

Gandhis may quit posts today over poll drubbing

Congress terms it rumours; CWC meeting to discuss poll debacle today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress Working Committee (CWC), scheduled to meet on Sunday to discuss the poll debacle in five States, is likely to be eventful and could include offers of resignations by Sonia Gandhi as interim party president and Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi as general secretaries.

Though the party officially stated that all these are mere rumours created by certain sections of media at the instance of the BJP, insiders said the resignations are a possibility as the mood even with the party's first family is quite sombre.

In the event of Sonia quitting, senior leader like Mallikarjun Kharge or Ghulam Nabi Azad may be appointed to take the party towards the conduct of the organisational elections, sources said.

AICC sources said the much-delayed party president election too could be advanced to stem dissidence and put the



house in order. In the meantime, a day before the CWC meet, influential Karnataka leader CM Ibrahim joined the list of leaders quitting the Congress. He tendered his resignation saying his grievances for the past 12 years were never addressed despite assurances by Congress president Sonia.

Sonia will chair the meeting of the party's top decision-making body at its headquarters. AICC sources said the meeting is likely to see some straight talk from the G-23 leaders who had suggested corrective measures after the previous round of Assembly polls, when the party lost Puducherry and failed to make a mark in Kerala, Assam and West Bengal, but there had been little movement on that front.

The leaders of G-23, who

have been demanding an organisational overhaul, had met Friday evening at the residence of senior leader Azad to evolve their strategy ahead of the crucial CWC meeting.

Azad and senior leader Anand Sharma are the two leaders of the group who are part of the CWC. Besides the two, Kapil Sibal and Manish Tewari too dropped in the meeting held at the residence of Azad within 24 hours of the declaration of the results of elections in five States.

Sources said besides evaluating the polls, the prime concern will now be to raise the pitch for immediate rehaul of the organisational structure and a "full time active party president" without waiting till September when the organisa-

tional polls are scheduled.

In the just concluded Assembly elections, the Congress lost Punjab to the AAP and could not win any of the four other States — Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur — even though it believed it could wrest power from the BJP in Uttarakhand and Goa.

The 'Group of 23', at their Friday meeting, expressed shock at the party's defeat. Sources said the leaders discussed the way forward and steps for the revival of the Congress which has become even "more marginalised, weakened and isolated".

They also expressed dismay at the Congress leadership not taking any corrective steps to revive the party, they said. Some leaders were concerned that the report of the committee formed to evaluate the party's losses in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and Puducherry was not even discussed.

Following the poll debacle, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who is among the G-23 leaders, had on Thursday said it is clear that change is unavoidable.

"All of us who believe in INC India are hurting from the results of the recent Assembly elections," he said.

Continued on Page 2

3 kids among 7 charred to death in Delhi blaze



Firefighters at shanties destroyed in an inferno at Gokulpuri area in New Delhi on Saturday morning Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Seven people, including three children, were charred to death after a major fire broke out in the shanties in Gokulpuri in northeast Delhi in the early hours of Saturday.

The police said the reason behind the fire is yet to be ascertained and teams from the Forensic Science Laboratory at Rohini visited the spot.

According to Atul Garg, the Director of Delhi Fire Services (DFS), a call regarding the blaze near pillar number 12

of Gokulpuri village was received at 1.03 am by the fire department following which 13 fire-tenders were rushed to the spot.

"The fire was finally brought under control around 4 am. Seven charred bodies were recovered from the site," said Garg, adding that around 60 shanties were affected and 30 of them were completely gutted in the fire.

Santu, the 58-year-old grandfather of Roshan and Dipika, said, "The fire started around 12.30 am when we

were sleeping. We have no idea from where and how it started. We have only one room. We came out of shanty when the fire broke out to save our lives."

The deceased have been identified as Babloo (32), Ranjit (25), Reshma (18), Priyanka (20), and Shahansha (10), of same family and two minors, Roshan (13) and his sister Dipika (9), of another family. Police said some people also received minor injuries in the incident.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

CENTRE GIVES REASONS FOR MERGING 3 MCDS

New Delhi: Frequent strikes by employees due to non-payment of salary, unequal distribution of assets and liabilities leading to imbalance of income and expenditures of municipal corporations are the reasons to integrate the three entities in Delhi, the Centre has stated. **P4**

SECURITY OF 122 PNJAB LEADERS WITHDRAWN

Chandigarh: The Punjab Police has ordered the withdrawal of security cover of 122 former ministers and MLAs, days before AAP leader Bhagwant Mann takes over as the Chief Minister.

DEUBA THANKS PM FOR EVACUATING NEPALESE

Kathmandu: Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Saturday expressed gratitude to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government for evacuating four Nepalese nationals stranded in Ukraine amidst the military offensive by Russia.

JD(U)'S 6 MLAS TO BACK BJP IN MANIPUR

New Delhi: The Janata Dal (U) on Saturday extended support of its six MLAs in Manipur to the BJP as the latter is set to form government after winning a majority on its own.

HEAT WAVE TO SCORCH ODISHA NEXT WEEK

Bhubaneswar: A heat wave is likely set to singe parts of Odisha next week and the mercury is expected to rise by a few degrees across the State.

AAP's clean sweep in Punjab spurs it to fight all seats in HP

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Emboldened by its landslide victory in Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has now decided to contest all 68 seats in the Assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh slated to take place later this year.

Planning for the Assembly polls in the hill State, Delhi Health Minister and AAP leader Satyendar Jain on Saturday led a victory procession in Shimla along with the AAP workers and also announced that the party would contest the Shimla Municipal Corporation elections.

"Before the 2022 Assembly polls, the party will contest Shimla Municipal Corporation. The AAP has the mantra to defeat the BJP. The Delhi model will be implemented in Himachal. After Punjab, now it's Himachal Pradesh's turn. We will contest elections to all 68 seats in Himachal Pradesh in upcoming Assembly elections," said Jain.

The AAP registered a landslide in the Punjab Assembly polls winning 92 seats in the 117-member Assembly, making history in the process.

Talking about the poll promises, Jain announced that the AAP if comes to power would provide free electricity and water in Himachal.

Continued on Page 2

Bhagwant Mann meets Guv, stakes claim to form Govt

Chandigarh: Punjab Chief Minister-designate Bhagwant Mann on Saturday staked claim to form government in the state after meeting Governor Banwarilal Purohit here.

After the meeting, Mann told reporters outside the Raj Bhawan that he handed over a letter of support of his party MLAs to the Governor who accepted it. **PTI**

Maya blames TV debates of casteist agenda, asks party to boycott progs



Lucknow: With the BSP still reeling from its worst-ever performance in assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, party supremo Mayawati on Saturday accused the media of adopting "casteist and hateful approach" towards the party, and asked its spokesperson to boycott TV debates.

Her outburst came through a series of tweets two days after the BSP slumped to its lowest ever tally of seats in Uttar Pradesh, winning just one in the current state polls.

She claimed the media adopted a "casteist, hateful and despicable approach" to "harm" the Ambedkarite BSP movement during the Uttar Pradesh assembly polls on the instructions of "their bosses".

"Therefore, all the spokespersons of the party -- Sudheendra Bhadauria, Dharamvir Choudhary, MH Khan, Faizan Khan and Seema Kushwaha -- will no longer participate in TV debates etc," she said in a tweet in Hindi. **PTI**

PF interest rate cut down to four-decade low of 8.1%

New Delhi: Interest rate on employees' provident fund deposits on Saturday was cut to a four-decade low of 8.1 per cent for the current 2021-22 fiscal from 8.5 per cent in the previous year.

This is the lowest interest rate since 1977-78 on deposits that employees make towards their retirement fund. Interest rate on employees provident fund that year stood at 8 per cent.

The 8.1 per cent interest rate was recommended by the Central Board of Trustees after its meeting in Guwahati under the chairmanship of Union Labour and Employment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, a labour ministry press statement said.

"The Central Board recommended 8.10 per cent annual rate of interest to be credited on EPF accumulations in members' accounts for the financial year 2021-22 (ending on March 31, 2022)," it said.

The recommendation will now go to the Finance Ministry and will be notified after its nod. **Detailed report on P6**

3 Govt institutions headless for years

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Three statutory institutions of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment — Chief Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities (CCPD), National Trust (NT) and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) — are without a full-time head for the past several years.

Anjali Bhawra, Secretary, Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) of the Ministry, has been given the additional charge of all the three posts.

The Ministry has been citing recruitment issues and paucity of "right" candidates for the delay in appointment. But, in the process, the Ministry has overlooked the fact that the disability sector with 21 different conditions is now recognised under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act that needs to be handled with a deeper understanding and sensitivity.

Disability rights activists alleged that entrusting the role of the statutory bodies to

bureaucrats has led the situation in a different direction and also, it's "not possible" to deliver quality work if three organisations are being supervised by one person. "Advertisements for appointments have been published from time to time over the past years, but the posts were never filled up," rued Muralidharan, Secretary, National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled.

He recalled that the advertisement to appoint the CCPD head was published in February/March 2021, and 15 candidates were shortlisted for interactive session on January 22, 2022.

"This was postponed just a week before the interactions with no further dates. The interactions were later fixed for March 7. But, on March 2, candidates were again informed that due to unavoidable reasons, the interactions are being postponed. No dates or reasons were given," he said.

In fact, in a reply to a query in Parliament last year, Union Social Welfare and

Empowerment Minister of State, Pratima Bhounik, too, had admitted that the post of Chairperson, RCI, has been lying vacant since September 15, 2015 and the additional charge of the post has been given to other officers. Steps are being taken to fill the post, she had then stated.

Expressing dismay at the Ministry's apathy, Muralidharan said besides the three vacancies, two posts of Joint Secretary in the Ministry too are yet to be filled. "It's questionable how they manage the programs and schemes," he said.

Dr Satendra Singh, Professor of Physiology, University of Medical Sciences and GTB Hospital, agreed as much and cited a recent instance where the office of the CCPD disposed of a complaint against Lady Harding Medical College, Delhi without any hearing. The complaint was regarding inaccessible facilities and disabled-unfriendly website of the college.

Continued on Page 2

Tainted BJD MLA rams SUV into crowd at block polls

PNS ■ KHORDHA

Chilika MLA Prashant Jagdev, who was suspended from the BJD in 2021 for hooliganism, has again landed himself in a soup by inhumanely ploughing his SUV into a crowd injuring many in Banpur of Khordha district on Saturday.

As election to the post of block Chairman was scheduled to be held on the day, there was a huge rush near the Banpur block office.

The crowd and police officials present stopped the MLA from entering the block office in his SUV. But the MLA, who was allegedly in an inebriated condition, ploughed his vehicle into the crowd injuring some BJP workers, several cops, including the Banapur police station IIC, and two journalists.

Continued on Page 2

Sanctions to hit International Space Station, says Russia

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia's space agency has sent NASA and other international partners a letter demanding an end to sanctions, saying they could threaten the International Space Station (ISS).

In a tweet Saturday, the head of Roscosmos, Dmitry Rogozin, said the letter appealed to the space agencies of the United States, Canada and Europe to keep the space station operational.

He illustrated the appeal with a map showing the flight path of the ISS — and a potential fall zone that straddles much of the world but barely touches upon Russia.

Four NASA astronauts, two Russian cosmonauts and one European astronaut are currently on the space station.

Blindness causing Trachoma affecting poorest resurfaces

Massive survey underway to find out prevalence

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A massive survey is underway across 200 districts in eight States and two Union Territories of India to assess the prevalence of Trachoma Trichiasis (TT), a poor man's disease causing blindness that was declared to have been eliminated from the country a few years ago.

Trachoma is a bacterial eye infection that damages the eyelids and causes the eyelashes to turn inwards. Its severe manifestation is Trichiasis which typically occurs in adulthood after multiple untreated infections.

Trichiasis is said to be present when turned-in eyelashes

scratch the eyeball — a painful condition that may lead to progressive and irreversible visual impairment. Surgery is required in time to save the eye.

Trachoma is one of the 20 neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) affecting over a billion of the world's poorest.

The Community Ophthalmology Division of AIIMS' RP Centre in Delhi, headed by Prof Praveen Vashist, who is also popularly known as the "survey man", in partnership with Tropical Data, a WHO initiative, has completed the survey, initiated last year, in 55 districts with the rate of prevalence so far found to be nearly 0.27 per cent.

The survey is being conducted in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh and the UTs of Chandigarh and Car Nicobar Island in Andaman.

Incidentally, India had declared Trachoma elimina-



tion among children in 2018, but a few cases in the endemic States in adults have since been reported.

"The survey aims to assess the prevalence of Trichiasis, including blindness due to Trachoma, in the previously Trachoma-endemic States in India by identifying TT cases 'unknown to the health system', as well as study the effectiveness of implementation of Trachoma Surveillance and

SAFE strategy in each district," Dr JS Titiyal, Chief of the RP Centre, AIIMS, told The Pioneer.

He explained that the survey has been planned in the 200 districts in the States which were found to be hyper-endemic in previous Trachoma rapid assessment and prevalence surveys, and will be completed by 2023.

Dr Titiyal said, as many as 1,79,871 individuals have been

examined and of them, 50 individuals were found to have TT. The cumulative prevalence of TT (unknown to the health system) is 0.27 per 1000 till now, he pointed out.

Trachoma prevalence has been found to be only 0.7% in India, much below the elimination criteria of infective trachoma as defined by the WHO.

The aim of this study is to estimate the prevalence of Trachoma in endemic States using protocol consistent with WHO recommendation.

"India had declared elimination of the disease among children. However, following detection of TT cases in some endemic States in adults, the present survey for the prevalence of the disease is being conducted," said Prof Vashist.

As many as 19,662 children in the one to nine year age group were examined by trained ophthalmologists while 44,135 persons were examined in the 15 years and above

age group. Prof Vashist said women are blinded up to 4 times as often as men probably due to their close contact with infected children and their resulting greater frequency of infection episodes.

Globally, around 12 countries that have been validated by WHO for having eliminated trachoma as a public health problem are Cambodia, China, Iran, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Gambia, Ghana, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

The first National Trachoma Prevalence Survey and the Trachoma Rapid Assessment Surveys were conducted by the Dr RP Centre, AIIMS, in collaboration with National Programme for Control of Blindness & Visual Impairment, Union Health Ministry, from 2014 to 2017.

Active trachoma is considered eliminated if the prevalence of active infection among children below 10 years is less than 5 per cent.

4 terrorists killed, CRPF soldier martyred in J&K

Jammu: A CRPF soldier identified as Muktar Ahmed who was on leave to visit his family in Chotipora, Shopian, South Kashmir was shot dead by unidentified terrorists late Saturday evening. The CRPF jawan was rushed to the hospital but succumbed to his injuries. The attack was possibly a handiwork of Pakistan sponsored terror group Lashkar e Tayyeba or TRF.

Intensifying anti terrorist operations across the Kashmir valley a joint team of security forces Saturday gunned down four more terrorists while one of them was captured alive in three different encounters at Pulwama, Ganderbal and Handwara.

Vijay Kumar, Inspector General of police, Kashmir, said that security forces had launched joint operations at four to five locations on Friday night which led to the killing of

two Jaish-e- Mohammad (JeM) terrorists and two LeT terrorists. The security forces have also caught one terrorist alive,he added.

Encounters in Handwara and Pulwama were over while the operation at Ganderbal was still going on. The encounters followed the killing of a sarpanch in the Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday.According to a police spokesman, "a Pakistani JeM commander identified as Kamaal Bhai, who was active since 2018, was neutralised in Pulwama.

So far, security forces have killed 35 terrorists in the year 2022. This includes 9 top Pakistani terrorists. Around 16 terrorists have been arrested alive by the forces.

According to a police spokesman, the first encounter took place in Chewaklan Village

of Pulwama district in South Kashmir. Two terrorists were killed by the security forces at the encounter site. Both the terrorists belonged to Jaish Outfit. The second Encounter started in Ganderbal district of central Kashmir. In Ganderbal, one terrorist belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba outfit was killed in the gunfight.

The third encounter broke out at the Rajwar area of Handwara district in north Kashmir. One terrorist belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba has been killed in the gunfight. Security forces have called off the operation at the encounter site.

On Thursday, three terrorists were killed in two operations in the Kashmir valley. Two of them were killed in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, while one of the terrorists was killed in Hazratbal area of Srinagar.

Satish Dhawan Space Centre launched in Jammu

Jammu: Satish Dhawan Centre for Space Sciences was inaugurated by the Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh in the presence of elite scientists in the Central University Jammu on Saturday.

The Minister described this as a historic decision and said that most of space technology institutes were in the past confined to Southern States and the only-of-its-kind Indian Institute of Space and Technology imparting Engineering, Aeronautics and other streams was located in Thiruvananthapuram. The opening of the Centre and the India's second-of-its-kind Space Training Institutes in J&K in 75th years of independence simultaneously marks the march of space journey from Kerala to Kashmir under PM Narendra Modi.

Mumbai cyber branch summons Fadnavis in phone tapping case

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Cyber branch of the Mumbai Police on Saturday summoned Maharashtra's former Chief Minister and current leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP before it on Sunday to record his statement relating to the leak of classified information relating to the much-discussed phone tapping case.

In a development that came less than as fortnight after the Pune police registered an FIR against senior IPS officer and former police commissioner Rashmi Shukla under the Indian Telegraph Act in the phone tapping case, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Cyber cell of the Mumbai crime police Nitin Jadhav asked Fadnavis to appear before the police at 11 am on March 13 (Monday) to

provide information relating to the phone tapping case.

"We have a reason to believe that you can give us factual information relating to the case. Hence we request you to appear before us tomorrow to record your statement in the case," the ACP stated in his notice.

Disclosing that he had been summoned by the cyber branch of the Mumbai police had issued him a notice under section 162 CrPC calling him to appear before the BKC Cyber Police Station at 11 am Sunday. "I will go there tomorrow and record my statement," he said.

Talking to media persons here, Fadnavis said: "As a Leader of Opposition, I have the privilege not to reveal where I got the information from. All the same, I was State Home Minister once and I understand my responsibility.

Kerala Govt to hold global peace meet

KOCHI: The CPI(M) led Kerala Government would soon organize global peace meetings featuring world leaders for brain storming sessions to save the world from the possibilities of a Third World War. The decision to venture into this initiative is a fallout of the failure of other international bodies to prevent the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, said K N Balagopalan, Finance Minister of Kerala, on Friday.

The decision to hold global peace meet was the first announcement made by Balagopalan in his 130 minutes long 2022-23 budget presentation in the legislative assembly.

An amount of Rs two crore has been allocated for holding the meet, the first of its kind session to be held by a State Government in the history of India. The Minister said a Latin American Study Centre would also be set up in Kerala for studies and research on the centuries-old ties between the

State and countries in Latin America. Countries like Cuba, Argentina, Bolivia enjoy special places in the hearts of Marxists in the State. Pictures of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Diego Maradona adore all CPI(M) offices in the State along with party founders like EMS Namboodirippadu, A K Gopalan and P Sundarayya.

The State would also hold a Global Science Fair , said the Minister. He said the callous attitude of the Centre has forced the State Government to set apart Rs 2,000 crore for food security.

"Though Kerala managed to control the Covid-19 pandemic because of its expertise in the field of public health and medicine, the policies pursued by the BJP Government at the Centre are not at all helpful to the State. The Centre is on a mission to appease the imperialist forces. The 2022-23 budget presented by the Centre confirms this," said Balagopalan.

AAP's clean sweep in Punjab spurs...

From Page 1

"There should not be anything like free to the public. It is a payback which is given to the public in the form of facilities for the tax which they have paid for," he said.

The AAP leader said that the organisation has been constituted in all the 68 Assembly seats and will now be expanded till the elections. "Education and health will remain the main issues in Himachal. This time the common man will be

elected by the people because now people have become upset with the special man. The tradition of the chain of five years to Congress and five years to BJP will be ending in 2022 in the State Assembly elections as the AAP has come as an alternate now in the State," he said.

Jain said the AAP's competition is with the BJP. "Congress cannot defeat the BJP. The AAP has the mantra to defeat the BJP," he said.

Tainted BJD MLA rams SUV into crowd at...

From Page 1

The injured were admitted to the Banpur hospital and the critically injured were shifted to the AIIMS Bhubaneswar.

Furious over the incident, locals dragged the MLA out of his vehicle and rained blows on him. The mob also overturned and severely damaged his vehicle. As Jagdev suffered a severe head injury in the mob attack, he was shifted to a private hos-

pital in Bhubaneswar.

Getting information, Central Range IG of Police Narsingha Bhol, who rushed to the spot, said Jagdev is undergoing treatment under police custody and would be arrested soon after completion of his treatment and forwarded to court.

"On the basis of the report of the police officials, a case has been registered against the legislator at the Banpur police station. The SDPO has been entrusted with the probe into the case," Bhol told the media.

Bhol said, "Six persons, 10 policemen and two journalists, were injured and all of them have been shifted to hospital. The condition of three of them is stated to be critical.

Arrangements have been made to provide them best possible treatment."

He said Jagdev has been charged with serious offences like attempt to murder, obstructing police personnel from performing their duty, injuring public and using the car as weapon to hurt people.

"There are several cases pending against him. Chargesheets have been filed in seven cases, out of which the court has taken cognisance in four cases and he is facing trials," Bhol said.

"We have taken serious note of the brutal act by the legislator. A DSP-ranked officer has been given the responsibility of the probe. Many people have recorded the barbar-

ic incident in their cellphones. Those electronic evidence will be brought under the purview of investigation," said the IG.

Meanwhile, prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC were clamped in Banpur town and adequate number of police forces deployed to prevent any further untoward incidents.

The incident, which is said to be first of its type in Odisha and a rerun of the recent Lakshim Keri incident in Uttar Pradesh, has been severely criticised by all political parties and the intelligentsia of the State.

BJD MLA rams vehicle in BJP supporters' crowd in Odisha – 22 injured.


Yagyan in Kerala to revive Indian economy

KOCHI: Even as Nirmala Sitharaman, the Union Finance Minister, and her team of experts are struggling to revive the Indian economy which went off the path of development due to factors like Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war, trustees of a one-year old Kubera Temple has come forward to revitalize the global economy by holding a seven-day yagyan in Kerala.

Come April 17, the Kubera Temple at Chalavara village in Kerala's Palakkadu district spread across 10.5 acres would

turn into a Yaga Bhoomi and a number of priests and scholars would hold a seven day Maha Kubera Yaagam to propitiate Lord Kubera, the god of wealth as per Indian scriptures.

"The last time a Maha kubera Yagam was held in the country was 700 years ago. Since then it has not been held. Taking into account the current economic scenario of the world crippled by the pandemic and war, we felt it is the ideal time to hold this yaagam," said Jithin Jayakrishnan, trustee of Kubera Temple at Chalavara.



DELHI POLLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, (GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI)
5th FLOOR, ISBT BUILDING, KASHMERE GATE, DELHI 110006
Visit us at <https://www.dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in>

ATTENTION

MANDATORY REGISTRATION AND TO UPLOAD SELF-ASSESSMENT/ AUDIT ON PORTAL BY ALLPROJECT PROPONENTS, CONTRACTORS, BUILDERS, PERSON OR AUTHORITY UNDERTAKING CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION ACTIVITY IN NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI

Delhi Pollution Control Committeehas developedan online mechanism through aWeb Portalcalled **"Dust Pollution Control Self-Assessment"** at<http://dustcontroldpcc.delhi.gov.in> for self-assessment by construction agencies with respect to dust pollution in their sites in pursuance of directions dated 11.06.2021 by Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas.

The above said mentioned directions envisage the following compliances by project proponents:

1. All current/ upcoming projects (on plot area equal to or greater than 500 square meters) of construction and demolition for civil structuresare required to mandatorily register at the web portal.
2. To self-monitor/ self- audit their activities on the parameters mandated/ directed for compliance and to take necessary steps, if required, to improve the status of compliance.
3. The project proponents are required to carry out self- audit / self-determination for dust control measures on the parameters provided on the Web Portal and upload a self-declaration on a fortnightly basis.
4. The provision of video fencing with remote connectivity of the projects (within the municipal area of NCR and plot area equal to or greater than 500 Sq.m) is part of portal.
5. Reliable lowcost PM2.5 and PM10 sensors are to be installed at the project site and linked to a cloud storage platform with a live Dash Board in the Web portal.

Further the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas vide its directions dated 20.12.2021 has ordered that for the projects located in the jurisdiction of GNCTD, the proponents of C&D projects in plot/ site measuring 500 Sq.m or above shall immediately register their project on the "Web Portal" for online remote monitoring by the agencies concerned.

All project proponents, contractors, builders, person or authority undertaking construction and demolition activity in National Capital Territory of Delhi are hereby directed to immediately register their projects on Web Portal and upload self-assessment/auditfor the purpose of online remote monitoring by the agencies concerned.

Non-compliance in this respect shall invite coercive action for violation of the directions of Commission for Air Quality Management.

(Member Secretary)
Delhi Pollution Control Committee

Gandhis may...

From Page 1

It is time to reaffirm the idea of India that the Congress has stood for and the positive agenda it offers the nation."And to reform our organisational leadership in a manner that will reignite those ideas and inspire the people. One thing is clear, change is unavoidable if we need to succeed," he had tweeted.

For his part, Ibrahim is likely to join the JD(S). Stating that he is also resigning as MLC, he said, "I have sent in the letter addressed to Chairman Legislative Council to Leader of Opposition (Assembly) Siddaramaiah, he can get it accepted by submitting. I have done this because, in case my resignation is accepted, BJP will get majority in the council and can easily get the anti-conversion bill (which is pending in the Council) passed. I leave it to them."

His decision to quit the Congress comes in the wake of the party appointing B K Hariprasad as the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council, the post which he was eyeing. He has also accused the Congress of neglecting the minority community leaders, and using the community only as vote bank.

Ibrahim, a former Union Minister and one-time close associate of Deve Gowda, had joined Congress in 2008, and had been sulking for some time now, upset with the party and Siddaramaiah.

3 Govt institutions headless...

From Page 1

"How can we implement the Accessible India Campaign," Dr Singh wondered.Apart from being a grievance redressal mechanism, there are various functions and duties that the CCPD has to discharge. For instance, it has to be consulted by the Government on various matters, added Muralidharan.

"For example, last year the Government exempted certain posts from the purview of 4 per cent reservations guaranteed under the Act. For such exemptions to be made, the RPD Act mandates that the Centre or the State has to consult the CCPD or the state Commissioner as the case may be. In this case the office sanctioning the exemption, the Department and the officiating as CCPD were one and the same. This is a conflict of interest," he said.

Alok Bhuwan from Manovikas Charitable Society concurred, saying because of the absence of a permanent head, new policies, existing programmes and funds remain half-heartedly implemented. Focus of the NT, RCI and CCPD have lost in between, leaving the sector to fend on its own.

Council formed under the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 is mandated to regulate and monitor the training of rehabilitation professionals while the activities of the National Trust include training, awareness and capacity building programmes and shelter, care giving and empowerment to the people with intellectual disability.

3 kids among 7 charred to...

From Page 1

Police said an First Information Report (FIR) under sections 285 (negligent conduct with respect to fire or combustible matter) and 304A (causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered at Gokulpuri Police Station and further sections will be added after the reports of fire department and FSL team.

Kejriwal visited the site of the incident and took stock of the situation and interacted with affected people. "When I woke up this morning, I came to know that a fire here killed seven people and many shanties were burnt. I am deeply saddened with this incident.

I pray to God that the deceased rest in peace," said Kejriwal.He said he had issued orders for a swift release of the compensation amount. "I will try to release this (compensation) very soon, in one-two days, so that you get the money soon," Kejriwal said.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from northeast Delhi Manoj Tiwari also visited the site and demanded a judicial inquiry in the incident.

"This is a very sad and a heartrending incident. I urge the CM to immediately announce a compensation of Rs 1 crore for the families of the deceased and those who have been injured should be given the best treatment," he said.

Nomination for UP MLC polls from March 15

Aligarh: After the assembly elections, now the preparations have started for the Aligarh-Hathras Local Bodies Legislative Council seat on the instructions of the Election Commission. For this, the process of nomination will start from March 15, which will continue till March 19. Polling will be held on April 9 and counting of votes will take place on April 12.

A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy District Election Officer Rakesh Kumar Patel with the office bearers of political parties in the office of the Collectorate.

Deputy District Election Officer informed that elections will be held for 36 seats of MLC including Aligarh-Hathras across the

CM announces ₹10 L for kin of fire victims

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing condolence over death of seven people, including three children, in a fire in Gokulpuri in northeast Delhi in the early hours of Saturday, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a compensation of Rs 10 lakh for the kin of adult deceased, Rs 5 lakh in case of minor deceased, and Rs 25,000 to those whose shanties were gutted.

Following the tragic incident, President Ram Nath Kovind said the news of casualties in the fire accident in Delhi was extremely sad, and offered his condolences to the bereaved families.

"The news of many casualties in the fire accident in Gokulpuri, Delhi is extremely

sad. I express my condolences to all the bereaved families and wish the injured a speedy recovery," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed deep condolences at the deaths in a fire tragedy. "The fire incident in Delhi's Gokulpuri is heart-wrenching. I express my deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in this accident. May God give them the strength to bear this immense sorrow," the PM tweeted in hindi.

The deceased have been identified as Babloo (32), Ranjit (25), Reshma (18), Priyanka (20), and Shahansha (10), of same family and two minors, Roshan (13) and his sister Dipika (9), of another family.

Police said that some people also received minor injuries in the incident.

According to Atul Garg, the Director of Delhi Fire Services (DFS), a call regarding the blaze near pillar number 12 of Gokulpuri village was received at 1.03 AM by the fire department following which 13 fire-tenders were rushed to the spot.

"The fire was finally brought under control around 4 AM. Seven charred bodies were recovered from the site," said Garg adding that around 60 shanties were affected and 30 of them were completely gutted in the fire.

Meanwhile, the police said that the reason behind the fire is yet to be ascertained.

CBSE communicates result of Term-I exams for Class X

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has communicated the results of the Term-I exams for Class 10 to the schools.

The weightage of Term-I and Term-II exams will be decided at the time of declaration of Term-II result and accordingly, final performance will be calculated, the board said.

The board examination for 2022 will be conducted in two terms, CBSE announced last year. The term 1 exams consist of the major subjects and were held from November 30 till December 11 last year.

The final performance of students will be calculated on the basis of the weightage of both term exams which will be decided at the time of declaration of term 2 result, the board said. Last year, the CBSE had announced that the board examinations for 2022 will be conducted in two terms. The Term-I exams for major subjects were held between November 30 and December 11 last year.

In a circular on March 11, the CBSE said, "The board is informing the schools only about the theory performance of their students of Class 10 in a collective manner. Hence, the performance of individual student will not be available on the website,"

"The board has communicated the results of only theory performance of the students since the information about practical, project, internal assessment is already with schools. It has not issued any mark sheet or passing certificate as it was only term 1 result, they said it will be issued after the term 2 only," CBSE said.

"The board has also constituted an online dispute redressal mechanism for students in case of any disputes regarding the Term-I examinations, the online link will stay live till March 26," said CBSE adding that the disputes will be settled after the term 2 exams.

CM posts tweet over Delhi's next LG

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal posted a cryptic tweet on Saturday, asking if Lakshadweep Administrator Praful K Patel is being made the next Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. Anil Bajjal is the current Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. "Is Mr Praful Patel, Administrator of Lakshadweep, being made the next LG of Delhi?" Kejriwal tweeted.

Bajjal, a 1969-batch UT cadre officer, was appointed the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi in December 2016.

Patel, who served as the home minister of Gujarat when Narendra Modi was the chief minister, took charge as Lakshadweep administrator in December 2020.

Delhi Govt approves ₹35.99 cr for renovation of CM office

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has approved a budget of Rs 35.99 crore for the renovation of the offices of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his other Cabinet colleagues at the secretariat.

The Public Works Department (PWD) has been given the task of renovation of these offices located inside the Delhi Secretariat, according to government officials.

The PWD has also issued an order in this connection. "In pursuance of the proposal of Engineer-in-Chief PWD titled renovation of offices of CM and ministers at Delhi Sachivalaya at an estimated cost of Rs 35,99,44,400, I have been directed to convey administrative approval and expenditure sanction for carrying out the above work," PWD Deputy Secretary (Works) Anil Bholia said in the order.

The proposal in this connection was prepared and tabled for approval on February 24 this year. Currently, Kejriwal and his Cabinet, along with other bureaucrats and officials, work from their offices at the Delhi Sachivalaya, which is also known as Players Building, situated near the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, the officials said. The Players Building was built as a hotel to accommodate players of Asian Games 1982. "Now since the administrative approval has been given and expenditure amount has also been sanctioned, the work on the renovation of offices at the secretariat will commence soon. The rendering process will now begin," a PWD official said on Saturday.

In a separate project, the PWD will also build two new multi-storey and environment-friendly buildings near the ITO with an estimated cost of around Rs 2,000 crore.





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05 CNG Sites (License Fee Basis) Vasant Kunj, Rohini, Paschim Vihar and other locations	24 Kiosk Units (License Fee Basis) Pitampura, INA Vikas Sadan, Rajouri Garden and other locations	46 Small Size Residential Plots (Freehold) Rohini
05 Group Housing Plots (Freehold) Rohini	05 ASMPCH* (License Fee Basis) Dwarka and Rohini	20 Mobile Tower Sites (License Fee Basis) Hauz Khas, Jasola, Subhash Nagar and other locations

Registration Start Date
14.03.2022

Closing Date
16.04.2022

***ASMPCH Registration Start Date**
29.03.2022

***ASMPCH Closing Date**
30.04.2022

SCHEDULE OF LIVE BIDDING DATES

19.04.2022	20.04.2022	21.04.2022	03.05.2022
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Sanjeev Kumar, Commissioner (LD-II)



For further details contact: Commissioner (LD-II), Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi-110023

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35 वां
सूरजकुण्ड अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय हस्तशिल्प मेला

19 मार्च से 4 अप्रैल, 2022
सूरजकुण्ड, फरीदाबाद, हरियाणा

रंगों, शिल्प, संस्कृति और संगीत का अनूठा संगम

आइये, भारत और विश्व के पारम्परिक शिल्प, हस्तशिल्प और हैंडलूम की दुनिया का बेहतरीन अनुभव करें। मंत्रमुग्ध करने वाले लोक संगीत की धुनों व प्रसिद्ध कलाकारों की शानदार प्रस्तुतियों का आनंद उठाएं। दुनिया भर के पारम्परिक व्यंजनों के स्वाद का लुत्फ उठाएं। आइये, इस अविस्मरणीय मेले का हिस्सा बनें।

मुख्य आकर्षण

- पारम्परिक शिल्प और हस्तशिल्प कला का प्रदर्शन
- सांस्कृतिक प्रस्तुतियां
- जाने-माने कलाकारों द्वारा चौपाल में शानदार प्रस्तुतियां
- फूड कोर्ट में स्वादिष्ट व्यंजन







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Centre gives reasons for merging 3 MCDs

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Frequent strikes by employees due to non-payment of salary and unequal distribution of assets and liabilities leading to imbalance of income and expenditures of municipal corporations are the reasons to integrate the three entities in Delhi, the Centre has stated. It was this communiqué to the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi that led to the deferment of the announcement of the date of the municipal corporation polls by the State Election Commission.

“There is an urgent need to take corrective measures to ensure efficiency in management of affairs of corporations. The Central Government is examining the matter in totality including the possibility of reorganising the municipal corporations and their integration,” the Ministry of Home Affairs said in the communiqué.

The MHA said the trifurcation of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi in 2011 might have resulted in unequal distribution of assets and liabilities coupled with increase in officers and overhead expenditures leading to inefficiency and imbalance of income and expenditures of corporations. “As a result there have



been frequent incidents of strike by various groups of employees due to non-payment of salary and terminal benefits affecting the delivery of essential municipal services. This in totality has entailed extreme hardship and inconvenience to the citizens of the NCT of Delhi and public at large due to inherent inefficiencies and sluggishness which has perpetrated in the working of the MCD established by amendment act of 2011,” reads the communiqué.

“Since elections to the MCD are due shortly, it would be prudent that the State Election Commission may be apprised that the Central government, in accordance with provisions contained in Article 239 AA of the Constitution and

other provisions connected therewith in the Constitution or in other legal statutes, is contemplating to bring in the aforesaid integration of the three municipal corporations existing in NCT of Delhi”.

“Further, in view of the aforesaid exercise in contemplation, the State Election Commission may also be requested to keep on hold the election process due in the aforesaid Municipal Corporations, as initiation of election process in the existing facts and circumstances will not only lead to an unnecessary and avoidable financial burden on the public exchequer but will also frustrate and result in ‘fate accompli’, of the whole process of integration which is intended to obviate the existing

system which is precipitating extreme hardships on the citizens of NCT of Delhi for the reasons stated above,” the communiqué said.

In 2012, the then Sheila Dikshit government had trifurcated the MCD, which was the second largest civic body in the world after Tokyo Metropolitan Area, into a number of smaller units so that it could serve the people better. Three municipal corporations – the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), North Delhi Municipal Corporation (North DMC), and East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) were created. MCD cumulatively provided services to 97% of Delhi’s population across 272 municipal wards. There were 12 administra-

tive zones under MCD out of which SDMC got four (Centre, South, West, and Najafgarh); North DMC got Rohini, Civil Lines, Karol Bagh, City Sadar Paharganj, Keshavpuram and Narela; and EDMC Shahdara North and Shahdara South.

As per reports, more than seven million work hours were lost due to several strikes by the municipal staff to protest against non-payment of salaries in 2021. The municipal staff went on strike on ten different occasions last year. It was mostly the staff of North Delhi Municipal Corporation that protested against the delayed salaries. The East MCD staff went on a strike just once, on December 23, and the South MCD workers did not stage any protest.

The data shows the longest protest took place between November 29 and December 31 by 1200 employees of North MCD leading to loss of 316,800 work hours. In terms of the participation of employees, the biggest protest was held between January 6 and 21, in which 52,000 employees were involved and led to a loss of 6,656,000 work hours. Civic officials explained that the work hours lost was calculated on the basis of total man days lost multiplied by 8, the number of official working hours.

India, China to find ways to defuse ongoing stand-offs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and China have reaffirmed their commitment to find ways to defuse the ongoing stand-offs at the friction points at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh for the last nearly two years. The two sides also agreed to maintain peace and stability at the border in the interim.

These were the main takeaways from the nearly 12-hour long Corps Commander level talks between India and China at Chushul border meeting point in Ladakh on Friday. It was the 15th round of talks between the two commanders since the face-offs began in May 2020. The 14th round of talks was held on January 12 without a major breakthrough. There were no major expectations from the latest round, sources said here on Saturday.

Chief of 14 Corps Lt General Lt General Anindya Sengupta led the Indian delegation while Major General Yang Lin represented China at the parleys.

In a joint statement issued on Saturday, the two countries said “The 15th round China-India Corps Commander Level Meeting was held at Chushul-

Moldo border meeting point on the Indian side on 11th March 2022. The two sides carried forward their discussions from the previous round held on 12th January 2022 for the resolution of the relevant issues along the LAC in the Western Sector.

They had a detailed exchange of views in this regard, in keeping with the guidance provided by the State Leaders to work for the resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest. They reaffirmed that such a resolution would help restore peace and tranquility along the LAC in the Western Sector and facilitate progress in bilateral relations.

The two sides also agreed to maintain the security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector in the interim. They agreed to maintain dialogue via military and diplomatic channels to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest,” the statement said.

In the 14th round of Corps Commander-level meeting, the two sides agreed to maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels to work out a “mutually acceptable resolution” of the remaining issues of the standoff at eastern

Ladakh.

Ahead of the latest round of talks, sources in the security establishment had said 14 rounds of talks till now have resulted in resolution of North and South Bank of Pangong Tso, Galwan and Gogra Hot Spring areas. Both sides will now focus to achieve resolution of balance friction areas. Recent statements by both sides to find a mutually acceptable solution have been encouraging and positive in nature.”

While troops disengaged from the above mentioned flash points in February last year, friction points now persist at Depsang valley, Demchok and patrolling points in the Hot Springs area.

India has all along maintained that restoration of status quo ante as existing prior to May 2020 be restored for normalizing of bilateral ties with China.

At present, more than 50,000 troops each from both the sides are deployed in the front at the LAC in eastern Ladakh leading to tension.

In fact, the frontline troops did not retreat to their bases during the winter months for the second year in a row given the situation at the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

Bypolls in four States on April 12

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The bypolls to one Lok Sabha seat and four Assembly constituencies across four States will be held on April 12. The Election Commission said on Saturday that the counting of votes will take place on April 16.

With the presidential election due later this year, the bypolls will also fill up the vacancies in the electoral college which elects the president.

The Asansol parliamentary seat in West Bengal fell vacant following the resignation of BJP lawmaker Babul Supriyo, who joined the Trinamool Congress.

By-elections will also be held for Ballygunge in West Bengal, Khairagarh in Chhattisgarh, Bochahan in Bihar and Maharashtra’s Kolhapur North.

The notification for the five by-polls will be issued on March 17.

NIA arrests six for helping Rohingyas enter India illegally

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested six persons who were allegedly part of a human trafficking syndicate involved in facilitating illegal entry of Rohingya Muslims into India.

The network had been operating in the border areas of Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya as well as other parts of the country. The agency also conducted searches at multiple locations in Assam, Meghalaya and Karnataka, the NIA said in a statement.

“The case pertains to illegal trafficking of Rohingya Muslims into the Indian territory to re-settle them on the basis of forged Indian identity documents,” the NIA said in its statement.

The NIA had registered the case on December 27 last year under Indian Penal Code

Sections relating to human trafficking.

The agency said the mastermind of the racket Kumkum Ahmed Choudhury alias K K Ahmed Choudhury Asiqul Ahmed was operating this illegal trafficking network from Bengaluru. Other active members of this racket are spread in various parts of the country.

The six arrested are Kumkum Ahmed Choudhury of Cachar, Assam (presently residing in Bengaluru), Sahalam Laskar alias Alam Laskar, Ahiya Ahmed Choudhury, Jamaluddin Ahmed Choudhury (all from Cachar), Wanbajang Suting of East Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya

During the searches, a large number of incriminating documents, articles and digital devices were seized and further investigation in the case is continuing, it added.

Plane overshoots runway in Jabalpur, probe begins

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An Alliance Air flight (ATR-72-600) from Delhi carrying 55 passengers overshoot the runway while landing at the Jabalpur airport on Saturday afternoon. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has started an investigation into the incident.

According to the airline, 55 passengers and five crew members on board safely disembarked after the incident without any injuries. Jabalpur Airport director Kusum Das said that operations at the airport have been suspended for four to five hours due to this incident.

According to officials, the aircraft overshoot the runway which is known as runway excursion in aviation parlance. This occurs when the flight

exits the runway while taking off or landing. The Delhi-Jabalpur flight was operated using an ATR-72 aircraft, they mentioned. It departed from Delhi at around 11.30 AM and landed in Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh at around 1.15 PM.

In a statement, Alliance Air said that the flight overran the runway by 10 metres. “During the operation of Alliance Air flight 91 691 from Delhi to Jabalpur on 12th March 2022, Alliance Air aircraft shot off the runway by 10 mtrs. We are grateful that all passengers and crew onboard the flight are safe.

Our first priority is to evacuate passengers without compromising their safety. While we follow laid down policies/procedures as per the regulatory authorities and have strict checks in place – both pre and post-flight operations in order

to ensure complete safety of our passengers & crew, we regret the unfortunate incident,” the airline said.

“We have taken strict note of the incident and the cockpit crew have been de-rostered. A thorough investigation has been initiated. The findings of the same shall be shared with the regulatory authorities and we shall ensure that all required corrective actions are put in place,” Alliance Air said.

Last month, an Alliance Air flight flew from Mumbai to Gujarat’s Bhuj without the engine cover, which fell off on the runway of the Mumbai airport. There was no threat to the safety of the passengers. The airport at Dumna, where the incident took place, is located around 21 km from Jabalpur city.

SSB organises six-day workshop on gender sensitisation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) organised a six-day workshop on gender sensitisation as part of the weeklong celebrations to mark the International Women’s Day.

The workshop themed “Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow” concluded on Saturday at the SSB headquarters here and was attended by 50 officers of the Force from across the country.

“The aim of the workshop was to make the participants of SSB sensitive to gender issues to meet the end goal of strengthening positive values that support women and their rights in traditionally male-dominated organizations,” the SSB said in a statement.

The whole workshop was divided into six modules (51 periods) and it covered all the dimensions of gender sensitization through lecture interactions, experimental learning,

experience sharing, role play, case studies, quiz and focussed group discussions, it said.

Faculty members from prestigious institutions like AIIMS, Delhi University, Jamia Milia Islamia University, JNU, IIT Delhi, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, Indian Law Institute, National Law University and eight officers from Delhi Judicial Services delivered lectures and shared their experiences during the workshop.

Justice Gita Mittal, former Chief Justice, Jammu and Kashmir High Court was the chief guest during the closing ceremony. She is the first woman judge to serve in that capacity.

She asked all the participants to inculcate qualities like hard work, honesty, and humility in their day-to-day life and also in their professional lives.

ITBP wives body hold spl felicitation ceremony at HQ

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commemorating the 75th anniversary of Independence, the Himveer Wives Welfare Association (HAWA) the welfare arm of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) organised a special felicitation ceremony at its headquarters here and honoured 12 Veer Naris (martyrs’ widows) with Smart phones.

Chairperson of HWWA, Ritu Arora felicitated the wives of the martyrs.

Addressing the gathering, Arora said any kind of complaints can be sent through these smart phones to the digital grievance redressal mechanism which will be taken up promptly.

Smartphones will be given to every Veer Nari of the Force in the coming days and the HWWA will always be supporting the martyr families, she said. A presentation was made on ‘Digital Literacy’ and an online debate competition based on women empowerment was organized for the Force’s families. Cash prizes and certificates were given to the members/ family members who secured the top three positions in the debate.

The event was telecast live on digital channels of the HWWA and ITBP which were viewed live by the families and personnel of the ITBP.

HWWA is a welfare organization dedicated to the families of ITBP personnel.

India urges all nations to ban biological weapons

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has urged all the nations to abide with pacts banning biological weapons and respect sovereignty and integrity of states. This plea came at a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) called by Russia to discuss alleged presence of biological laboratories in Ukraine.

Making his country’s stand clear at the session on late Friday, Permanent Representative of India to UN T S Tirumurti said matters relating to obligations under the Biological and

Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) should be addressed through consultation and cooperation between the parties concerned. He also stressed the need for sustained dialogue to end the ongoing war.

Russia requested for the Security Council meeting followed a US rejection of Russian accusations that Ukraine is operating chemical and biological labs with American support.

“We have repeatedly expressed serious concern over the ongoing situation in Ukraine,” Tirumurti said on Friday. Stating that India has noted the recent statements by member states regarding biological activities, he said “In this context, we would like to underline the importance attached by India to the Biological and Toxin Weapons

Convention (BTWC) as a key global and non-discriminatory disarmament Convention, prohibiting an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.” He also stressed that it is important to ensure full and effective implementation of

the BTWC in letter and spirit.

Russian Permanent Representative Vassily Nebenzia said in the Council that “we discovered truly shocking facts of emergency cleanup by the Kyiv regime of traces of a military biological programme being implemented by Kyiv with support by the US Ministry of Defense.”

He said Russia’s Ministry of Defence has documents confirming that on the territory of Ukraine there was a network of 30 bio labs where “very dangerous biological experiments were being conducted aimed at strengthening pathogenic qualities of plague, anthrax, cholera and other lethal diseases using synthetic biology.”

Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo told the Council that Russian armed



forces are pursuing their offensive operations and laying siege

to several cities in the south, east and north of the country.

She said the situation is particularly alarming in Mariupol, Kharkiv, Sumy and Chernihiv, where there is the shelling of residential areas and civilian infrastructure, resulting in an increasing number of civilians killed and injured.

“Directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects, as well as so-called area bombardment in towns and villages, are also prohibited under international law and may amount to war crimes,” she said.

Tirumurti said India sincerely hopes the “ongoing direct negotiations between Russia and Ukraine would lead to cessation of hostilities. “There is no other alternative except the path of diplomacy and dialogue. The dire humanitarian situation needs immediate and urgent attention,” he said.

Rajya Sabha to get 19 hours of additional time for business over schedule

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the Budget session of Parliament resumes on Monday, following a break, with pre-Covid timings, the Rajya Sabha will get 19 hours of additional time for business over the earlier schedule. Both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha will sit simultaneously from 11 am in view of the decline in Covid-19 cases.

The Rajya Sabha will sit from 11:00 am till 6:00 pm during the scheduled 19 sittings, while it sat from 10:00 am till 3:00 pm during the first part of this session.

With this increase in sitting time of one hour per sitting, Rajya Sabha will get 64 hours 30 minutes for transacting the government’s legislative busi-

ness and taking up issues of public importance during the second part of the session.

The House will have four days for Private Member’s business. Question Hour will continue to be for one hour while the Zero Hour, which was curtailed to half an hour during the first part, will now be for full one hour per sitting. The first part of this Budget session concluded on February 11, 2022 and had a total of 10 sittings. The House reporting productivity was 101.40 per cent.

The Budget Session is set to resume after a recess of one month.



During the 30-day recess after the first part of Budget Session, the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRSCs) examined the demands for grants of various ministries and departments. Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu is likely to give an account of the working during this recess of the 8 DRSCs of Rajya Sabha in the House on Monday.

‘India water Pitch-Pilot-Scale Startup Challenge’ launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Saturday launched the ‘India WaterPitch-Pilot-Scale Startup Challenge’, under which the government will select 100 start-ups and they will be provided with Rs 20 lakh each as funding support as well as mentorship.

According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the new initiative aims at empowering start-ups in the water sector to grow through innovation and design that will drive sustainable economic growth and generate employment opportunities.

The initiative was launched at an event here by Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri under the ministry’s Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and

Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0.

Puri emphasised on the important role being played by the start-ups and assured them of full and active support from the government, according to a statement from the ministry. “Start-ups are the flavour of the season, as the number of ‘unicorns’ in the country has jumped, by leaps and bounds,” the minister said.

He said that the success of the government’s schemes hinges, to a large extent, to the role and contribution of stakeholders and others in the ecosystem, adding that the stakeholders’ responses in the water sector are crucial for formulating government programmes. Puri said AMRUT 2.0 is a transformative and unique scheme, with a huge outlay of over Rs 2.77 lakh crore. He said that the scheme



will ensure water security in the country, reduce its transportation costs, reduce groundwater contamination, and increase water utilisation capacity.

The Union minister also said that for the success of the mission, start-ups will have to

play a meaningful role by bringing in innovative ideas, technology, novel delivery mechanisms, etc.

At the event, several start-ups from various parts of the country engaged in water gave their presentations with inno-

vative ideas and cutting edge technologies, the statement mentioned. The minister and other officials also saw the exhibition on the water sector, organised by various stakeholders engaged in water management, it added.

Russia strikes near Ukraine's Capital

Mosque hit

AP ■ LIVV

Russian forces pounding the port city of Mariupol shelled a mosque sheltering more than 80 people, including children, the Ukrainian government said Saturday as fighting also raged on the outskirts of the capital, Kyiv.

There was no immediate word of casualties from the shelling of the mosque. Mariupol has seen some of the greatest misery from Russia's war in Ukraine as unceasing barrages have thwarted repeated attempts to bring in food and water and to evacuate trapped civilians.

The Ukrainian Embassy in Turkey said that a group of 86 Turkish nationals, including 34 children, were among the people who had sought safety in the mosque of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent and his wife Roksolana.

Elsewhere, air raid sirens rang out across the capital region and artillery barrages sent residents scurrying for shelter.

Fighting erupted in multiple areas around Kyiv.

Russia's slow, grinding apparent attempt to encircle the city and the bombardment of other population centers with artillery and air strikes mirror tactics that Russian forces have previously used in other campaigns, notably in Syria and Chechnya, to crush armed resistance.

Artillery pounded Kyiv's northwestern outskirts. To the city's southwest, two columns of

smoke - one black and one white -- rose in the town of Vaskiyv after a strike on an ammunition depot.

The strike on the depot caused hundreds of small explosions from detonating ammunition.

As of Friday, the death toll in Mariupol passed 1,500 during 12 days of attack, the mayor's office said.

A strike on a maternity hospital in the city of 446,000 this week that killed three people sparked international outrage and war-crime allegations.

The ongoing bombardment forced crews to stop digging trenches for mass graves, so the "dead aren't even being buried," the mayor said.

An Associated Press photographer captured the moment when a tank appeared to fire directly on an apartment building, enveloping one side in a billowing orange fireball.

Russian forces have hit at least two dozen hospitals and medical facilities since they invaded Ukraine on February 24, according to the World Health Organisation. Ukrainian officials reported Saturday that heavy artillery damaged a cancer hospital and several residential buildings in Mykolaiv, a city 489 kilometers (304 miles) west of Mariupol.

The hospital's head doctor, Maksim Beznosenko, said several hundred patients were in the facility during the attack but no one was killed.

The invading Russian forces have struggled far more than expected against determined Ukrainian fighters.

But Russia's stronger military threatens to grind down

the defending forces, despite an ongoing flow of weapons and other assistance from the West for Ukraine's westward-looking, democratically elected government.

The conflict has already sent 2.5 million people fleeing the country. Thousands of soldiers on both sides are believed to have been killed along with many Ukrainian civilians.

On the ground, the Kremlin's forces appeared to be trying to regroup and regain momentum after encountering tough resistance and amassing heavy losses over the past two weeks.

Britain's Ministry of Defense said Russia is trying to reset and 're-posture' its troops, gearing up for operations against Kyiv.

"It's ugly already, but it's going to get worse," said Nick Reynolds, a warfare analyst at Royal United Services Institute, a British think tank.

Russian forces were blockading Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, even as efforts have been made to create new humanitarian corridors around it and other urban centers so aid can get in and residents can get out.

Ukraine's emergency services reported Saturday that the bodies of five people - two women, a man and two children - were pulled from an apartment building that was struck by shelling in Kharkiv. The Russians' also stepped up attacks on Mykolaiv, located 470 kilometers (292 miles) south of Kyiv, in an attempt to encircle the city.

As part of a multi-front attack on the capital, the



Russians' push from the north-east appeared to be advancing, a US defense official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to give the US assessment of the fight.

Combat units were moved up from the rear as the forces advanced to within 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) of Kyiv.

New commercial satellite images appeared to capture artillery firing on residential areas that stood between the Russians and the capital.

The images from Maxar Technologies showed muzzle flashes and smoke from big guns, as well as impact craters and burning homes in the town of Moschun, 33 kilometers (20.5 miles) from Kyiv, the company said.

Residents in a devastated village east of the capital climbed over toppled walls and flapping metal strips in the remnants of a pool hall, restaurant and theater freshly blown apart by Russian bombs.

With temperatures sinking below freezing, villagers quickly spread plastic wrap or nailed plywood over blown-out

windows of their homes.

Russian President Vladimir Putin "created this mess, thinking he will be in charge here," 62-year-old Ivan Merzyk said.

He added: "We are not going away." On the economic and political front, the US and its allies moved to further isolate and sanction the Kremlin. President Joe Biden announced that the U.S. will dramatically downgrade its trade status with Russia and ban imports of Russian seafood, alcohol and diamonds.

The move to revoke Russia's "most favoured nation" status was taken in coordination with the European Union and Group of Seven countries.

"The free world is coming together to confront Putin," Biden said.

With the invasion in its 16th day, Putin said Friday that there had been "certain positive developments" in ongoing talks between Russian and Ukrainian negotiators. He gave no details.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy appeared on video to encourage his peo-

ple to keep fighting.

"It's impossible to say how many days we will still need to free our land, but it is possible to say that we will do it," he said from Kyiv.

Zelenskyy said authorities were working on establishing 12 humanitarian corridors and trying to ensure food, medicine and other urgently needed basics get to people across the country.

He also accused Russia of kidnapping the mayor of one city, Melitopol, calling the abduction "a new stage of terror." The Biden administration had warned before the invasion of Russian plans to detain and kill targeted people in Ukraine. Zelenskyy himself is a likely top target.

American defense officials said Russian pilots are averaging 200 sorties a day, compared with five to 10 for Ukrainian forces, which are focusing more on surface-to-air missiles, rocket-propelled grenades and drones to take out Russian aircraft. The US also said Russia has launched nearly 810 missiles into Ukraine.

Croatia criticises NATO after crash of Russian-made drone

AP ■ ZAGREB

Croatian officials criticized NATO on Saturday for what they said was its slow reaction to a military drone that apparently flew all the way from the Ukrainian war zone over several NATO member states, before crashing in an urban zone of the Croatian capital.

The Russian-made unmanned aircraft crossed Romania and Hungary before entering Croatia and slamming late Thursday into a field near a student dormitory. Some 40 parked cars were damaged but no one was injured after a loud blast.

NATO said the alliance's integrated air and missile defense had tracked the object's flight path. But the Croatian prime minister said the country's authorities were not informed and that NATO reacted only after question were posed by journalists.

"We cannot tolerate this situation, nor should it have ever happened," Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said while visiting the crash site. "This was a pure and clear threat and both NATO and the EU should have reacted," he said. "We will work to raise the readiness not only of us but of others as well."

Plenkovic said a Soviet-era Tu-141 "Strizh" reconnaissance drone flew for over 40 minutes over Hungary and six to seven minutes over Croatia before crashing.

Moved 12,000 US troops along borders with Russia but not fighting WWII in Ukraine: Biden

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden said he has moved 12,000 troops along the borders with Russia, such as Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Romania while asserting that Vladimir Putin will not be victorious in the war he has waged against Ukraine. Addressing members of the House Democratic Caucus on Friday, Biden stressed over "not fighting a third World War in Ukraine" but avowed sending an "unmistakable message that we will defend every inch of NATO territory." The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is a group of 30 North American and European nations. According to NATO, its purpose "is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means." Biden said the people of Ukraine have demonstrated remarkable bravery and courage in the face of a Russian military offensive but the security assistance that the US provides has been critical in their defence. "And as we provide support to Ukraine, we're going to continue to stand together with our allies in Europe and send an unmistakable message that we will defend every inch of NATO territory with a united galvanized NATO," the US president said.

Concern grows over traffickers targeting Ukrainian refugees

AP ■ SIRET

One man was detained in Poland suspected of raping a 19-year-old refugee he'd lured with offers of shelter after she fled war-torn Ukraine. Another was overheard promising work and a room to a 16-year-old girl before authorities intervened.

Another case inside a refugee camp at Poland's Medyka border, raised suspicions when a man was offering help only to women and children.

When questioned by police, he changed his story.

As millions of women and children flee across Ukraine's borders in the face of Russian aggression, concerns are growing over how to protect the most vulnerable refugees from being targeted by human traffickers or becoming victims of other forms of exploitation.

"Obviously all the refugees are women and children," said Joung-ah Ghedini-Williams, the UNHCR's head of global communications, who has visited borders in Romania, Poland and Moldova.

"You have to worry about any potential risks for trafficking - but also exploitation, and sexual exploitation and abuse. These are the kinds of situations that people like traffickers



ers ... look to take advantage of," she said.

The UN refugee agency says more than 2.5 million people, including more than a million children, have already fled war-torn Ukraine in what has become an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Europe and its fastest exodus since World War II.

In countries throughout Europe, including the border nations of Romania, Poland, Hungary, Moldova and Slovakia, private citizens and volunteers have been greeting

and offering help to those whose lives have been shattered by war. From free shelter to free transport to work opportunities and other forms of assistance - help isn't far away.

But neither are the risks.

Police in Wroclaw, Poland, said Thursday they detained a 49-year-old suspect on rape charges after he allegedly assaulted a 19-year-old Ukrainian refugee he lured with offers of help over the internet.

The suspect could face up to 12 years in prison for the

"brutal crime," authorities said.

"He met the girl by offering his help via an internet portal," police said in a statement. "She escaped from war-torn Ukraine, did not speak Polish. She trusted a man who promised to help and shelter her. Unfortunately, all this turned out to be deceitful manipulation."

Police in Berlin warned women and children in a post on social media in Ukrainian and Russian against accepting offers of overnight stays, and urged them to report anything

suspicious.

Tamara Barnett, director of operations at the Human Trafficking Foundation, a UK-based charity which grew out of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking, said that such a rapid, mass displacement of people could be a "recipe for disaster."

"When you've suddenly got a huge cohort of really vulnerable people who need money and assistance immediately," she said, "it's sort of a breeding ground for exploitative situations and sexual exploitation. When I saw all these volunteers offering their houses ... that flagged a worry in my head."

The Migration Data Portal notes that humanitarian crises such as those associated with conflicts "can exacerbate pre-existing trafficking trends and give rise to new ones" and that traffickers can thrive on "the inability of families and communities to protect themselves and their children."

Security officials in Romania and Poland told The Associated Press that plain-clothed intelligence officers were on the lookout for criminal elements. In the Romanian border town of Siret, authorities said men offering free rides to women have been sent

away.

Human trafficking is a grave human rights violation and can involve a wide range of exploitative roles.

From sexual exploitation - such as prostitution - to forced labour, from domestic slavery to organ removal, and forced criminality, it is often inflicted by traffickers through coercion and abuse of power.

A 2020 human trafficking report by the European Commission, the EU's executive branch, estimates the annual global profit from the crime is 29.4 billion euros (USD 32 billion).

It says that sexual exploitation is the most common form of human trafficking in the 27-nation bloc and that nearly three-quarters of all victims are female, with almost every fourth victim a child.

Madalina Mocan, committee director at ProTECT, an organisation that brings together 21 anti-trafficking groups, said there are "already worrying signs," with some refugees being offered shelter in exchange for services such as cleaning and babysitting, which could lead to exploitation.

"There will be attempts of traffickers trying to take victims from Ukraine across the border. Women and children

are vulnerable, especially those that do not have connections - family, friends, other networks of support," she said, adding that continued conflict will mean "more and more vulnerable people" reaching the borders.

At the train station in the Hungarian border town of Zahony, 25-year-old Dayrina Kneziva arrived from Kyiv with her childhood friend. Fleeing a war zone, Kneziva said, left them little time to consider other potential dangers.

"When you compare ... You just choose what will be less dangerous," said Kneziva, who hopes to make it to Slovakia's capital of Bratislava with her friend. "When you leave in a hurry, you just don't think about other things."

A large proportion of the refugees arriving in the border countries want to move on to friends or family elsewhere in Europe and many are relying on strangers to reach their destinations.

"The people who are leaving Ukraine are under emotional stress, trauma, fear, confusion," said Cristina Minculescu, a psychologist at Next Steps Romania who provides support to trafficking victims.

"It's not just human traf-

ficking, there is a risk of abduction, rape ... Their vulnerabilities being exploited in different forms."

At Romania's Siret border after a five-day car journey from the bombed historical city of Chernihiv, 44-year-old Iryna Pyppenko waited inside a tent with her two children, sheltering from the cold.

She said a friend in Berlin who is looking for accommodation for her has warned her to beware of possibly nefarious offers.

"She told me there are many, very dangerous propositions," said Pyppenko, whose husband and parents stayed behind in Ukraine.

"She told me that I have to communicate only with official people and believe only the information they give me." Ionut Epureanu, the chief police commissioner of Suceava county, told the AP at the Siret border that police are working closely with the country's national agency against human trafficking and other law enforcement to try to prevent crimes. "We are trying to make a control for every vehicle leaving the area," he said. "A hundred people making transport have good intentions, but it's enough to be one that isn't ... and tragedy can come."

Pak court charges 89 people in lynching of Sri Lankan man

PTI ■ LAHORE

A Pakistani anti-terrorism court on Saturday charged 89 people for alleged involvement in the lynching of a Sri Lankan citizen in its Punjab province in December last year.

A mob of over 800 men including supporters of hard-line Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) allegedly attacked a garment factory and lynched its general manager Priyantha Kumara, 47, and burned his body over allegations of blasphemy on December 3, 2021, in Sialkot district, some 100 kms from provincial capital Lahore.

Some factory employees had accused Kumara of tearing a poster of TLP inscribed with Islamic verses during his inspection of machines in the factory.

"Anti-Terrorism Court Lahore judge Natasha Nasim indicted 89 suspects involved in lynching and burning

Kumara on the allegations of blasphemy during a hearing at the Kot Lakhpat jail here on Saturday," a court official told PTI after the hearing.

He said the judge after charge-sheeting the suspects ordered the prosecutors to present witnesses in the court on March 14.

The official further said that the suspects denied the charges of their involvement in the crime.

Owing to security concerns the trial is being held in the jail.

The suspects' role has been identified through video footages.

After the incident, nearly 200 suspects were taken into custody but no evidence of involvement of 110 people could be produced, thus they were not nominated in the FIR and subsequently released.

The local business community has handed over a donation of USD 100,000 to the wife of Kumara and the fac-

tory owner says his salary of USD 1,650 is also given to his family every month.

Surprisingly neither the federal nor Punjab government has announced any compensation package for the victim's family so far.

Kumara, was working as general manager in Rajko Industries (dealing in garments) in Sialkot district for the last seven years.

The incident sparked outrage across Pakistan with all sections of society condemning it and calling for the culprits to be given exemplary punishment.

The ATC Gujranwala earlier had awarded one-year imprisonment to a man for 'justifying' the lynching of Kumara on his YouTube channel. Convict Muhammad Adnan, 27, of Sialkot, had uploaded a video on his YouTube channel about the murder of Priyantha and justified the killing and burning of the body.

Judge: Trump delays on rape accuser's claims in 'bad faith'

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Former President Donald Trump's legal moves aimed at delaying a rape accuser's defamation claims from reaching trial are in bad faith and, so far, succeeding, a judge said in a decision released on Friday as he rejected an attempt by Trump to countersue.

E. Jean Carroll's single claim of defamation "could have been tried and decided - one way or the other - long ago," US District Judge Lewis A. Kaplan said.

In a written ruling dated Thursday but publicly filed Friday, Kaplan cited delays caused by Trump's legal tactics as he rejected the former president's attempt to countersue Carroll under a law sometimes used to challenge defamation lawsuits that unfairly make claims.

A countersuit could have been filed 14 months ago, Kaplan wrote.

"The record convinces this Court that the defendant's lit-

igation tactics, whatever their intent, have delayed the case to an extent that readily could have been far less," the judge wrote.

Trump's attorney, Alina Habba, responded to a message seeking comment with an email saying, "While we are disappointed with the Court's decision today, we eagerly look forward to litigating this action and proving at trial that the plaintiff's claims have absolutely no basis in law or in fact."

Roberta Kaplan, a lawyer for Carroll, said of the judge's decision:

"My client E. Jean Carroll and I could not agree more." Carroll, a longtime advice columnist for Elle magazine, wrote in a June 2019 book that Trump raped her in the mid-1990s in an upscale Manhattan department store.

Trump denied it and questioned Carroll's credibility and motivations.

Judge Kaplan wrote of litigation delays, saying Trump "attempted

Thousands of Albanians protest price hike, accuse Government

AP ■ TIRANA

Thousands of Albanians are holding a protest Saturday in the capital Tirana against recent price hikes that authorities blame on the war in Ukraine.

Albanians from all around the country first gathered at the main Skanderbeg Square before marching in front of Prime Minister Edi Rama's office with banners and antigovernment slogans.

Many people took the floor in the fourth day of protest asking the government to tackle a recent significant hike in the price of fuel and other food items. After fuel prices rose 50% last week, two days ago, Rama's government imposed price controls on fuel, and has urged Albanians to use their cars less. Fuel suppliers' profit margins have been frozen in the coming months, while retail prices will be set daily and gas stations that charge more will be closed.

CANCELLATION OF NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS	
No. SSA/Esstt/KGBV-Utensile/370/2021/9432	Date: 11.03.2022
The Notice inviting e-tender vide (i) No. SSA/Esstt/KGBV-Utensile/370/2021/7945 Date: 15.12.2021 for Utensil (ii) No. SSA/MDMS/Plates & Glass / 331 / 2021 / 7771 Date: 08.12.2021 for Stainless Steel Plates and Stainless Steel Glass for Mid Day Meal are hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons.	
Janasanyog /CF/3723/21	Sd/-Mission Director, SSA, Assam Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

Notice Inviting Re-e-Tender	
No.SSA/Esstt/KGBV-Utensile/370/2021/9431	Date : 11.03.2022
Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites re-tender through e-Tendering process from Manufacturer/Authorized dealer of utensil for supply of Utensil. To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal https://assamtenders.gov.in by themselves. The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website https://assamtenders.gov.in , with proof of payment of non refundable tender processing fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/ Scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.	
Janasanyog/CF/3720/21	Sd/-Mission Director, SSA, Assam Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

"The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO's) apex decision making body Central Board of Trustees has decided to provide 8.1 per cent rate of interest on Employees Provident Fund (EPF) for 2021-22 in its meeting held on

The COVID-19 pandemic has strained EPFO's earnings. EPFO delayed payments for 2019-20 and paid the inter-

A member of the CBT said the interest rate setting reflects the state of the Indian economy and the difficulty the EPFO faces in generating returns

EPFO issued directions to field offices to credit the interest income at 8.5 per cent for 2020-21 into the subscribers' accounts.

The rate of interest was slightly higher at 8.8 per cent in 2015-16. It had given 8.75 per cent rate of interest in 2013-14 as well as 2014-15, higher than the 8.5 per cent for 2012-13.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

"We have taken a number of steps to promote growth of the technical textile sector. There has been a very good response for the PLI scheme. "As many as 67 companies

It is used in different areas such as construction, road, railways, healthcare, automobile, and agriculture. The market size of the sector in India is about USD 20 billion. The global market size is about USD 260 billion.

"Huge scope is there to tap the global market in the sector," she said.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

the restriction on the business generating activities planned under the Bank's Digital 2.0 programme, vide its letter dated March 11, 2022," HDFC Bank said in a statement.

In December 2020, the RBI had barred HDFC Bank from issuing new cards and launching new digital initiatives after repeated instances of technological outages at the

Following remedial action from HDFC Bank, the regulator partially lifted the ban on card issuances last year in August.

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Joint Venture and Shareholders' Agreement (JVSHA) for the Trincomalee Power Company Limited (TPCL) -- a joint venture between National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)

"Similarly, there is significant interest among the private sector on both sides for cooperation in renewable energy

In recent months, the public has experienced a shortage of many essentials due to the foreign exchange crisis. Import restrictions to save dollars have threatened cooking gas and fuel supplies in addition to the looming power cuts.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and Surya Kant gave three months to the Centre to examine if there are any deviations between the rules drawn up by the states and those framed by the Centre in 2016, and to place the report

Homebuyers would also have more faith in developers across the spectrum, and even in under-construction projects, the Colliers India CEO said.

PTI ■ DUBAI

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General public that Mrs. Meena is the owner of Entire third floor, with roof rights "said floor" part of Property bearing RZF-375, area measuring 100 sq. Yds, out of Khasra No. 606, Situated in the revenue estate of Village Narisapur colony Sadh Nagar II, Palam Colony New Delhi "Said property" by virtue of Gift Deed dated 04.02.2002 executed by Mrs. Sarla Devi in favour of Mrs. Meena, duly registered as Doc No. 1102, dated 12.02.2002 at District Registrar's Office mentioned above. In order to mortgage the said floor to our client Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited, if anybody has any objections upon the said property, and its ownership it's Title / Mortgage etc., the kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
1102, 1st Floor, 23, Shwari Marg, Near Mo Nagar, B. Dethi-110014, New Delhi-110014, India.
E-mail: advocates@kumaradvocates.com

"With the signing of this CEPA agreement, there will be further cooperation and collaboration between steel manufacturers of both countries and this will be a win-win (sit-

He said earlier India was importing a specific type of steel. "Now, we have introduced a PLI (Production Linked Incentives) scheme, for which this budget has provided about Rs 6,322 crore," Singh said.

Addressing the perception of cartelisation in the steel industry, the minister said steel is a deregulated sector in which as of now 86 per cent was in the private sector and only 14 per cent in the government sector.

Take notice that, in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General public that Mrs.
Ranjit Kaur Vs. Dr. Sunderpal Rai Singh is the owner
of A Back side portion of Property No. WZ-75, Plot No.
80-69, Facing Main Road, Village, Khairpur,
District (Portion of measuring 5.77 Sq. Yds. Total area
measuring 41.77 Sq. Yds. out of, Area No. 32, Killar
No. 19, Situated in the area of Village, Khaira, in the
Taluka of Haryana District of Rohtak.

The General Power of Attorney dated 25.05.2005 by which
persons are hereby informed that Mr. Mohammad
Usman & Mrs. Sabra Begum are purchasing this
property from Mrs. Ranjit Kaur Vs. Dr. Sunderpal Rai
Singh as a realty. As per the said Power of Attorney
Futority India Home Finance Company Ltd to take a
loan for the same, if anybody has any charges
interfere in the said property or any kind of dispute
between the parties, please contact the lawyer at the
mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Mrs. Prasoon Latia, Advocate,
SG Associates (Law Firm)
Unit No. Basement, Plot No. 178,
Sector 22, Gurgaon - 122001
E-Mail: sgassociates1@gmail.com
Ph: 7011172764, 8130200837

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE FOR
MISCELLANEOUS WORK
Srl. No. (1) Tender No. SECR-HQ-
Engg-BL-21-22-15
Work : Replacement of existing
plate girders with new steel plate
girder (Re-girding work) at Bridge
No. 250 UP (2x40') between SKS-
DKS- station in the jurisdiction of
SSE/Bridge/Gondia in Nagpur
Division. **Tender Value :** ₹
31,74,227.04. **EMD :** ₹ 63,500.00
Bidding Start Date : 17.03.2022
Tender closing date Time : 16:30
hrs on 31.03.2022.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

"Our aspirations for India are not just related to products, they are related to running global businesses out of India. We are running complete businesses out of India. "We are disproportionately invested in India, and that trend will continue," Naraven said.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI


Online accommodation platform Airbnb on Saturday announced the opening of a new technology hub in Bengaluru to help it serve its "global community". The Bengaluru technology hub will aim to create local, skilled jobs, with plans for the centre to cater to a few hundred people in the initial phases, followed by an expanded footprint in the future, the company said in a statement. "India is an incredibly important market for Airbnb. The opening of this technology hub will further our ongoing investment in the nation and is testament to our long-term vision for growing our business locally into the future," Airbnb Co-Founder and Chief Strategy Officer Nathan Blecharczyk said. "The tech hub will bolster our ability to serve our global community, while also providing fresh opportunities, he said.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has also issued 15 notices against e-commerce entities and sellers selling non-standard pressure cookers online. The Authority has also issued safety notice alerting consumers against buying household goods like electric

The CCPA has decided to take up cases involving sale or offering for sale goods which violate compulsory standards to prevent unfair trade practice and to protect, promote

already been issued with respect to such violations. The cases have also been forwarded to BIS for taking necessary action under the BIS Act, 2016," the statement said.

Notice Inviting Re-e-Tender	
No.SS/AMDMS/Plates & Glass/331/2021/9433	Date: 11.03.2022
<p>Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhiyan Mission cum State Nodal Officer-MDM, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites re-tender through e-Tendering process from manufacturer of Steel Utensil/ authorized dealer of the manufacturer / supplier of Steel Utensil for supply of Stainless Steel Plates and Stainless Steel Glass for Mid Day Meal.</p> <p>To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal https://assamtenders.gov.in by themselves.</p> <p>The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website https://assamtenders.gov.in, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhiyan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.</p>	
	Sd/-Mission Director, SSA, Assam cum State Nodal Officer-MDM Kahilipara, Guwahati-19
Janasanyog/CF/3717/21	

PUBLIC SUMMONS

IN THE AHMEDABAD CITY CIVIL COURT COURT AT AHMEDABAD OF CIVIL SUIT NO. 1523 of 2018

Plaintiff Advocate :	Prashant R. Trivedi	Exh. 20
Plaintiff :	TIRUPATI FOAM LIMITED	
	V/s	
Defendant :	1) Ms. MONIKA SINGH	
	SOLE PROPRIETOR OF DREAMWORLD INDUSTRIES	
	Address - 8-B, DDAA FLAT, RAMPURA, DELHI-100035	

Suit Valued Rs. 300/-

Whereas you the Defendant is hereby informed you that the summons issued against you by this court Through bailiff and varies mode of service has returned unserved subsequently, and as your current whereabouts are unknown, Hence in the consequence Plaintiff advocate is given application Vide **Exh.19** and Court ordered on it therefor this summons is published.


The plaintiff therefore prays as under:

A. The Hon'ble Court be pleased to restrain the defendant by its proprietor, servant, agents, dealers, distributors and all other person connected with them in any manners may please be restrained by the perpetual order and injunction of the Hon'ble court from adopting and/or using and or selling the goods under the impugned trade mark "Dream World Mattress" and/or carrying on business of any type of pillow cushion, mattress, foam mattress relating there to under the impugned trademark " Dream World mattress" and/or any other identical and/or deceptively similar trademark containing and consisting of the word "Sweet Dream" in any manner in respect of the business of Flexible polyurethane foam and allied goods/products all type of mattresses, pillow, bolsters, back cushion etc., home product and sheet, roll etc. industries product thereof and hereby infringing the statutory rights of registration in the registered trademark "Sweet Dream" of the plaintiff.

Therefore, you the Defendants are hereby summoned to appear in this court in person or by a pleader duly instructed, and able to answer all material question — relating to the suit, or who shall be accompanied by some person able answer all such question on the day of **07/04 / 2022** at 11-00 O' Clock in the forenoon to answer the claim, and as the day fixed for you appearance is appointed for the final disposal of the suit, you must be prepared to produce on that day all the witnesses upon whose evidence and all the documents upon which you intend to rely in support of your defence.

Take notice that, in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given Under my hand and seal of this Court: On this 07th day March of 2022.

	(A. N. Chavda) Prepared by Assistant	(S. J. Bhagat) Comp. By Bench Clerk Grade-I
	(A. P. Joshi) Registrar, City Civil Court Bhadra, Ahmedabad	

India dismantle SL to end Day 1 on a high

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Shreyas Iyer's pyrotechnics with the bat drove India to a position of strength after Sri Lanka made early inroads on a spinner-friendly track with the second Test heavily tilting in favour of the hosts, here on Saturday.

The bright afternoon sun in the beginning of the day/night contest did not allow the pink ball to swing enough and trouble the batters but the early and sharp turn on offer made life tough for the Indians, who were tottering at 126 for five at one stage.

Rishabh Pant began the counter-attack with his fiery 36-run knock and Iyer carried forward the recovery work with his scintillating 92-run knock that helped India post a decent 252 in their first innings.

Iyer's entertaining knock, that came off 98-balls and had 10 fours and four sixes, negated all

the good work done by the visiting bowlers in the first session when they had taken four wickets, including that of skipper Rohit Sharma (15) and Virat Kohli (23).

Iyer missed out on what would have been a deserving second Test hundred as he was stumped off left-arm spinner Praveen Jayawickrama (3/81) while going for a big shot.

Later, the pink ball was expected to assist the fast bowlers in comparatively cooler floodlit conditions and the lethal India pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah (3/15) and Mohammed Shami (2/18) blew away the top-order with two wickets apiece.

Shami's dismissal of rival captain Dimuth Karunaratne (4) was a treat to watch as the ball came in to shatter the stumps.

Sri Lanka ended the day at 86 for

six, trailing by 166 runs, as 16 wickets fell on the opening day with nine of them taken by the spinners.

Old warhorse Angelo Mathews (43 off 85 balls) and Charith Asalanka (5) had a 22-run stand for the fifth wicket but it did not last long with Axar Patel getting rid of the left-hander.

Mathews twice lofted Axar for straight sixes and negotiated the other Indian bowlers with confidence but his colleagues were found wanting due to lack of technique and temperament to counter a world class Indian attack on a tricky surface.

Mathews' combative knock ended when he fished outside off stum and edged one from Bumrah to Rohit in second slip.

Niroshan Dickwella (13) and Lasith Embulkdenya (0) will resume Lankan innings on Sunday.



INDIA ON TOP

Mandhana, Harmanpreet hit tons as India register massive 155-run win over West Indies

PTI ■ HAMILTON

Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur slammed twin centuries as India produced a splendid batting display to notch up a 155-run win over West Indies and bring their campaign back on track at the ICC Women's ODI World Cup here on Saturday.

While Mandhana smashed her fifth ODI hundred, a sensational 123 off 119 balls studded with 13 fours and two sixes, Kaur had 10 hits to the fence and two maximums in her 107-ball 109, which was her fourth ton and the first since hitting 171 not out against Australia in the 2017 World Cup.

The duo forged a 184-run stand for the fourth wicket, India's highest partnership for any wicket at the women's World Cup, to help the team post its highest total in the history of the showpiece event, a challenging 317 for eight after skipper Mithali Raj won the toss and elected to bat.

The 2017 edition finalists then returned to dismiss West Indies for 162

in 40.3 overs to keep themselves in contention for the knockout stage.

By virtue of this win, India now lead the eight-team standings with four points from three games, ahead of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa because of a better net run rate.

Chasing the stiff total, West Indies were off to a flier with openers Deandra Dottin (62) and Hayley Matthews (43) putting up 100 runs in 12.1 overs but the spin-pace duo of Sneha Rana (3/22) and Meghna Singh (2/27) put the breaks by rocking the top-order, as the Caribbean slumped to 114 for four in 19th over.

Pooja Vastrakar (1/21) and Rajeshwari Gayakwad (1/24) then got into the act, removing Shemaine Campbelle (11) and Chinelle Henry (7) as the Windies slumped to 134 for six.

Gayakwad and Rana then combined to run-out Aaliyah Alleyne (4), while Jhulan Goswami (1/43) returned to get rid of Anisa Mohammed (2) and become the all-time highest wicket-taker in the women's World Cup with 40 wickets in her kitty.

Could not have asked for anything better: Mithali

PTI ■ HAMILTON

Skipper Mithali Raj on Saturday hailed India's "special effort" to comprehensively beat West Indies by 155 runs but wants more consistency in the upcoming games of the ICC Women's ODI World Cup.

"Could not have asked anything better than today's display. Today's win should keep us in the (frame) tournament for the knockouts. Batting and bowling really came out well," Raj said in the post-match presentation.

"It had a lot to do with the couple of games, could see the nerves in the girls. Everyone knew the importance of today's game. Required a special effort, we knew West Indies came from 2 wins, we were playing after a big loss.

"We need to be consistent as the next game is in a different venue and a different opponent, we will be having different plans."

Smriti Mandhana (123) and Harmanpreet Kaur (109) slammed twin centuries to set up the win and Raj praised the duo for their sensible batting.

"The way Smriti and Harman played, very sensible and they have used their experience to get us to the table," she said.

West Indies skipper Stafanie Taylor blamed the bowlers for their insipid performance.

"I don't think we bowled the way we wanted to. Gave away too many short balls. I thought Harman and Smriti batted really well. We just couldn't get back from that."

Mithali, Jhulan make new records

PTI ■ HAMILTON

India's ODI skipper Mithali Raj on Saturday broke the record for most matches captained in the ICC Women's World Cup, surpassing former Australian counterpart Belinda Clark.

Mithali, 39, led the country in 24 World Cup games, claiming 15 victories, 8 losses and one no result. Clark had captained her side in 23 matches.

The India skipper achieved the feat when she stepped out to lead the country against the West Indies in a crucial match in the ongoing showpiece event here.

Interestingly, Mithali and Clark are the only two cricketers to have led their country at more than two World

Cups.

Also, veteran India pacer Jhulan Goswami on Saturday surpassed yet another milestone in her illustrious 22-year-old career by becoming the all-time highest wicket-taker in the history of the ICC Women's World Cup.

With 40 scalps in her kitty, Goswami has surpassed Australia's Lynette Fullston, who took 39 wickets during her career spanning six years from 1982 to 1988. Goswami achieved the feat by dismissing Anisa Mohammed in the 36th over of the innings with West Indies chasing a mammoth target of 318 set by India. Goswami, thus, lead the chart ahead of Fullston, England duo of Carole Hodges (37 wickets) and Claire Taylor (36) and another Australian in Cathryn Fitzpatrick (33).



Khawaja 127* takes Australia to 251-3

AP ■ KARACHI

Opening batter Usman Khawaja didn't miss out on a second chance to score a century in the country of his birth and led Australia to 251-3 at stumps on the first day of the second Test against Pakistan on Saturday.

Khawaja made an unbeaten 127 off 266 balls on another flat wicket after narrowly missing out on a hundred in the first Test at Rawalpindi which ended in a tame draw.

Khawaja and Steve Smith (72) shared a 159-run third-wicket stand before Pakistan broke it with the second new ball when Faheem Ashraf took a brilliant one-handed low catch in the slips to dismiss Smith off Hasan Ali (1-31).

Nightwatchman Nathan Lyon was yet to score and survived a dropped catch when Imam-ul-Haq couldn't hold on to a tough chance at forward short leg off Shaheen Afridi's last ball of the day.

Pakistan also went for an unsuccessful caught behind television review of Khawaja in Afridi's first over with the new ball before Hasan struck in the penultimate over of the day.

Pakistan deployed its spinners for 26 overs in the last session, but their negative tactic of bowling down the legside to both batters did nothing else but to

slow down the Australian scoring rate.

Khawaja, who raised his half-century off 69 balls in the first session, didn't get frustrated and waited patiently before completing his century in the last session off 193 balls with 12 fours and a six.

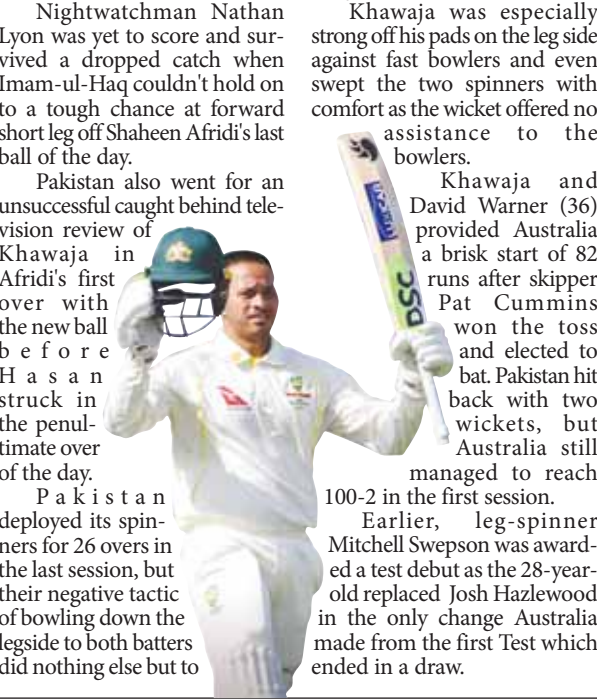
Smith hasn't scored a test hundred for the last 27 Test innings, but made his second successive half-century in Australia's first tour to Pakistan since 1998 off 214 balls with seven fours before Ashraf plucked an impressive catch.

Earlier, Pakistan had got two quick wickets before lunch before Khawaja and Smith toyed with the bowlers on a docile wicket, which both teams expect to help out spinners as the game progresses.

Khawaja was especially strong off his pads on the leg side against fast bowlers and even swept the two spinners with comfort as the wicket offered no assistance to the bowlers.

Khawaja and David Warner (36) provided Australia a brisk start of 82 runs after skipper Pat Cummins won the toss and elected to bat. Pakistan hit back with two wickets, but Australia still managed to reach 100-2 in the first session.

Earlier, leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson was awarded a test debut as the 28-year-old replaced Josh Hazlewood in the only change Australia made from the first Test which ended in a draw.



Faf du Plessis is new RCB captain

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Royal Challengers Bangalore on Saturday appointed former South Africa national team skipper Faf du Plessis as their new captain for the upcoming edition of Indian Premier League.

Du Plessis, one of the consistent performers for Chennai Super Kings, was an obvious choice after Virat Kohli decided to call time on his leadership role for the franchise after a decade during which their trophy drought didn't end. He was bought for Rs 7 crore by RCB and is available for the whole

season. Du Plessis was handed over the cap by team's chairman Prathmesh Mishra and director cricket operations Mike Hesson in a virtual event here.

"I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity. I have played a lot of IPL and understand the dynamics of the game. It's a small thing to trust an overseas player," Du Plessis, who gave up South African captaincy across all formats in 2020, said.

"I would rely heavily on the amazing experience of domestic players.

We have got great leader of the game in Virat Kohli," Du Plessis said.

The 37-year-old Du Plessis has so far played 100 games in IPL, scoring 2935 runs at a strike-rate of 131-plus. He scored 633 runs for CSK in last year's IPL-winning campaign.



DC unveils new jersey

New Delhi: Delhi Capitals on Saturday unveiled their new official jersey for the upcoming edition of the IPL. The first few jerseys were given to select DC fans at the team's home ground — the Arun Jaitley Stadium. "It's a new cycle of the IPL, and we can't wait to see our players in this brand new jersey," said Vinod Bisht, Interim CEO, Delhi Capitals.

Indian squad announced for SAFF U-18 Women's C'ship

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Saturday named a 22-member squad for the SAFF U-18 Women's Championship football tournament to be held in Jamshedpur from March 15 to 25.

India's head coach Thomas Dennerby said the girls selected for the tournament "pose a bright future for women's football" in the country.

"We have a lot of good players in the squad, and these girls pose a really bright future for women's football in India," he said.

The 62-year-old coach, who had previously guided the senior national women's team, feels

these youngsters have a strong football base which is key to achieving success in the sport.

"The great thing about them is that they have been properly educated about football from a very young age. The key now is to keep on with that. They need to keep training properly on a regular basis," said Dennerby, who guided the Swedish women's team to the quarterfinals of the Olympics, and Nigeria to the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2019.

India will open their campaign against Nepal on March 15, followed by games against Bangladesh (March 19), Nepal (March 21) and Bangladesh again (March 25).



Atletico warm up for Man Utd date with victory

AP ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid edged out Cadiz 2-1 on Friday to move into third place in La Liga and earn a timely morale-boost ahead of their Champions League trip to Manchester United next week.

Diego Simeone's team are three points ahead of Barcelona who host Osasuna but 12 points back from leaders Real Madrid.

Real also have a game in hand. On Tuesday, Atletico go to Old Trafford for a Champions League last 16 tie which is delicately poised at 1-1 after the first

leg in Spain last month. "We had the character to get the result after a first half where we could have done better," said Simeone.

"But without a doubt, the most important thing is still the victory, especially at this time."

"Cadiz played well, they have improved enormously since the arrival of their new coach but we continue to build the spirit that this team needs to stay competitive."

Portugal's Joao Felix gave Atletico the perfect start when he opened the scoring in just the third minute from a pass by Mario Ledesma.

However, 36-year-old striker Alvaro Negredo headed Cadiz level just before half-time. Rodrigo de Paul sealed the win in the 68th minute.

LILLE DRAW BLANK

Lille were held to a goalless draw at home against a resurgent Saint-Etienne on Friday just days before attempting to overturn a 2-0 deficit against holders Chelsea in the last 16 of the Champions League.

They also suffered a blow with the exit of Renato Sanches with a left thigh injury midway through the first half.

Murray joins ATP 700 club with Indian Wells win

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Former world number one Andy Murray notched a milestone win and US Open champion Emma Raducanu made a victorious return from injury in a one-two punch for Britain on Friday at the Indian Wells WTA and ATP Masters hardcourt tennis tournament.

Murray, a three-time Grand Slam champion now ranked 88th in the world and playing on a wildcard invitation, rallied after a dismal first set to beat Japanese qualifier Taro Daniel 1-6, 6-2, 6-4 in the first round.

Raducanu, seeded 11th, reached the women's third round with a 6-1, 3-6, 6-1 victory over France's Caroline Garcia.

Murray claimed the 700th ATP match win of his career.

"Reaching that number is a really, really good achievement," said Murray, who is one of just four active players to hit the milestone after Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic.

"It has not been easy getting there," he added, noting that he had reached 600 match wins in 2016 before his victory rate was slowed in large part by injury.

British qualifier Harriet Dart also advanced, with an impressive 2-6, 6-3, 6-3 comeback over 12th-seeded



Ukrainian Elina Svitolina -- her first victory over a top-20 player.

In other women's action, third-seeded Iga Swiatek of Poland and former world number one Simona Halep battled to three-set victories to reach the third round.

Swiatek dropped the opening set to Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina but lost just one game over the next two sets to triumph 5-7, 6-0, 6-1.

Halep, who lifted the Indian Wells trophy in 2015, defeated Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-2, 4-6, 6-2.

Halep next faces 16th-seeded US teenager Coco Gauff, who held on for a 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) victory over compatriot Claire Liu.

American Alison Riske shocked eighth-seeded Garbine Muguruza 0-6, 6-3, 6-1, winning 12 of the last 13 games.

the pioneer agenda



FROM THE INSIDE

Design of a new chapter

With development and aesthetics at its core, an experimental universal township is slated to come up in Auroville soon

10



12

Astrology can unravel potential

Astrology helps identify even hidden potential in a being, about which the person himself may not be aware

I remember how to be a person by being around them
—Natalie Portman



HOSPITALITY

RESET TO THE NEW NORMAL

The biggest blow from the pandemic is that it hasn't just brought about an extended slowdown, but has hit reset for many hospitality businesses. Only those who were able to pivot at the right time were able to survive, writes JAIDEEP AHUJA

The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting lockdowns over the past two years affected every industry across the globe, but the impact on the hospitality industry was catastrophic. Restaurant businesses were decimated, food service providers couldn't stay afloat, city and business hotels relying on transient travellers saw their revenues plummet, and many cash-flow-challenged hotels had to shut shop. Everything came to a standstill as only those dealing in essential goods and services were allowed to operate.

As per The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), owing to financial losses during the first wave, almost 40% of hotels and restaurants in India have shut down permanently. And about 20% haven't bounced back fully and the remaining continue to run in losses. This pretty much sums up the state of a sector that contributes nearly 7% to the country's GDP and caters to more than 39 million jobs.

These seismic changes in the hospitality sector became quite apparent from the get-go. But what about the long-term consequences of what happened during the pandemic? While on the one hand several hotels and restaurants were shutting shop, those in leisure destinations like Goa, Himachal, and Uttarakhand also saw revenues rise as people from neighboring Covid-affected cities flocked there for staycations. But is this change here to stay? Or was it a one-wave wonder for these destinations? Let's look at some of the problems that arose as a result of the pandemic and how the industry is looking at tackling them.

The biggest blow from the last two years of the pandemic is that it hasn't just brought about an extended slowdown, but has hit reset for many hospitality businesses. Everything had to be re-examined and re-designed for survival. And only those who were able to pivot at the right time were able to survive.

To that effect, revenue losses stretched over ₹1.30 lakh crore during the previous fiscal year! And to cope with that the industry has been pleading for government help to provide fresh impetus and revive growth. And looks like we are on the right track here because, in the recently declared Union Budget 2022-23, the Finance Minister has extended the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for MSMEs till March 2023, while more importantly providing a guarantee cover of ₹50,000 crore, exclusively earmarked for businesses in the hospitality and related sectors.

In addition to ECLGS, the government also announced the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme with

an outlay of ₹6,000 crores over the next five years. While the focus of this programme is not entirely on the hospitality sector, mid-tier entities in the segment will stand to benefit from it in the long run. The ECLGS scheme on the other hand shows positive intent of the government and should provide short-term relief. This is good news.

The government also announced various other indirect measures for pumping growth and energy into the hospitality industry. While these will only help the Covid-battered industry in the long run, we do need these measures because like I've mentioned above, the long-term impacts of the pandemic are still unknown, and having these options ensures that the industry continues to get the help it needs over an extended period.

Although industry shareholders were hoping for more of a reduction in GST rates from the current 12% to 5% as well as the inclusion of hotel-related expenses under LTA to help boost demand from travellers, not all is lost. Funding to the Tourism Ministry has been increased by 18.4% compared to the previous year with a focus on developing tourism infrastructure, capacity building, alongside marketing and promotion. This will help boost domestic tourism at a time when international travel is still reeling from restrictions.

In addition to this, increased focus on large-scale infrastructure development under PM Gati Shakti plan has been proposed, with roads, railways, airports, ports, and waterways being the key areas. This will not only help the tourism sector to achieve its full potential but also provide new business opportunities for growth and expansion. The introduction of 400 new Vande Bharat trains and construction of 25,000 km of new expressways this fiscal, should significantly improve access and last mile connectivity to several tourist destinations across the country. Moreover, infrastructure development in northeast India and the proposal of eight new ropeways under the Parvatmala scheme (an eco-friendly alternative to regular roads), which has been stressed upon by the government will help in unlocking the tourism potential of the north-east region and hill-stations, which remain in high demand during the summer season.

Apart from these relief measures, e-passports were also announced in the Union Budget. This will enhance comfort and convenience for international travellers by cutting down long queues at immigration counters. Moreover, corporate travel is also expected to revive, considering a 35.4% increase in Capex by the government to accelerate the country's economic recovery and aid job creation.



ONE REASON FOR THIS GROWTH EXPECTATION IS THE OVERALL ASPECT OF REVENUE CONSUMPTION AND TRAVELLING AMONG CUSTOMERS. WHILE OFFICES ARE OPENING UP, PEOPLE HAVE STARTED EATING OUT AND ENGAGING IN WORK TRAVEL. EVEN THOSE WHO ARE WORKING FROM HOME HAVE STARTED MOVING OUT DURING WEEKDAYS AND WEEKENDS NOW



All in all the budgetary decisions seem to be a step in the right direction and will definitely benefit vulnerable players while also helping the sector become more resilient, competitive, and efficient.

Government initiatives aside, the industry is also fast adopting to changing consumer patterns. This was one of the major challenges at the onset of the pandemic. Fuelled by fear and concern, consumer behaviour became unpredictable and that made it very tedious for businesses to assess which direction the buying patterns would go in. What seems to be like a silver lining is that now two years into the pandemic, consumer behaviour seems to have shifted for good, and organisations in the hospitality sector are now adapting to it quickly.

When it comes to food and travel, this has manifested in the form of home-delivered meals becoming common, something that can be judged by the exponential growth of the online food delivery segment during the last couple of years. A market size that is about to hit the \$14 billion mark and user penetration, which is already at 24%, speaks for itself.

The concept of cloud kitchens has also gained a lot of steam, with many foodservice providers exploring it as a possible cost-saving alternative to dine-in restaurants. As it primarily focuses on the food delivery experience, owners now have greater flexibility in terms of the set-up space and location, leading to a substantial reduction in real estate costs and increased profitability. An increasing number of restaurants, therefore, are also responding to the pandemic challenges by investing in cloud kitchens.

This has further led to investments in direct delivery channels and alterations of menus to suit home delivery logistics and quick turnaround times. Those eateries which adapted quickly and increased their focus on online deliveries or switched to dark kitchens initially were able to survive without having to shut outlets and lay off staff. But the same was not the case with many others who either couldn't pivot as quickly or were catering to specific dine-in experiences.

Moreover, the rising concern and expectations for safety, cleanliness, and hygiene amongst consumers forced the HoReCa player to press the reset button. Industry first initiatives also came to light with a major focus on proper sanitation and cleanliness even in the kitchen premises. Face masks and daily temperature checks of restaurant staff, regular hand and contact surface sanitation, social distancing, and QR-based ordering became common practices in the industry. Businesses also started leveraging their digital presence on social

media to showcase their commitment toward the health and safety of the consumers.

The advent of Covid also forced hotels to alter their pricing strategies and product offerings, depending on the severity of the pandemic in their area. Hotels across the country initially resorted to lower booking prices, and service offerings such as free cancellations, "breakfast service included" options and higher number of people allowed in the room, among other things to cope with the economic losses.

While this has continued till now in some form, the market is hopeful for a rebound in the coming times. Covid has also forced many companies to rethink their staffing with greater focus being put on talented employees while seeking greater flexibility with dynamic staff during high-demand cycles. As a result the relationship between the academic world of hotel schools and the industry has seen a reinvigoration in the last couple of years.

An interesting example of this is the partnership between CII and EHL Advisory to launch a Vocational Training Initiative to help the industry's insatiable hunger for quality trained manpower for front-line positions. Contract terms have also been re-negotiated and in some cases changed not just for the short term but also for medium to long terms as it has become clear that recovery is going to be a long process. Departments like Food & Beverage have been re-examined for innovation and improving profitability. These cost-saving strategies have helped several hotels keep their debt in check and remain afloat during challenging times.

As hospitality companies continue to reduce their debt and find themselves on the path to recovery, a new dawn seems to be lighting up the horizon for the hospitality industry. With the reduction in travel restriction post the third wave, the hospitality industry expects a good recovery this year and those who are a part of it are confident of rebounding to pre-covid levels in the next couple of years owing to an increase in leisure and work travel.

One reason for this growth expectation is the overall aspect of revenue consumption and travelling among customers. While offices are opening up, people have started eating out and engaging in work travel. Even those who are working from home have started moving out during weekdays and weekends now. Additionally, newer trends like education tourism, staycations, workstations, and homestays are also expected to generate revenue in the coming times and help the industry to get back on its feet.

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Putin has set a new world order in making

Maidan Revolution — the very name of the movement born out of the “Independence Square” known as Maidan and located at the heart of Ukraine capital city Kyiv — reached its zenith in February 2014, when for the first time Ukarianians demonstrated the bond of unity against the then remote-controlled regime of Russian-backed President Viktor Fedorovych Yanukovych.

The movement gained traction and its strength and size shot up to take the shape of a mass movement, later termed as the “Revolution of Dignity” (Revoliutsiia Hidnosti, which played an important role in the ouster of Yanukovych, the fourth President of Ukraine).

The protest was popularised as “Euro-Maidan Revolution”. Precisely, Euro-Maidan was used in the beginning as a hashtag on Twitter after an account on the micro blogging site was created on the very first day of the movement so as to reach out to more and more people across the country and amplify the message of the movement. The name consisted of two parts: “Euro” came from Europe and “Maidan” came from the Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square).

Why this movement started? In fact, the root of this revolution goes back to November 21, 2013. That time Yanukovych chose not to sign an agreement called “Association Agreement” with the European Union that would have integrated the nation more closely with the group. That time around, young journalist turned activist Mustafa Nayem addressed his countrymen through Facebook on this matter. Nayem wrote, “Come on guys, let’s be serious, don’t just like this post. Write that you are ready, and we can try to start something new.” He urged people to gather on Maidan Square that evening. From a crowd of just 50 people, the demonstrators swelled to 1,000. And all of them stayed there at the Square and students took the centre stage. However, gradually, a cross section of people marched towards the centre of the capital city.

The movement had two principal demands: First, to remove the Government of Yanukovych; second the immediate restoration of the 2004 amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine. The 2004 amendment (Law No.



A resident passes by the cars burnt in the Russian shellfire as he flees from his hometown on the road towards Kyiv, in the town of Irpin, some 25 km northwest of Kyiv, on March 12, 2022

AP

2222-IV) was passed during the time of then President Leonid Kuchma. The set of reforms brought by the new amendment seriously limited the powers of the President. Under the new law, the President lost the power to nominate the Prime Minister and it was handed over solely to the unicameral Parliament known as “Verkhovna Rada” or “Rada”.

The President could only appoint the Defence and Foreign Ministers. The President also lost the right to dismiss the members of the Cabinet, but he could dissolve the Parliament. But during the time of Yanukovych, this historic amendment was overturned by the Constitution Court of Ukraine, branding them as purely unconstitutional. Thus, the demonstrators of the Maidan Revolution wanted the same to be revoked and desired that the powers of the President be limited like before.

How is it different from the Orange Revolution of 2004-05? The Orange Revolution was the result of fraudulent presidential election of 2004 when the Russian-backed Yanukovych

contested against the Opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko. In fact, this presidential election brought Ukraine to the brink of a civil war like situation. This election was a tug of war between those who seek closer ties with the EU, NATO and the West and those who favour stronger alignment with Russia.

After two rounds of controversial voting, Yanukovych won the presidential race against Yushchenko. Then the latter’s supporters, dressed in orange colour, Yushchenko’s election colour took to the streets and forced a revote in December the same year. Finally, Yushchenko won the election. Clearly, this was a stern warning for Russia as it was a second colour revolution in a post-Soviet State, the first being Georgia’s Rose Revolution in 2003.

However, in Maidan Revolution, the crowd, unlike the Orange Revolution, did not give way for deep disappointment. It prompted more urgent actions and kept the outside world more involved under the auspices of the EU and the IMF. The new government inherited an economy

that was almost bankrupt. The huge government debt was unpayable without help from outside agencies. Inflation rocketed Ukraine and its currency Hryvnia lost half of its value in 2004. And Bloomberg that year recorded Hryvnia as the worst performing currency in the world. That year ironically Russian intervention moved from banning Ukrainian products and influencing political parties to Russian soldiers annexing Crimea and supporting a separatist movement in the Donbass region. Since then Moscow has been aiding the separatists with arms & ammunition and finances till the declaration of the independence of the two republics of Luhansk and Donetsk in February 2022.

Interestingly, with the Maidan Revolution, the people of Ukraine learnt the lessons from the Orange Revolution and pushed for immediate reforms in their country. The post-Maidan Revolution era witnessed the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU.

As a result, a slew of reforms started taking place.

Hence, the Orange Revolution soon slipped into oblivion unlike the Euro-Maidan Revolution. The latter brought subsequent changes and lobbied Ukraine at the centre stage of the strategy making of the West.

Volodymyr Zelensky is the sixth President of Ukraine who came to power in 2019. With all the sixth presidents, including Zelensky, the influence of the West and Russia are clearly evident. All these years, the struggle between the Russian Federation and the combined pressure of the NATO and the EU were fully acting over Ukraine. The saddest part is that till date, no single group or party has either given full support or security to Kyiv.

What happened in Ukraine in the beginning of 2014 is worthy of noting. It primarily ushered in a transformation of the country’s society and the post-Soviet State that gradually turned into a rent-seeking one since 1991. The first victory of the revolution came when the protesters removed the thuggish rule of Yanukovych from Kyiv. During the four years of his reign, he and his cronies looted about

\$100 billion from a country that came out of the clutches of the USSR. Sadly, the EU’s key decisions came frustratingly late to Ukraine since the beginning of its separation from the USSR.

Today, Ukraine has finally come under the boots of Russia. Putin was quietly waiting for the last eight years to grab this opportunity. At this moment, when the Russians are at the gates of Kyiv and the whole world is simply watching the bloody war, the people of Ukraine are encountering the enemy alone. The war that has already completed half a month is rightly seen as David vs Goliath.

Ukraine is crying for help from the most powerful countries of the world. But all are turning their back on Ukraine, except imposing severe sanctions on Russian oligarchs and top legislators of that country. Clearly, no single sanction is directly targeted at Putin.

However, the sanctions that are already imposed on Moscow are considered one of the severest in recent times. But now the question is that can the world prevent a man like Putin with such sanctions from

launching further offensives in the coming years? Definitely not.

Such sanctions were imposed over Moscow immediately after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, but Putin could hardly be stopped from the offensive in this February against Ukraine. Rather, such sanctions have emboldened him to become more aggressive.

At this juncture, when we look back and see the outcomes of the Maidan Revolution, what we observe is that the assurances from the EU and the expected protection from the NATO finally could not save Ukraine from Russia. For all these years, the NATO could not embrace Ukraine and offer full guarantee of its territorial integrity. After witnessing the Crimean annexation, the Western allies of Ukraine should have been more cautious. Now everything is lost.

Russia is not solely responsible for the current war against Ukraine. The NATO and the EU must share the blame equally. After the breakdown of the USSR in 1991, the NATO quickly moved into former Soviet Republics and Communist bastions of Eastern Europe to fill in the security vacuum. Both the groups have almost formed a security ring around the Russian Federation. And, Ukraine is the only country left in that bloc. Therefore when the NATO was already inching closer to Ukraine, Russia became too cautious. For long, Putin was sending warning signals to the NATO and the EU. Today, by attacking Ukraine, Putin has set a new world order in the making. And this has finally resulted into the end of the US dominance in global politics to a great extent. Truly, this episode has redefined the post Cold War global power calculus for now.

The Maidan era has long gone. The Orange Revolution has slipped into oblivion. Hope the sovereignty of Ukraine will be respected by Russia. But there is little hope.

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

The EU assurance and the promised protection by the NATO could not save Ukraine from Russian attacks. This has finally resulted into the end of the US dominance in global politics to a great extent. This episode has redefined the post Cold War global power calculus for now



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Empowering elders with digital skills

The number of elders is presently estimated at over 130 million. With longevity and better health care, this number will increase to 194 million by 2031, and reach about 319 million by 2050. We can ill-afford to neglect the critical needs of so many people, comprising a fifth of our total population by 2050. If they are not to be left behind, it is essential that we facilitate their on-line access



KIRAN KARNIK

Few things have changed our world and lives as much as the Covid-19 pandemic. From months of “house arrest” during lockdowns, to work-from-home, from becoming masked warriors fighting the virus to on-line everything, we have had to quickly learn, adapt and change. Some of these, including remote working and on-line interaction, are likely to become permanent features of our life, with businesses too having changed and moved to this new paradigm. Covid has also brought home the terrible inequities in our society, creating awareness and a degree of empathy for the disadvantaged that was missing earlier.

Economic inequity has also amplified educational inequity. The move to on-line teaching has led to a very large proportion falling way behind their classmates because they are unable to participate properly in on-line learning. Lack of

access to smart phones or computers and poor internet connectivity have compounded the disadvantages of their economic status and low parental education. This is in addition to missing the essential learning which comes from peer-interaction and socialising: an outcome of governments’ insistence on keeping schools closed.

Students (the disadvantaged among them, in particular) have, doubtless, been seriously affected. There is, though, another group whose travails are hardly recognised: the elders.

An overwhelming majority of them cannot afford a computer or a smart phone; of the remaining, a large proportion does not have the necessary skills, having spent most of their lives in a non-digital environment. It is, indeed, but a minuscule percentage that has the affordability, access and skills to navigate the new

on-line world, and to reap its benefits.

Yet, it is elders who, more than the rest, can greatly benefit from the on-line access. This is especially so for those whose physical movement is constrained for health reasons. In addition, with stay-at-home guidelines for the 60+, their only access to the outside world is through electronic means. Ordering essentials like medicines or groceries, remote health services, shopping, bank transactions, socialising through video calls, watching streaming services: all these require access and e-skills. Without these, elders are handicapped. Even in a post-Covid world — whenever that may be — many of these services will continue to be on-line, for reasons of cost or convenience.

The number of elders is presently estimated at over 130 million. With longevity and better health care, this number will increase to 194 million by

2031, and reach about 319 million by 2050. We can ill-afford to neglect the critical needs of so many people, comprising a fifth of our total population by 2050. If they are not to be left behind, it is essential that we facilitate their on-line access.

In this, Governments (at Centre, State and local level) have the primary responsibility. They might do well to take the cue from Vice President Venkaiah Naidu. Launching the Senior Able Citizens for Re-Employment in Dignity (SACRED) portal a few months ago, he laid great stress on the need for imparting digital literacy to the elderly. A focussed programme, possibly as part of the National Digital Literacy Mission, may give this effort the necessary momentum.

The responsibility, though, cannot be solely of the Government: the community and their own families have a

big role. However, beyond these, and especially in rural areas, civil society organisations (CSOs) must play an important part. One example is the Digital Literacy programme of HelpAge India (HI). It empowers elders by introducing them to the on-line world through workshops across the country, which provide them digital training, besides counselling for financial planning, and education and awareness on their rights and entitlements.

CSOs have last-mile reach, and they could — in partnership with appropriate Government agencies — take digital literacy into even the remote corners of the country. Further, CSOs have a natural bent to look for new solutions, and they could find innovative ways to ensure digital literacy of even those who are conventionally illiterate. Having done this, they could partner with State and Central Governments to scale up the programme and

reach millions of elders.

It is vital that while teaching transactional skills — or even for those who already have them — awareness and training is imparted regarding basic aspects of cyber security. Today, with increasing amount of cyber crime, this is a necessity, especially as one begins to do more financial transactions in the digital mode. Therefore, this must be an integral part of any digital literacy programme.

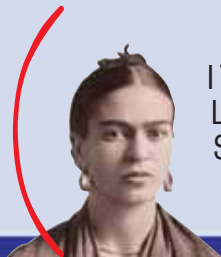
Clearly, there is urgent need of an intensive programme of e-enablement of elders, with two components: training and access. The former has been discussed above; on the latter, Government must look at ways through which it can provide a laptop or smart-phone to all elders who cannot afford them.

Together, these will not only empower elders but will also help to reduce the load on their caregivers. In fact, a successful programme can help

transform elders into “home managers”, taking on the responsibility for the family’s shopping, bills payment and banking needs, among other things.

For elders who are on their own, basic digital skills will greatly improve their ease-of-living and help them become more independent. It could also open new avenues for livelihoods and income, for example, through on-line classes for cooking or other skills that elders may possess. Such a programme must, therefore, be high on the agenda of the government, which can best implement this in partnership with CSOs.

(The writer is an author. His latest book is “Decisive Decade: India 2030, Gazelle or Hippo”. He chairs HelpAge India, and is associated with a number of other CSOs in the areas of education and development.)



I THINK THAT LITTLE BY
LITTLE I'LL BE ABLE TO
SOLVE MY PROBLEMS
AND SURVIVE
—FRIDA KAHLO



**YOUR
WEEK
AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

Keeping your stress level manageable is necessary to stay in good health now. Deal with any problems that come up physically. Ensure proper rest and avoid alcohol or intoxication. If you need healing, ask for it on both the literal and the spiritual planes. Professionally, if you work emotionally, things may not turn out well for you this week. You need to take some firm decisions on certain matters. Financial matters should be dealt with extra precautions. Those looking for a job, will get support from a female in your life. Your energy and confidence increase dramatically. On the personal front, some impulsive decisions could make your relationships complicated. Be careful as you may be swept off your feet.

Lucky number 28
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Saturday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week health may suffer, so take adequate rest. Be open to spiritual healing, but if you are struggling with a serious illness, know that a cure is not always associated with healing. You may require some therapy or surgery. Professionally, you will be able to make a mark for yourself. You feel confident of your choices, and this helps you to move towards the achievement of your goals. A fortunate outcome is indicated whatever you do or start at this time. Your skills & potentials will be duly recognised. On the personal front, your loved ones will be supportive, and you will have new feelings and new hopes. Do not let your desire for fun make you overlook the real and deep love that may come your way.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Mustard
Lucky day Tuesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, your energy and stamina will be outstanding. You have the confidence, and you will present yourself as strong. Everything gets better than what it was earlier. On the work front, new opportunity will arrive this week, it depends on you how you perceive it. This is the time to have a broader vision and an open mind. Discussing your career with a professional will be helpful. Update your knowledge and current happenings in the technology and other fields. On the personal front, you may get occupied in something new and even more exciting and inspiring. You can look forward to the rapid completion of a relationship. There is no stopping you right now as you are full of energy and enthusiasm to move quickly.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Thursday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

If you have not been feeling well, due to low energy, that will end soon. Those with ongoing health issue, may benefit from undertaking some sort of alternative therapy. This is an excellent time for you to undertake some form of spiritual study, that you have thought about in the past. On the professional front, you may need to keep your eyes open for opportunities. This week's energy is not favourable. You may feel stressed over minor details or the job you do and the recognition you get for it. Prioritise your work and give great attention to your responsibilities to win the situation. Relationship area requires your attention. You need to turn your world around and view your situation from a different perspective.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Wednesday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week the health is good. You have the confidence within yourself and present yourself as strong, vibrant, and persevering. Things are seen to get better with the warmth and care of your loved ones. Do not push yourself too hard. Take a break to restore your energy. Professionally, the week stores some negative energy. Your job responsibilities may be at standstill position at this time. Expecting a promotion or increment can be disheartening. Instead of feeling stuck or restricted in life, think other ways to earn a livelihood. On the personal front, there is a need for balance with family, friends, and relatives besides work. If you are already in a relationship, it is about to get a new meaning.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Monday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

You have been thinking of bringing a major change in your life. Something is provoking you, a feeling of dissatisfaction with your level of enjoyment in life and inner discontent demands few changes. Improve your life by bringing more spirituality and fantasy into the picture. Professionally, ensure that your day-to-day affairs are in order. If not, there is an urgent need for good time and financial management. Keep a track on your expenditure as well as investments. It may sound tedious, however, these are fundamentals which pave the way for success in career. On the personal front, increasing domestic requirements could affect the quality of your work, but you look at life more joyfully. You spend time on entertainment and celebrating life.

Lucky number 30
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

A balanced lifestyle is the first step towards healthy living. Make full efforts from your end. What you eat, how much you eat, and sleep matters a lot. Take time out for entertainment and physical activities for rejuvenation and regain energy. Sometimes money cannot buy those what we want from our life. Your cheerful outlook plays an important role too. On the career front, this week is favourable. You will want to reach out to people and interactions & understanding will play a major role in keeping you on the move. On the personal front, you may feel the need to be liberated from certain restrictions and spread your wings. Traditions and family are important currently. Married couples will seek advice from elders.

Lucky number 25
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Sunday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week you may get angry quickly and put yourself in intense arguments. Those with a health problem may have to take tests. Deepen your spiritual awareness and practice. Try something new, even reading can sometimes offer new clarity. Active meditations are useful now. Your job or professional responsibilities move at breakneck speed. Some obstacles are seen that could hamper your growth. The position you were aspiring for may not fall in your kitty. Work could be a challenge for you. On the personal front, the power of your words is stronger than action. This could make your relationships complicated. Stay grounded and enjoy the energy of the day. Work with your heart than mind and be flexible in your approach with the loved ones.

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour Purple
Lucky day Tuesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Health needs immediate attention. Get clinically examined even if it is a simple problem. Take second or third opinion in case there is confusion in diagnosis. Rest to renew energy and bring stability into your life. Take a quick decision if you must undergo treatment. On the career front, you are highly action-oriented and feeling incredibly inspired and enthusiastic about pursuing a new idea or project that you have in mind. You can use your creative energy and passion to take the first steps and get this project underway. Under your leadership, people will be charged up. On the personal front, create a safe and trusting environment where you can go. Allow some space to others and being tolerant of their needs will help you win favour for yourself.

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Friday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week there is a need to bring some positive changes to your lifestyle. Make sure you are not doing too many things at a time. Anger, aggression, and hyper actions could affect health. Check your diet, exercise, and working hours. On the work front, you are practical in your approach and extremely hard working. Determination and courage will be applied to all your endeavours. Results may be slow in coming but you will hold your own. You may need a boost to carry your goals. On the relationship front, you divert your attention through art, music, and entertainment with your partner. Your final decision matters a lot to someone. Communicate your confirmation or rejection.

Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Wednesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week you may feel stuck or restricted in your life. You need to get in touch with why you are feeling this way, and work to release yourself from these restrictions. Your health could be affected if you are not open and expressive. Learn to express yourself, share your sorrow and happiness to maintain equilibrium. More than physical, mental peace is required at this time. On the work front, things are not as good as you might have expected this week. If you are willing to put yourself in limelight you feel cheated. Some other people will take the credit of your hard work. Beware of insecure and overly suspicious people. On the relationship front, this is a good week which has happiness, laughter and sharing time with loved ones stored in it.

Lucky number 18
Lucky colour Black
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week there are strong chances of you catching seasonal diseases. Avoid outside food. If you feel that something is amiss with your body, trust your concerns and follow through. Stay away from bright colours. Go for light pastel colours that will be good for you. Meditate when you get the time and be natural. On the work front, your exceptional sense of cooperation and bonding with people at the workplace will be your asset. You can progress rapidly provided you talk to your boss about your findings. On the personal front, you may be dealing with some conflict at home. If you are looking for love, you may need to behave with a great deal of humility with your partner. Allow your partner to have his or her space.

Lucky number 15
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Tuesday

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ASTROTURF

BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Astrology can unravel hidden potential

Astrology helps identify even hidden potential in a being, about which the person himself may not be aware. Even if aware, it will not be in his priority if it doesn't fit into main stream category. If, however, explored further and honed, it may prove rewarding and fulfilling. A case in point is that of a person who came to me almost two decades back, looking for what is in store of his destiny. He had finished his Masters and wished to join teaching profession. "By when do I get a job of my choice?" He made a specific question. I could see that he had to be a late starter. For, delaying Saturn, the 7th and 8th lord (both detrimental houses), was debilitated in the 10th house marked with career. What further played a multiplier was that Saturn was also placed adverse to his *lagna* lord Moon. I didn't wish to discourage him. I told him that either he will be based in Delhi or may later join government of India assignment, as would Saturn's placement in Aries sign mean as per the dictum of *Bhṛigu Nanda Nadi*. I suggested him to meanwhile acquire other relevant qualifications as would make him suited to teaching

profession.

He then did his M Phil. Even while pursuing the courses, his family members discouraged him, and in fact, arranged a small job in his home town. Confused, he came running for advice. I told him to pursue the course in hand to its logical conclusion before trying something else. Later, he earned a doctorate degree also in his discipline. Meanwhile he got teaching assignments on contractual basis for a while, but it did not continue long. A stage has reached when he had no choice than to move back to his native place, as he could not sustain anymore by himself. In a state of desperation, he came back with a question, asking that "you had predicted my stay in Delhi or a Government of India assignment. How come, I am now forced to go back home?"

As I was giving a fresh look to his chart, a peculiar combination caught my attention. *Lagna* lord Moon, marked with his individuality, was beautifully aligned with intellectually ordained Uranus. It meant that he carried some extraordinary talent, in a field, which would be unconventional



in nature by usual worldly assumption. Not simply that, Moon formed benefic angle with Jupiter the 6th and 9th lord, respectively signifying the field in which he may toil and his overall destiny. Jupiter was tenanted in the 5th house, where from it extended its benevolent aspect to the *lagna*, the 11th house which promised assured income as well his destiny indicating 9th house. Linkage of *lagna*, 5th and 9th houses meant that he carried virtues of extraordinary nature acquired in the past. Even his spiritual quotient would be quite high. Jupiter was also conjunct psychic planet Neptune, which meant that his intuitive sense was quite high. Jupiter, apart from teaching and philosophy, does also indicate a physician. That made me curious. I asked him: "What special talent you have that requires strong sense of intuition, which may carry healing property?" "Sir, my father was a homeopath of great repute of his time. I have learnt a lot in his company. I have observed that the medicine that I intuitively identified but kept within myself, was the one that my father used to prescribe to his patients. But that is not anywhere in my

priority. I will be happy if I get a teaching job. All my attempts in this direction so far have gone in vain and I have lost all hope." He replied.

To sustain yourself, why don't you practice homeopathy, I prodded. He said that he didn't feel the confidence necessary to pursue that line. I then said: "Getting the job you are looking for is not in your hand. It may though come with time. But you will be able to pursue your objective better by staying here in Delhi. In that interest, do begin homeopathy. Start meditating as I suggest, and see how your confidence level goes up." That struck his head. He began meditating and began practising homeopathy. His medicines had healing effect on many confronted with chronic diseases. His fame spread far and wide and is in great demand now. Later on, he was introduced to a realised Spiritual Master. He though went reluctantly, but now enjoys his patronage. Following which, his skill set further went up.

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