you. Take one moment at a time, think positively, and know that it may take a while to get to the bottom of what is happening. On the work front, big ideas coupled with determination can help you achieve your targets, that is if you choose your activities and projects wisely. This is a period of increased studying and learning, joining an educational course, vocational training, and research and for a master's degree. Artistic interests will draw your attention. On the love front, know that love doesn't know of age. Love can mean that someone is about to sweep you off your feet. Give them a chance. Existing relationships find ways to bring more charm to their life.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Sunday

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week stress may take a mighty toll. Look at ways to ease your risk factors and deal with stress. If all else fails, think about changing your lifestyle and the things you are spending your money on. On the career front, you need to take care of emotional matters and relationships with colleagues and boss which had given you tense moments in the past. The situation will improve, and you must make the best use of this time to repair and improve your contacts and enhance your career. The changes you make at this time will lead to interesting money-making opportunities later. On the relationship front, try to give your partner some breathing space. A lifestyle change may not please everyone, but it should lift your spirits.

Lucky number 16
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Tuesday

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week you must manage your stress level to stay in good health. Deal with any problems that come up physically, don't try to avoid them. Ensure you get enough rest. If you need healing, ask for it. Hearty talk with friends will go a long way towards keeping you healthy and sane. On the professional front, conflict with a superior will lead you to change track. Try not to close all doors, unless you have another opportunity. Be patient as this is a temporary situation. Self-improvement projects will be successful and bring added confidence. You will make progress by making corrections. Try to be adjusting to the current environment; success is within your reach. On the personal front, a committed relationship will need to take action for survival.

Lucky number 5
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Saturday

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week your health will improve. If dealing with a serious illness, a new and improved healing system or new doctor will bring hope. Think positively and expect the best, and do not hesitate to ask for healthcare if you need it. Your life will get a new meaning if you reach out to spiritual practices and have immense faith in God. On the career front, keep the office and personal life separate. You are likely to try a different tactic or may even choose to leave the job that you're currently in. Due to sensitive time, if you plan to stay back then look for alternate ways to make your work easier. In the matter of heart, mild conflicts with loved ones are indicated. Allow your partner to have his or her space for a healthy relationship.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Monday

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This is a good time to improve your health. A positive attitude is important for good health. Excessively, this week you should be feeling loving toward everyone and everything. Share that good energy, others might need it. Going for a walk or practicing yoga with your friend or partner is good for your health and wellbeing. Professionally, you will be wise to follow established social structures and traditions. Some of you may consider starting your own business or joining a family business. You feel happy being self-employed than working for others. You may meet someone new through your work or feel attracted to your working colleagues. On the love front, for those in a committed relationship, be sure that your communication is as clear as it can be.

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week be watchful as there may be something about your health that has not yet come to light. If you feel that something is amiss with your health, believe in your concerns and advocate for yourself. Be sure that you are supporting yourself as best you can with diet, exercise, nutrition, and vitamins/minerals. On the career front, you miss a wonderful opportunity that has the potential to bring satisfying improvement in your status. Focus on your strengths, on what you do have and can do, not what you can't do and don't have. On the love front, know that a little effort goes a long way if you're looking to improve your love life today. This is a good time to look hard at yourself as to whether you are being realistic with regards to love.

Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Thursday

PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week your firm approach towards life will help you solve problems. Restless mind and aggression may cause BP problems. You have a sensitive nature, and you may suffer if you do not release your feelings. On the career front, go ahead with creative ideas along with your colleagues and peers. This is the right time for making deals, connections, and collaborations. An increase in your confidence is indicated. Don't rush, finish what you have started before you decide to call off. On the relationship front, your logical nature may spoil your connection with your partner. Avoid heated arguments. You need to be grounded and firm in your decisions. Your partner may be very demanding. You need to be honest with him/her.

Lucky number 9
Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Sunday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Patient handling can bring change

"What is in store of my son's destiny? He suddenly gave up his job a year and half back. When asked, he said: Unlike you, I am not prepared to toil all my life. I will try to set up a business that brings good and quick returns. Nothing seems to be moving by now. Will he ever settle down, and if so, by when? I asked him to seek your counsel, but he won't listen." A worried father asked me some time back.

At the outset, let me assure you that your son is quite talented and he will settle down for sure with time. Like any ordinary mortal, if he has some positives, he carries negative traits also, which is playing heavy at this particular point of time. A look at his chart reveals that as of now he would be under great stress, suffering from inferiority complex, and in fact in a state of depression. "If so, he would need therapy. Otherwise, if left unattended, I am afraid, it will grow with time. But the problem is that he won't listen. Will you suggest any *puja* that helps bring him around?" the father came with a counter question.

Well, therapy works only when the person concerned acknowledges his problem and wilfully tries to seek help. The irony, however, is that his high ego doesn't let him acknowledge fault lines, not to say anything about seeking help. Even if taken to a therapist, he won't share much, and so the effort will go in vain. If you somehow connect him with me, my counsel will not work. The key to his problem is his present mindset. Any *puja* you do can't enter his mind space to make necessary correction. Have patience. Be supportive. Assure him that you are there to fully support him. The progression of his planetary placements suggests that hopefully, after a year, a situation may arise that may trigger the sense of reasons in him, which too is immense. The positives within him will then lead him make a fresh and strong start. "It is difficult for me to digest that without making any suitable effort, time alone would bring about necessary change. Please explain," the father asked.

When I talk about 'time', in astrological framework, it doesn't simply mean a measure of space between two set of events. In astrology, all scales of time are set in correspondence with periodical movement of the Sun and Moon. The two luminaries being primary energy balls of the cosmos playing from the front, their progression reflects upon varying energy dynamics of the cosmos. That has related bearing on life cycle on earth. A look at your son's astrological pointers and their progression will make things clear.

The Sun signifying his identity is conjunct Mercury, which makes him quite intelligent having a good memory. Both are beautifully aligned with intellectually ordained Uranus and Neptune. It, in the first place, implies that that he is highly talented and has innovative and inventive mind. Second, he has strong imagination, is highly intuitive, and compassionate. Jupiter conjunct Moon gives him a fertile mind and also makes out a good human being. All put together qualifies him to make a mark for himself.

The negatives within are also there that may play spoilsport with his potentials, particularly when time becomes adverse. Moon posited in Virgo sign brings in the sense that others don't understand him. It is placed adverse to Mars, Uranus, Neptune and Venus. This, in the first place makes him irritable and aggressive. Second, he is too much sensitive. Third, it may at times makes him vulnerable to get stuck to his fanciful dream perception. Mars opposite Uranus and Neptune makes him temperamental, who remains susceptible to develop inferiority complex when things don't move on expected lines. Mars placed adverse to Jupiter speaks of his inflated ego, which may not let him digest advisories when things don't work his ways. All these came into prominence when progressed Sun was opposite Moon, which put him under stress. Mars progressed to a point exactly opposite Uranus and Neptune that put him under depression, when to hide his weakness, he may overreact when counselled.

All these indicators will move further away from their negative positioning by his next birthday. Fortunately at the same time his progressed *lagna* becomes beautifully aligned to Venus posited in his career signifying 10th house. The *dasha* sequence too becomes favourable. His may then make a fresh positive start whereafter, his performance may far exceed your expectations.

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