

## OPINION 6

UP, UP, AND AWAY  
FOR ADITYANATH

## WORLD 8

BIDEN BRANDS PUTIN A WAR CRIMINAL;  
KREMLIN DECRIES POTUS' REMARKS

## MONEY 9

MARKETS POST GAINS,  
MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY MARCH 18, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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# Sonia, Rahul break ice with G-23 leaders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after a formal meeting of a section of senior party leaders led by the G-23 faction, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi is learned to have spoken to dissident leader Ghulam Nabi Azad. This was the first dialogue between the so-called dissidents and the party leadership.

Sources said that Azad and Sonia are trying to establish a channel of communication between the high command and the disgruntled lot.

Another round of meeting of dissidents took place at Azad's residence on Thursday.

On the other hand, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi met Bhupinder Singh Hooda, one of the participants of Wednesday's dinner meet at Azad's residence. They are learned to have discussed the concerns and feelings of the party leaders and the need to revamp the party and the way forward following its loss in five Assembly elections.

After the meeting, Hooda visited Ghulam Nabi Azad residence to brief him about the meeting.

The second meeting in the last 24 hours is said to be a feedback session after Hooda



met Rahul. Sources said in the two-hour-long meeting Hooda, Azad, Kapil Sibal, and Anand Sharma are said to have discussed concrete proposals, the details of which were not known yet.

The separate meetings between Sonia and Azad, and Rahul and Hooda are being seen as attempts by the Gandhi family to reach out to the dissenters who have shown signs of increasing aggression on the leadership issue after Congress's dismal performance in the recently-concluded Assembly elections in five States.

G-23 is a group of rebel Congress leaders formed in August 2020. The G-23 leaders have been demanding organisational overhaul ever after successive electoral setbacks

starting with the Congress rout in the Lok Sabha poll.

Sources said a meeting between Sonia and some of the G-23 leaders, including Azad was on the cards. The G-23 leaders in a meeting on Wednesday evening stated the "only way forward" for the party was to adopt a model of "collective and inclusive leadership and decision-making at all levels."

While the party leadership is said to be upset with senior leader Kapil Sibal for suggesting that the Gandhis should step aside, Sonia's outreach to Azad is seen as an attempt to break the ice and see whether the ballooning is internal crisis can be resolved.

There were three new entrants — veteran leader Mani Shankar Aiyar, Lok Sabha

member and former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh's wife Preet Kaur, and Gujarat leader Shankarsinh Vaghela, who quit the Congress in 2017 to join the NCP in 2019 and then quit it. He is expected to return to the Congress.

After the Wednesday meeting, the leaders issued a statement. It was signed by 18 leaders: Azad, Anand Sharma, Kapil Sibal, Prithviraj Chavan, Manish Tewari, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Akhilesh Prasad Singh, Raj Babbar, Vaghela, Aiyar, Shashi Tharoor, P J Kurien, MA Khan, Rajinder Kaur Bhattal, Sandeep Dikshit, Kuldeep Sharma, Vivek Tankha and Preet Kaur.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi continued to hold discussions with party leaders from Uttar Pradesh to ascertain the reasons for the party's dismal show in the Assembly elections.

The AICC general secretary, who spearheaded a spirited campaign focussed on women's issues in UP, separately met State leaders Pramod Tiwari, Acharya Pramod Krishan, Satish Ajmani, Ajay Rai, Ajay Kumar Lallu, and Virender Chaudhary and discussed party's strategy for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

# Covid returns! WHO warns against laxity

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday flagged concern about the resurgence in Covid-19 cases, which it said, were "the tip of the iceberg," and asked the countries to remain vigilant against the virus.

After more than a month of decline, Covid cases started to increase around the world last week, the WHO said, with China's Jilin province battling to contain the outbreak. Just a few days ago, the WHO had noted that the countries were reporting a reduced and incorrect way of testing.

The surge is caused by a combination of factors, including the highly transmissible Omicron variant and its BA.2 sublineage, and the lifting of public health and social measures. The WHO said new infections jumped by 8 per cent globally compared to the previous week, with 11 million new cases and just over 43,000 new deaths reported from March 7-13. It is the first rise since the end of January. The biggest jump includes South Korea and China, where cases rose by 25 per cent and deaths by 27 per cent.

"These increases are occurring despite reductions in testing in some countries, which



means the cases we're seeing are just the tip of the iceberg," WHO's head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

The WHO chief also said the problem of low vaccination rate and "huge amount of misinformation," also explained the rise.

Africa also saw a 12 per cent rise in new cases and a 14 per cent rise in deaths, and Europe a 2 per cent rise in cases but no jump in deaths. Other regions reported declining cases, including the eastern Mediterranean region, although this area saw a 38 per cent rise in deaths linked to a previous spike in infections.

Experts have raised concerns that Europe might face another coronavirus wave as Austria, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the UK might see a rise in the cases.

WHO's Maria Van Kerkhove said at the briefing that BA.2 appears to be the most transmissible variant.

However, there are no signs that it causes more severe disease and no evidence that any other new variants are driving the rise in cases. Further, experts have also warned that the US could soon see a similar wave like Europe, driven by BA.2.

Continued on Page 2

## CAPSULE

### MAMATA: PEGASUS WAS OFFERED FOR ₹25 CRORE

**Kolkata:** A day after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee revealed that the controversial Pegasus spyware was offered to her government, she provided on Thursday more details, stating the State police was approached at least four to five years back with an offer to sell the controversial Israeli spyware for just ₹25 crore.

### MOODY'S CUTS INDIA GROWTH TO 9.1 PC

**New Delhi:** Moody's on Thursday slashed India's growth estimate for the current year to 9.1 per cent, from 9.5 per cent earlier, saying high fuel and fertilizer import bill could limit the Government's capital expenditure.

P10

### DELHI SEES SEASON'S WARMEST DAY AT 36.1C

**New Delhi:** Delhi recorded the warmest day of the season on Thursday as the maximum temperature settled five notches above normal at 36.1 degrees Celsius.

THE PIONEER wishes its readers Happy Holi. As the offices of The Pioneer will remain closed on March 18, the next issue will appear on March 20



## Mann's phone is anti-graft helpline

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Soon after taking over, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann launched a crusade against corruption announcing the launch of an anti-corruption helpline number on March 23 that will allow people to upload videos of corrupt officials asking for a bribe or indulging in other malpractices.

He said it is his "personal WhatsApp number" and asserted that he will ensure a corruption-free Government in the State.

"With this, corruption ended completely in Delhi," he claimed. "In the coming days, we will launch a helpline number that will be my personal WhatsApp number. If anyone demands a bribe from you, do not refuse it. Record a video or audio of it and send it to this number. I guarantee you, our office will examine it and no corrupt person will be spared and strict action will be taken," he said.

Continued on Page 2

# Govt code to end bribing of doctors by pharma firms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi Government has come out with a draft — Uniform Code for Medical Device Marketing Practices — to check the bribing of doctors by the pharma and medical devices companies.

According to the document, "No gifts, pecuniary advantages or benefits in kind shall be supplied, offered or promised to persons qualified to use, prescribe or supply medical devices, by a medical device company or any of its agents."

The code also bars gifting for the personal benefit of doctors and their family members (both immediate and extended) perks such as tickets to entertainment events.

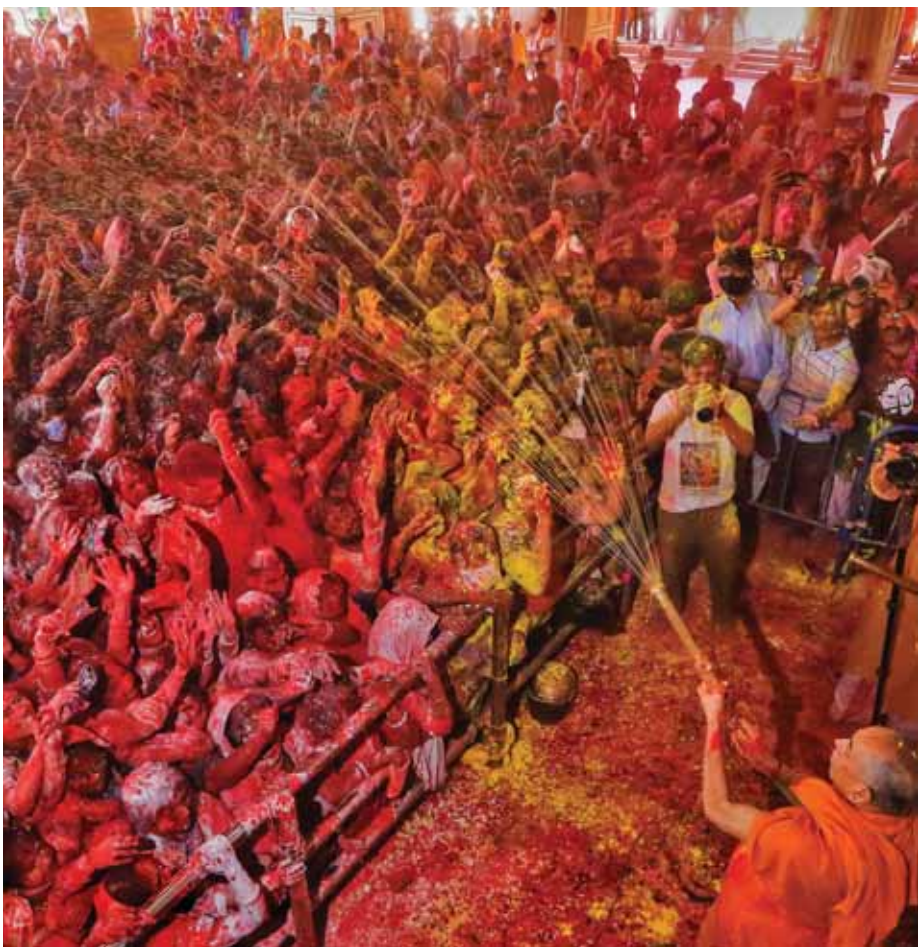
The Department of Pharmaceuticals — under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers — has released the

draft and sought feedback from the industry representatives by April 15.

"This is a voluntary code for the present and its implementation will be reviewed after a period of six months from the date of its issue. If it is found that it has not been implemented effectively by the Pharma Associations /Companies, the Government may consider making it a statutory code," the 16-page draft document said.

"Companies or their associations/representatives or any person acting on their behalf shall not extend any travel facility inside the country or outside, including rail, air, ship, cruise tickets, paid vacations, to healthcare professionals and their family members for vacation or for attending the conference, seminars, workshops, CME programme as a delegate.

Continued on Page 2



Devotees celebrate with colours, a day before the festival of Holi, at Govind Dev Ji Temple, in Jaipur, on Thursday

PTI

# Japan's PM, UK Secy to visit India for talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India will see some high-profile visits and virtual interactions in the next few days starting with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida followed by British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also hold virtual talks with his Australian Scott Morrison.

Japanese Prime Minister Kishida will pay a two-day visit beginning Saturday to hold the 14th India-Japan summit with his Indian counterpart Prime Minister Modi.

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said here on Thursday that the summit will be held on Saturday. He said the summit will provide an opportunity for the both sides to review and further strengthen bilateral ties. The two leaders will explore further avenues in commerce and trade.

Japan is part of Quad combine along with India, Australia and the US, and both the leaders are likely to review the sit-

uation in the Indo-Pacific. China is flexing its muscle there and has criticised the Quad claiming it will lead to militarisation of the region.

Interestingly, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is likely to come here on March 24 or 25 to hold talks with his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar. Bagchi said Modi and Morrison will take part in the second India-Australia virtual summit on March 22. He added that this virtual summit follows the "historic first virtual summit which was held on June 4, 2020 when our bilateral relationship was elevated to a comprehensive strategic partnership."

The leaders will take a stock of progress made on various initiatives under the comprehensive strategic partnership. In June 2020, India and Australia elevated their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership and signed a landmark deal for reciprocal access to military bases for logistics support.

Continued on page 2

# Miracle! DRDO builds high-rise in 45 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has made a record by building a multi-storey facility at Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) in Bengaluru in 45 days. The facility houses flight control system for fighter aircraft and Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) project.

The foundation stone for the project was laid on November 22, 2021, and actual construction began on February 1. The building was constructed using composite construction technology.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the complex on Thursday. Congratulating those involved in the project, he said it is no less than a miracle.

The seven-storey building, with a plinth area of 1.3 lakh square feet, will house research

and development facilities for the development of a fifth-generation medium-weight deep penetration fighter jet.

The DRDO completed the construction of the infrastructure for flight control system at ADE Bengaluru with hybrid technology consisting of conventional, pre-engineered and precast methodology in record 45 days, officials said here.

The complex will have facilities for developing avionics for fighter aircraft and flight control systems (FCS) for the AMCA project. India has been working on the ambitious AMCA project to develop a fifth-generation medium fighter jet with advanced stealth features to significantly bolster its air power capability. The initial development cost of the project, being undertaken by the ADE, has been estimated at around ₹15,000 crore.

Continued on Page 2

# Kumaoni Holi reflects its pristine vibrant culture

PURNIMA BISHT ■ DEHRADUN

Though the ways of celebrating Holi have changed in recent years, the celebration of Holi in Kumaon continues to reflect the vibrant and rich local culture of Uttarakhand. Apart from the colours, it is the folk songs — many based on classical ragas — folk dances and customs which lend a special touch to this celebration of Holi.

Kumaoni Holi has its origin in the Kumaon division, but it is celebrated in different parts of the country by the natives of the Kumaon region who have kept their Holi traditions alive.

A 74-year-old senior citizen of Almora, Paan Singh Joshi informed *The Pioneer* that the celebrations of Kumaoni Holi do not just depict the victory of good over evil but more importantly, it marks the end of the winter and the beginning of the sowing season which has always been an important period for

farmers. The Holi in Kumaoni tradition is celebrated in two prominent variations — Baithaki Holi and Khadi Holi. He said, "Baithaki Holi begins from Vasant Panchmi and ends on Dashmi of Phalgun month, while Khadi Holi commences from Ekadashi of Phalgun month and ends on Poornima. The day after Poornima is celebrated as the last day of Holi which is called Charradi. The men generally wear white kurta, pajama and topi and the women wear sarees during the celebrations."

Joshi added, "Baithaki Holi, as the name suggests, is celebrated in a seated position by Holyars (people celebrating Holi) singing folk songs recounting the tales of Lord Krishna and how he celebrated Holi at Mathura with Radha and his friends and family. The subjects of the songs based on gods and goddesses like Shiva-Parvati, Ram-Sita and Hanuman are also sung by Holyars. Dhol, Huruk and Damau which are an indis-

pensable part of the celebration are also played by them."

In Khadi Holi, Holyars traditionally gather in a circle in a courtyard or an open area and sing folk songs and play traditional musical instruments like Dhol, Huruk and Damau and move together in sync dancing to the song, added Joshi. However, there is also a fixed pattern of singing these folk songs which adds to the charms of the celebration, said a Pithoragarh resident Richa Bisht.

She said, "During Holi celebration, there is a chief holyar who sets the tone of the song by singing the intro and main verse while the rest of the Holyars sing the song in chorus."

Nainital resident Namita Suyal said Baithaki and Khadi Holi are being celebrated at least for over a century while Mahila Holi, which has now become an important part of the Kumaoni Holi and celebrated only by women, became popular only in the past two

decades. She said that in the modern world where people are in a constant race to do well at any cost professionally and personally, Kumaoni Holi celebrates the joy of togetherness

and gives the people a sense of oneness.

"It is not easy to keep the tradition alive when the younger generation tends to stay away from old culture

and traditions but I am glad, many young people have been attending and learning about Kumaoni Holi and celebrating it wherever they go in their life," said Suyal.





# Delhi Govt indentifies 147 waterlogging hotspots

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

To deal with the menace of waterlogging during the monsoons in the national Capital, the Delhi Government has started its preparations and identified around 147 hotspots of waterlogging across the city.

On Thursday, Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister and Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Manish Sisodia held a review meeting with PWD officials to take stock of the preparations and directed the concerned officials to take all preventive measures by the end of May to prevent any inconvenience to the public.

Last year, Delhi had received up to 110 mm rainfall per day, which led to serious waterlogging issues in many areas. Sisodia had also directed all the concerned departments including PWD to prepare short-term and long-term strategies to prevent waterlogging in the future.

According to a senior PWD official, many water log-

ging incidents were reported from Pul Prahladpur Underpass here last year and to prevent any such situation, PWD is constructing an underground pump of 7.5 lakh liters capacity and a permanent pump house of 600 horsepower.

"The construction work of the underground sump and pump house will be completed by the end of May. Along with this, seven temporary pumps will also be installed here, which will have a total capacity of 500 horsepower," said the official.

"To eliminate the problem of waterlogging on Ring Road, nine pumps will be installed as well as PWD will construct a 1.5 lakh liter sump and stormwater drain from the old IP power plant to the Yamuna. This construction work will be completed before the monsoon," said the official.

"Action plan of PWD to prevent waterlogging at Jahangirpuri Metro Station Road includes the construction of a drain along with service

road, reconstruction of old SW drain between the main road and Mukarba Chowk bound, along with the main road towards Ramgarh and Mahendra Park. Remodeling of SW drain and construction of permanent pump house is also included," said the official.

"Till a year ago, even if there was less rain, the situation of water logging used to arise under the Minto-Bridge. To overcome this, many permanent steps were taken by the Delhi Government last year and despite the unexpected rains, people did not face water-logging here," said the official.

"This year, the Delhi government will set up an alternate drainage system and an automatic water pump to further improve its preparedness in the Minto-Bridge area," the official added.

The Deputy CM has also directed the officials that the desilting work of all drains should be completed before May 31 and there should be no laxity.

## CASE OVER ENDORSEMENT OF REAL ESTATE PROJECT

# G'gram cops register case against Sharapova, Schumacher

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Following directions of a local court, the Gurugram police have registered a case against former Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova, former Formula 1 racer Michael Schumacher and 11 others for fraud and criminal conspiracy at the Badshahpur police station.

The complainant, a Delhi Chattarpur resident, Shafali Agarwal, made allegations against the former duo sports personalities and the M/S Realtech Development and Infrastructure (INDIA) Pvt Ltd, developers.

She alleged in her complaint that "Sharapova was the signed promoter of the project and was also criminally conspired the buyers, she visited the site and promised the opening of a tennis academy and sports store in the project. She was also mentioned in the brochure promoting the project, and she also made false promises and had dinner parties with the buyers, and all this was done for the project which never took off from last 7

years". She also alleged that Michael Schumacher World Tower as mentioned in the advertisements and brochure has been named after former Formula One racer Michael Schumacher.

In 2013, the complainant had booked an apartment in a project named Maria Sharapova and a tower in the project was named Michael Schumacher world tower. The project is located in sector-73.

The complaint said, the project was to be completed by 2016 but had never been completed in the past 7 years.

Earlier, Agarwal had also filed a complaint in a Gurugram court against the developers, Sharapova and Schumacher for duping her of around Rs 80 lakh.

She accused the duo of sports celebrities of being part of the fraud through their association and promotion of it.

The victim also said she approached the National Consumer Dispute Redressal commission by way of filling a consumer complaint in 2018.

"Wherein the court has issued notice to accused. She



also filed a complaint in October 2020 bearing Diary No. 1580 in the Badshahpur police station, in the statement they mentioned (police) their grievances and requested the concerned authorities to register an F.I.R. but no action was taken in regards with the same," she alleged.

The complainants even wrote to the Director of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) by sending an email and seeking information but did not receive any reply.

Thereafter, the complainant also filed an RTI to Director and The Country Planning, Gurugram, Haryana

for seeking information about the project registration details and updates, but to date, the complainants have not received any response as of now.

The Complainant got to know from sources that accused developers have not even acquired the project land anywhere in Sector - 73 they claim to make the project namely MARIA SHARAPOVA, also they don't even hold a licence from DTCP or permission from the concerned government authorities," she added.

Earlier, Agarwal had also filed a complaint in a Gurugram court against M/S

Realtech Development and Infrastructure (INDIA) Pvt Ltd, other developers, Sharapova and Schumacher for duping her of around Rs 80 lakh.

The complaint alleged that only after the promotion of the project by these international sports stars and advertisements she had invested in the project.

She added that at that time the company officials had also made several lucrative promises which were found false at the time of booking.

"As per the court order, an FIR has been registered and we are investigating the matter. The matter will be investigated at all different angles," Preet Pal Sangwan, ACP (crime) said.

Dinkar, station house officer (SHO) of the Badshahpur police station said, "We have yet to get more details about the matter. The FIR has been registered on the court directions.

The FIR has been registered under Sections 34 (common intention), 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 406 (criminal breach of trust) and 420 (cheating) of the IPC at the Badshahpur police station.

# Delhi Govt likely to allocate funds for new secretariat, mohalla clinics for women

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In its budget for 2022-23, the Delhi government is likely to earmark funds for several key initiatives such as redesigning city roads on the lines of European ones and constructing a sports university, new secretariat and dedicated mohalla clinics for women, official sources said on Thursday.

Officials said that like previous years, this year too health,

education and transport are likely to be the main focus areas of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government in its budget.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia is likely to present the budget on March 25 in the Delhi Assembly's budget session starting from March 23.

Officials said that redesigning of the roads is one of the priority projects of the Delhi Government where it aims to improve and beautify 500 km of city roads on European stan-

dards.

The Government has already issued funds for development of nine sample stretches for the project.

"Some of the key projects for which the government may allocate funds in the upcoming budget include redesigning of roads on European standards and construction of world class sports university in Bawana," one of the sources told PTI.

A Government official said that both these projects will be carried out by the Public Works Department. The construction work on redesigning of roads project is likely to begin in 2-3 months.

Similarly, the construction of sports university in Mundka is also to start soon as its planning-related work has been done.

Sources also said that after the success of mohalla clinics across the city, the Government is likely to announce mohalla clinics for women in this budget.

# Defamation case: No material to show magistrate acted without fairness, says court on Kangana's transfer plea

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Sessions court here while rejecting Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut's plea seeking transfer of the defamation case against her, has held that there was no material to indicate that the metropolitan magistrate had acted without "fairness" or had any biases against her.

The actor had filed a plea seeking that a criminal defamation case filed against her by lyricist Javed Akhtar be transferred from the Andheri metropolitan magistrate to any other court.

The sessions court also refused to transfer her cross complaint filed against Akhtar before the Andheri court.

Both pleas filed by Ranaut were rejected by the second additional principal and sessions judge (Dindoshi) S S Oza on March 9. The detailed order was available on Thursday.

While rejecting the plea, the court held that the apprehension of not getting a fair and impartial inquiry or trial is required to be "reasonable and

not imaginary, based upon conjectures and surmises".

"If it appears that the dispensation of criminal justice is not possible impartially and objectively and without any bias, before any court, the court may transfer the case to another court where it feels that holding of fair and proper trial is conducive," it said.

The court observed that a mere allegation that there is apprehension that justice will not be done in the given case, alone does not suffice.

The judge in his order noted that in absence of any material demonstrating the apprehension that justice will not be done, without any bias, such application for transfer cannot be entertained.

"There is no material to conclude that the metropolitan magistrate was dealing with the matter without fairness and had any biasness (biases) against applicant (Kangana). Therefore, in my considered opinion, the applicant has not made out a case under section 408 of CrPC to transfer both the cases," it said.

Ranaut, in her plea, had alleged that the 10th Metropolitan Magistrate's Court (Andheri) had shown "bias and prejudice towards her" by not granting her permanent exemption and threatened to issue an "arrest warrant" for a "bailable and non-cognizable offence".

In October last year, the chief metropolitan magistrate (CMM) had rejected a similar plea by the actor, who later challenged the order before the sessions court. However, her revision petition was also rejected.

Her latest plea was filed under section 408 of the CrPC, which provides power to a sessions judge to transfer cases and appeals.

Akhtar (76) had filed a complaint in the court in November 2020, claiming that Ranaut had made defamatory statements against him in a television interview, which allegedly damaged his reputation.

The complaint is being heard by the metropolitan magistrate court, Andheri.

# Over 3,900 children in 12-14 age group given Covid shots in Delhi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Over 3,900 children aged between 12 and 14 were vaccinated against COVID-19 in Delhi on Thursday.

The vaccination for this age group commenced on Wednesday. A total of 3,907 children were administered the jab on the second day in the city.

As many as 612 children were vaccinated in northeast Delhi, the highest among all the districts. The district had recorded the highest figures in the first day too.

Central Delhi recorded the lowest figures at 120. Southeast district, where there was zero vaccination on the first day, saw 173 children receiving the first jab of the Biological E's Corbevax vaccine.

The second highest and third highest figures were recorded by west district (634)

and southwest district (615), respectively.

About six to seven lakh children in the age bracket of 12 to 14 are eligible for vaccination in the city. Delhi on Thursday reported 148 fresh COVID-19 cases and one fatality, while the positivity rate stood at 0.47 per cent, according to data shared by the city's health department. With this, the national capital's case count increased to 18,63,493 and the death toll climbed to 26,145, the health bulletin stated.

The Centre had on Tuesday released guidelines for Covid vaccination of children aged 12-14 and said only the Corbevax vaccine would be used for the beneficiaries in this age group. According to it, vaccination of 12-14 years would be conducted through dedicated inoculation sessions to avoid their unintended vaccination with any other COVID-19 vaccines.

# Delhi Govt to distribute ₹41.9 cr to over 83,000 construction workers as pollution subsistence grant

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will be distributing ₹41.9 crore to over 83,000 construction workers as a pollution subsistence grant, according to an official statement.

These construction workers had not received the grant in November last year due to the non-completion of the renewal process, the statement said. The city Government had distributed a pollution subsistence grant of ₹5,000 each to the construction workers registered with the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (DBOCWWB) during a ban on construction activities in the national capital due to high pollution levels in November.

The Delhi Government had announced an assistance of ₹5,000 each to the workers and a total amount of ₹250 crore was released for this.

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SEWERAGE & DRAINAGE**  
**DIVISION No: 1<sup>st</sup> SULIMAN COMPLEX DALGATE SRINAGAR**  
**(e-mail ID: xen\_sewerageeud@yahoo.com)**  
**GIST of Short Term e-NIT No: 38 of 2021-22**

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K State e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. and other State / Central Government for the following work:-  
**S.No 1. Name of work :-** Annual Maintenance by way of clearance of sewer including manholes, drains, chambers, sump wells etc for Sewerage and Drainage Network of SMHS Hospital Medical College, Doctors Hostel and Super Speciality Hospital Srinagar.  
**Est. Cost (Rs. In lacs) including Departmental Supply :- 2.35, Cost of T/Doc. (in Rs.) :- 500/= , Period :- One Year, Class of Contract :- "DEE"**  
**Important Dates:-**  
**1.Date of publishing :- 16/03/2022**  
**2. Period of downloading of bidding documents :- 16/03/2022 to 26/03/2022 up-to 4:00 PM**  
**3. Bid submission Start Date :- 16/03/2022 from 4:00 PM**  
**4. Bid submission End Date :- 26/03/2022 up-to 4:00 PM**  
**5. Date & time of opening of bids (Online) :- 28/03/2022 at 11:00 AM or any other convenient date.**  
**Tender Receiving Authority:-**  
**Executive Engineer S&D Division I<sup>st</sup>**  
**Sulaiman Complex Dalgate Srinagar**  
**Sd/- Executive Engineer,**  
**S&D Division I<sup>st</sup> Srinagar**  
**No. DIPK-19659/21**  
**Dated: 16-03-2022**

# Covid returns!....

From page 1

"We just have to avoid thinking that Covid is no longer there. And therefore maintain the strictly necessary measures, which are essentially the continuous monitoring and tracking of cases, and the maintenance of the obligation to wear a mask in closed or very crowded places," Antonella Viola, Professor of immunology at the Italy's University of Padua said.

As each country is facing a different situation, the WHO has kept cautioning that the pandemic is not over yet, calling on all countries to remain vigilant.

According to Mike Ryan, executive director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, the virus will "wax and wane" as "it has not settled down into a purely, seasonal or predictable pattern yet," according to Mike Ryan, executive director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.

"We need to be very cautious. We need to watch this very carefully, and we need to focus on getting the most vulnerable appropriately vaccinated. And we need to do that as quickly as possible in every country," he said.

# Govt code to end...

From page 1

It is hereby clarified that in any seminar, conference or meeting organised by a pharmaceutical company for promoting a drug or disseminating information, if a medical practitioner participates as a delegate, it will be at his/her own cost. Companies will be asked to "not pay any cash or monetary grants to any health-care provider for individual purpose in individual capacity under any pretext."

The code states: The companies will be allowed to occasionally provide modest, appropriate educational items to doctors that "benefit patients or

serve a genuine educational function for HCPs. Also, companies may occasionally provide modest, appropriate brand recall items that are reasonable in value and frequency. "However, the value of such brand recalls items/ brand reminders shall not exceed Rs 1,000." "Free samples of drugs shall not be supplied to any person who is not qualified to prescribe such product. Where samples of products are distributed by a medical representative, the sample must be handed directly to a person qualified to prescribe such product or to a person authorised to receive the sample on their behalf," it said.

# Mann's phone is..

From page 1

In a video message, Mann reminded people that when the AAP came to power in Delhi, people were asked to provide videos of corrupt officials.

Mann said this helpline number will be launched on March 23, the death anniversary of freedom fighter Bhagat Singh. The Chief Minister said it will be a big announcement in the history of Punjab.

During an online briefing, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal recalled he had done something similar in his first stint in Delhi that lasted 49 days. "When I had formed the Government for the first time, I had also issued a WhatsApp number. During those 49 days, we took action against 30-32 officials by sending them to jail.

Corruption was eradicated in Delhi and the phone became the biggest weapon of empowerment of the common public," he said.

"It's been 75 years since we have gained independence but we still have to pay bribes. All parties have indulged in corruption. The Aam Aadmi Party is the first party to run an honest Government.

"Kejriwal and his Ministers, Mann and his Ministers are not corrupt. We don't want 'hafia' (protection money). Just like we eradicated corruption in Delhi, we will end it in Punjab as well," he said.

Kejriwal assured people that strict action will be taken on their complaints. Mann took oath as Punjab Chief Minister on Wednesday.

**कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल**  
**यात्रिक विभाग (मुख्यालय) गोविंदपुरा (बी.एच.ई.एल.)**  
**निविदा आमंत्रण घोषणा-पत्र**

क्र. 419/या.वि./2022

भोपाल, दिनांक 16.03.2022

निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु दो लिफाफा पद्धति के अनुसार म.प्र. लोक निर्माण विभाग में केन्द्रीकृत व्यवस्था के अंतर्गत पंजीकृत टेकेंडर परसेन्टेज मोहर बंद निविदायें निर्धारित प्रपत्र पर ऑनलाईन आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।

S. No.	Tender ID	Name of Work	Probable Amount of Contract (Rs. in lakh)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (In Rs.)	Cost of Bid Document (In Rs.)	Period of Completion (in Months)	SOR
1	2022_UAD_191579_1	ANNUAL TENDER WORK (EMPANELMENT BASIS) FOR MAINTENANCE OF BUILDING TOILETS, FOOTPATH, DRAINS AND OTHER WORKS IN BHOPAL CITY ZONE 01 TO 19	448.94	224474	15000	12 months (including rainy season)	MPUADD ISSR 2021

1. Interested bidders can view the NIT on website <https://mptenders.gov.in/>

2. The Bid Document can be purchased only online from 10:30 A.M. (time) 17.03.2022 (date) to 17.30 P.M. (time) 31.03.2022 (date).

3. Amendments to NIT (if any) would be published on website <https://mptenders.gov.in/> only, and not in newspaper.

4. E. M. Deposit will not be refunded till the end of contract Period.

5. Minimum Rate Quoted by any Bidder will be Applicable to all the Empanelled Contractors.

In. Chief Engineer

Municipal Corporation Bhopal

District Bhopal

**नि.क्र. 1325/021/022**

# Japan's PM, UK Secy....

From page 1

The Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) allows militaries of the two countries to use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies, besides facilitating scaling up of overall defence cooperation.

The Australian Navy was part of the Malabar naval exercise hosted by India in November 2020 as well as last year. The navies of the US and Japan were also part of it. Australia was part of the Malabar exercise this year as well. The British Foreign Secretary is likely to arrive here towards the month-end.

# Miracle! DRDO builds.....

From page 1

The Defence Ministry on Monday said it has initiated the process of obtaining the approval for the design and prototype development of the AMCA from the prime minister-led Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

It is a unique record of completing a permanent seven-storey building with hybrid construction technology, that too in ready-to-move condition for the first time in the coun-

try, officials said.

In hybrid construction technology, the column and beam elements of the structural frame are built with steel plates, the columns are of hollow steel tubular section.

The building features air-conditioning, electrical and fire protection systems as per the standard national building code and the design check and technical support was provided by teams from IIT Madras and IIT Roorkee.

# Two held for cheating 50 people on pretext of providing jobs in Railways: Police

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two men were arrested for allegedly cheating around 50 people on the pretext of providing them jobs in railways, police said on Thursday.

The accused have been identified as Faridabad resident

Ritesh, 26, and Mohit Rajput, 25, of Ambala in Haryana, they said.

Police made the arrests after conducting a probe into the complaints against Ritesh of duping people on the pretext of getting them the job of the

assistant station master in railways.

During the investigation, police conducted raids at various places in Haryana and nabbed main accused Ritesh from Faridabad on Sunday, Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi said.

During interrogation, Ritesh disclosed that he had duped around 50 unemployed people on the pretext of providing them with the job and had taken around Rs 50 lakh from them, Kalsi said.

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ROW OVER DEFERMENT OF MCD POLLS

Ask SEC to hold polls on time, AAP urges SC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the Centre decided to re-unify all MCDs and deferred the announcement of civic body polls, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has moved the Supreme Court seeking direction to the State Election Commissioner (SEC) to expeditiously conduct the municipal elections in Delhi in a free and fair manner.

The party alleged that the "brazen influence" of the Central Government over the SEC and its "flagrant meddling" with the conduct of municipal elections forms the subject matter of its plea.

The petition said it is raising an important question of constitutional significance in its writ petition whether the SEC can be influenced by an unofficial communication sent by the Central Government to defer municipal polls, which the SEC was otherwise

absolutely prepared to schedule and conduct. "Petitioners are exercising their right under Article 32 of the Constitution of India to correct this unconstitutional anomaly and protect the free, fair, and expeditious elections of the Municipal Corporations of Delhi", the plea filed through advocate Shadan Farasat said.

The ruling party in Delhi said, "They seek the issuance of a writ of mandamus directing the Respondent (SEC) to conduct the municipal elections in Delhi according to the initially conceived schedule of the SEC, National Capital Territory of Delhi, before the expiry of the tenure of the municipal corporations of Delhi, in May 2022."

The petition said that cognisance of the attempt of State functionaries to hamper timely conduct of elections to local bodies, Article 243U was introduced in the Constitution of

India, mandating the five-year tenure of civic bodies. "Section 4 of the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957 codifies this five-year period of operation of the three MCDs, which have been tasked with performing several administrative functions in Delhi.

This duration is coming to an end in May 2022. Thus, elections for Councillors are due in these corporations", the plea said.

It added that the SEC of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, set up under Article 243ZA of the Constitution of India is responsible for the free, fair, and impartial conduct of these elections under Section 7 of the 1957 Act.

It said that accordingly, the SEC has been preparing for the Delhi Municipal Elections, which it has declared in multiple notices, notifications and orders would be conducted in April 2022.

No Covid patient at LNJP Hosp now

First to be turned into a Corona facility, the hospital is free for first time since March 2020

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the decline in Covid-19 cases in the national Capital, the Delhi Government-run LNJP Hospital now has zero patients admitted at facility. This has happened for first time since March 2020. "All the Covid-19 patients of the third wave have been successfully treated and discharged from LNJP Hospital. For first time since March 2020, zero patients of Covid-19 are admitted in hospital.

Salute to entire medical fraternity for their dedicated service," Satyendra Jain, Delhi's Health Minister tweeted. The first case of Covid-19 in Delhi was reported in March 2020 and since then British-era hospital, which is largest facility of the city Government, has been

at forefront of fight against pandemic in national Capital. The hospital staff treated domestic patients as well as those from foreign countries in three successive waves, the last being fuelled by the Omicron variant. The hospital has 2,000 beds and was first to be turned into a Coronavirus facility soon after first case of Covid-19 was reported in early March.

During the second wave, Covid-19 patients from UK were treated while during the third wave, many from South Africa and other countries received treatment at the facility. During second brutal wave, scenes of distressed family members seeking a bed at hospitals had become a common sight. The LNJP Hospital also was heavily burdened, but doctors still tried to lend whatever medical support they could to such patients who could not get a bed in order to give them a chance for survival. The number of daily cases in Delhi has been on decline after touching record high of 28,867 on January 13.

Man held for sexual assault on minor girl

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a 28-year-old man for the alleged sexual assault of a minor girl. The man was held after a brief encounter with the police in Delhi's Shahbad Dairy area. The accused has been identified as Mohammad Akhtar, a resident of Shahbad Daultpur. He sustained a bullet injury in his leg. Police said that a five-year-old girl who was playing outside her home went missing on March 9.

According to Brijendra Kumar Yadav, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer district, the girl was brought home the next morning by a neighbour. "The girl's statement was recorded before a Magistrate and she did not mention anything about sexual assault in it," said the DCP.

"On Saturday, the girl started having some medical problem and was taken to the hospital. The medical report stated that her hymen was torn, thereby indicating sexual assault. Thereafter, a search for the accused was launched and he was caught.

Govt job for brother of IB officer Ankit killed in Delhi riots

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has provided a Government job to Ankur Sharma, brother of late Intelligence Bureau (IB) staffer Ankit Sharma, who lost his life during the Delhi Riots. Sharma has been appointed as 'Junior Assistant' in the education department of the Delhi Government.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal personally handed over appointment letter to Ankur Sharma in presence of Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

"We can never compensate for loss of a loved one's life but I hope this Government job and an assistance of Rs 1 crore brings the family strength. We will continue to stand by them and support them whenever needed," Kejriwal wrote in a tweet. "Ankur Sharma, the brother of Delhi riots victim and late IB staffer Ankit Sharma was given a job certificate by CM Arvind Kejriwal.

Ankur Sharma is being appointed to the Education Department of the Delhi Government," Sisodia, who is also the Education Minister, wrote on Twitter. After receiving the certificate from the Chief Minister, Ankur Sharma said his brother Ankit Sharma died during the Delhi riots and since then, the Delhi Government had supported him and his family at every step.

"The CM provided us with financial assistance. Today, I have been offered a Government job in the Delhi Government by the CM. I will always remain indebted to Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and everyone at the Delhi Government for looking after our family," said Sharma. Earlier, a Cabinet meeting was convened at Delhi Secretariat in March 2021 in which Ankur Sharma, brother of late Ankit Sharma, was proposed to be given a job in the Delhi Government as per his merit.

'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' drive

AAP Govt to get audit of green initiative's impact

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In order to assess the impact of the 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' drive, the Delhi Government has decided to conduct a third-party audit of the ambitious initiative.

According to an official, a proposal for a third-party audit of the drive has been sent to the Delhi Environment Minister's office. "We are awaiting the nod. We will try to assess the impact of the drive on vehicular pollution," said the official.

Under the drive launched on October 16, 2020 to cut down vehicular pollution in the national Capital, drivers are encouraged to switch off their vehicles while waiting for the traffic light to turn green. Another official said the drive is planned this year too. "Whether any campaign is a success or not depends upon public participation. The people need to fulfil their responsibility in the fight against pollution," he said.

At the launch of the campaign at the ITO traffic signal in October 2020, Environment Minister Gopal Rai had said vehicular pollution in Delhi can be reduced by 15 to 20 per cent if commuters turn off their vehicle engines while waiting at traffic signals.

Data from the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) shows if people switch off engines at traffic signals, pollution can be cut down by 13 to 20 per cent. According to Government estimates, the transport sector accounts for 28 per cent of the PM2.5 emissions in Delhi. The vehicular contribution also

makes up 80 per cent of nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide in Delhi's air.

A total of 1.33 crore vehicles are registered in Delhi currently. The count of vehicles in the national Capital more than doubled to 643 per 1,000 population in 2019-20 from 317 in 2005-06. As part of the 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' campaign, the Environment Department deploys civil defence volunteers at major traffic junctions in the city who ensure the commuters kill the engine while waiting at traffic signals and hand out pamphlets carrying information on vehicular pollution.

The department deployed around 2,500 civil defence volunteers in two shifts of 8 am to 2 pm and 2 pm to 8 pm at 100 traffic junctions in the latest leg of the campaign from October 18 to December 18 last year.

The Government pays Rs 700 a day to every volunteer, according to officials. The AAP Government had also got an audit done of 'Pusa bio decomposer', a microbial solution for fermenting stubble into manure, by WAPCOS, a consultancy firm of the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, last year.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had said the audit found the solution to be highly effective and had urged the Centre to ask neighbouring States to distribute it for free among farmers.

The Delhi Government used solution, prepared by scientists at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, to manage stubble in non-basmati rice fields here post harvest in 2020 and 2021.

Tech snag derails Metro services

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following a technical glitch, the Delhi Metro services were delayed for nearly two hours on Thursday on its three corridors. Many commuters took to social media to share pictures of stranded passengers.

A large number of people, mainly office-goers, take the metro in the morning to travel to their destinations in Delhi and neighbouring cities.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) tweeted around 9 AM to alert commuters: "Service Update Delay in services on Violet, Green and Pink lines. Please allow for some extra time in your commute."

"Train services on Green, Violet and Pink Lines were affected today from 8:05 AM to 11:05 AM due to intermittent signalling issues resulting in movement of trains with restricted speed on manual mode with full safety," said the spokesperson of DMRC.

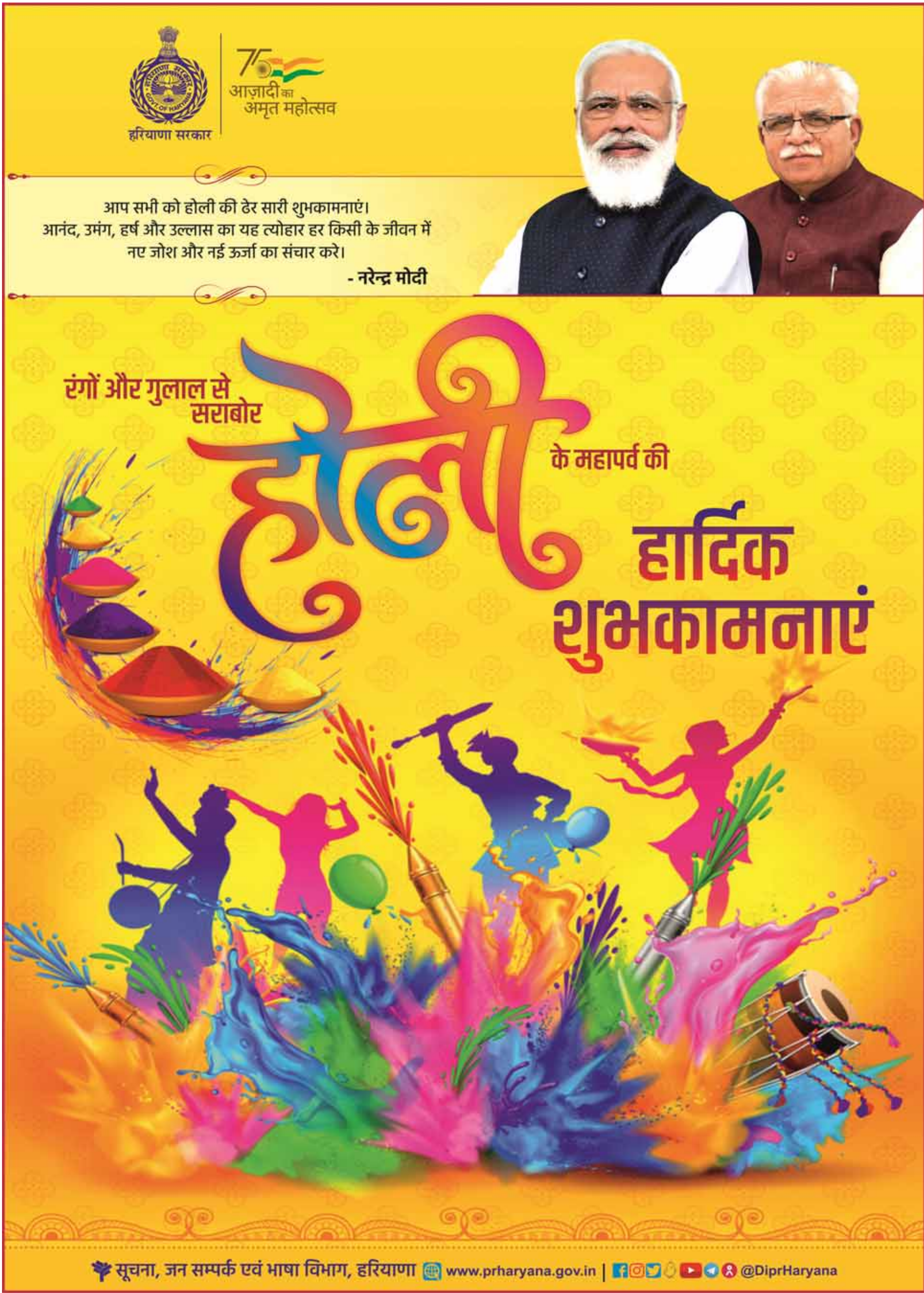
"The signaling issue was reported from these Lines having the Bombardier-based signaling system. During this period, services on these lines were regulated to minimise delay



and inconvenience to passengers," said the spokesperson adding that the DMRC will be further investigating and taking up the issue with Bombardier to avoid recurrence of such failures in the future.

Meanwhile, commuters shared pictures of long queues at many stations, with people awaiting arrival of trains, on Twitter. "No metro from last 20 minutes at Kashmir Gate heavy rush," wrote one Mayank Sharma in response to the DMRC's tweet.

Many riders on these lines also tweeted that they were "not informed" about the reason behind the delay. Around 11:30 AM, the DMRC again tweeted: "Service Update. Services have been normalised. However, to avoid any further inconvenience, the system is still under observation. Passengers are requested to allow for some extra time in their commute."





# Set eyes on goal of building ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’: PM



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Urging Government officials "to take Reform, Perform, Transform to the next level", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asked them not to lose sight of the goal of the 21st century - 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Modern India'. Addressing the Valedictory Function of the 96th Common Foundation Course at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) via video conferencing, the Prime

Minister underlined the emerging new world order in the post-pandemic world.

He said the world is looking towards India at this juncture of 21st century. "In this new world order, India has to increase its role and develop itself at a fast pace", he said. He asked the officers to keep in mind the importance of this period with special focus on the 'biggest goal of the 21st century' i.e. the goal of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Modern India. "We can't afford to lose this opportunity," he said. He also inaugurated the new sports complex and dedicated revamped Happy Valley Complex to the nation. Modi greeted the officers on completing their course and conveyed his wishes on the joyous occasion of Holi. He noted the uniqueness of the outgoing batch as this batch is entering the active service in

the year of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. "Your batch will play a key role in the nation's development in the Amrit Kaal of the next 25 year," he added.

Referring to the views of Sardar Patel on civil services, the Prime Minister said that sense of service and duty has been the integral part of the training. "In all your years of service, these factors of service and duty should be the measure of your personal and professional success", he added.

He said work is never a burden when done with a sense of duty and purpose. He told the officers that they have come to the service with a sense of purpose and to be a part of a positive change in the context of the society and the country.

The PM emphasised the need to embrace the experience from the field as real feel of the issues of the file come from the

field. Significantly, he said that files do not contain just the numbers and statistics but they contain life and aspirations of the people. "You do not have to work for numbers but for the lives of the people", he said.

He said that in this period of 'Amrit Kaal', we have to take Reform, Perform, Transform to the next level. That is why today's India is moving ahead with the spirit of 'Sabka Prayas'.

He also recalled Mahatma Gandhi's mantra that every decision should be evaluated on the touchstone of the welfare of the last person in the last line. The Prime Minister gave the officers task of identifying 5-6 challenges of their districts at local level and work for those issues. He said identification of the challenges is the first step in the rectification of the challenges.

## Evacuation can be tough in LWE areas: CRPF chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

CRPF chief Kuldip Singh on Thursday said he will hold himself responsible for delays in air-evacuation of injured personnel but pointed out that sometimes "practical

difficulties" crop up in executing such operations in a timely manner in the Naxal theatre. Talking about a recent incident in which an injured Assistant Commandant Bibhor Kumar Singh had to undergo amputation of both his legs post a

blast in an anti-Naxal operation in Gaya due to delayed evacuation for over seven hours, Singh said "why the helicopter could not evacuate the officer or during other operations is a big technical issue".

"If you ask who is responsible for this, I would hold myself responsible, it is my responsibility to ensure helicopters are provided to troops because it is me who directs and motivates troops to go out for operations.

If anyone is to be blamed, it is me. I cannot blame anyone else," Singh told a press conference ahead of the Force's 83rd raising day on Saturday.

"But I can tell you that pilots and agencies operating sorties in these (Left-Wing Extremism) areas are professionals. There are practical difficulties in conducting these air evacuation operations," he said.

The force regularly takes up issues related to concerns over delay in evacuation by air with the top brass of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Border Security Force (BSF), which

operate helicopters for aiding ground troops fighting Naxalism, he further said. Earlier, the parade was generally held in the national capital and on a few occasions it was organised at Neemuch in Madhya Pradesh where the Force was originally headquartered after its creation by the British Government in 1939 as Crown Representative Police.

Talking about the Bihar incident, the DG said Assistant Commandant Bibhor Kumar Singh could not be evacuated for better treatment as pilots did not fly at night from Gaya to Ranchi but the next day they sent an air ambulance to airlift him to Delhi for admission to AIIMS.

"We also feel sad, the families of the injured or slain troops are anguished but I can tell you it is not exactly someone's fault," the DG said. He said that logistical, maintenance and other issues came in the way of having a "dedicated" air wing exclusively within CRPF.

## ‘Will screen Kashmir Files if it is motivational film’



New Delhi: CRPF Director General Kuldip Singh on Thursday said the force will discuss if the Kashmir Files movie could be inspirational or will have motivational effects on the rank and file and accordingly decide to make arrangements to screen the movie for the 3.25 lakh strong force. Incidentally, the 83RD CRPF Day on Saturday is being

held in Jammu. However, he said no decision has been taken so far regarding the screening of Kashmir Files for CRPF personnel. "But it is certain that if a film or drama is inspirational or motivates people, it must be seen," he said. According to CRPF data, a total of 175 terrorists have been killed by it in the past year in Jammu and Kashmir, 183 have been apprehended and two have surrendered. Three CRPF personnel were killed while 61 injured between March 2021 and March 16 this year. Of the killed terrorists, 40 per cent were foreign terrorists. PNS

## PM speaks with S Korean Prez-elect; leaders vow to deepen ties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with South Korean President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol on Thursday with two leaders agreeing to further broaden and deepen India-Korea special strategic partnership, especially in present global context. Prime Minister Modi congratulated Yoon on his victory in recent presidential elections of South Korea, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement. The leaders agreed on importance of further broadening and deepening India-Korea Special Strategic Partnership, especially in present global context, it said. Modi and Yoon discussed various sectors that offer potential for accelerated bilateral cooperation, and agreed to work together to this end. The leaders also emphasised their desire to jointly celebrate 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and South Korea next year, the statement said.

## Delhi does not expect OIC to encourage anti-India activities, says Bagchi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday came out strongly against the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for inviting the chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference to attend its foreign ministerial meeting in Islamabad next week.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said New Delhi does not expect the OIC to encourage actors and organisations engaged in terrorism and anti-India activities. Bagchi was replying to a question on reports about the OIC inviting the chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference to attend the meeting of the grouping's Council of

Foreign Ministers on March 22-23 in Islamabad. At the MEA media briefing, he said India takes very serious view of such actions which are aimed at subverting the country's unity and violating its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It is highly unfortunate that the OIC continues to be guided by a single member's political agenda rather than focusing on important development activities, Bagchi said in an indirect reference to Pakistan.

"We have repeatedly called upon the OIC to refrain from allowing vested interests to exploit the platform for comments on India's internal affairs," he said.

## Think about legal aid centre for the needy: CJI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In his first visit to the UAE, Chief Justice of India NV Ramana on Thursday suggested the organizations of the Indian diaspora in the Gulf nation to think about creating a legal assistance center to help those in need of such assistance in India.

"As the Chief Justice of India, I cannot make any promise to you but I can suggest to organizations, such as the India Social and Cultural Centre, to think about creating a legal assistance center to help those in need of legal assistance in India," Justice Ramana said. The CJI said the national and state legal services authorities in India,

which takes care of the legal service needs of 70 per cent needy population totally free of cost, would extend all possible help in dealing with the legal problems of the needy persons in India.

He was speaking at a felicitation function organised by the Indian community in UAE at the India Social and Cultural Centre, Abu Dhabi.

India's Embassy in Abu Dhabi tweeted that Justice Ramana held a meeting with Abdullah bin Sultan bin Awad Al Nuaimi, the UAE's Minister of Justice, and Mohammad Hamad Al Badi, President of the UAE's Federal Supreme Court. India's Ambassador to the UAE Sunjay Sudhir was present during the meeting. This is the first-ever visit by

the CJI to the UAE in official capacity. Justice Ramana said the growing strong relationship between the two countries will only grow in the times to come and the strong bonds of friendship are bound to flourish and achieve new heights.

He said one of the major reasons for the strong ties between the two nations is that Indians constitute one of the largest ethnic groups in the UAE and they have significantly contributed to the development of the UAE over the years.

Justice Ramanna, the 48th Chief Justice of India, is scheduled to address the fourth edition of an international conference - Arbitration in the Era of Globalization in Dubai on Saturday.

## Nadda discusses UP Govt formation with party's allies



DEEPAK UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Taking the Government formation process in Uttar Pradesh forward, BJP president JP Nadda on Thursday met the party's allies in Uttar Pradesh — Anupriya Patel of the Apna Dal(S) and Sanjay Nishad of the Nishad party at his residence here to finalise the names and numbers to be included in the Council of Ministers from the key allies.

The Apna Dal contested 17 seats and won 12 of them while the Nishad party fought on 16 seats and won six seats in the just concluded Uttar Pradesh polls.

Patel made her debut in the 2012 Assembly elections when her party contested two seats and won both. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the party contested two seats in alliance with the BJP and won both. Patel went on to become a Minister of State at the Centre.

In the 2017 Assembly elections, the Apna Dal contested 11 seats in alliance with the BJP and won nine.

Nadda met Patel and Nishad separately along with BJP's Uttar Pradesh poll-in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan and state unit chief Swatantra Dev Singh, and is understood to have discussed government formation in the state.

While Yogi Adityanath is to occupy the Chief Minister's post for the second time — a record after 37 years—the BJP is yet to be done with the question of having two Deputy Chief ministers as was the case in the first term of the Yogi government.

The loss of assembly elections by ex-deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya from his traditional Sirathu seat has further complicated the issue. Former Governor of Uttarakhand and MLA-elect from Agra rural Baby Rani Maurya is seen as the probable candidate as a minister or a Deputy Chief Minister, sources said.

A number of new faces are certain to gain space in Yogi 2.0 cabinet, sources said. State party president Swatantra Dev Singh is also likely to be inducted in the cabinet.

A day before, Adityanath had held deliberations with Nadda and Union home Minister Amit Shah to finalise the list of 50 probable ministers in the state. The UP CM had earlier in the week also had a long meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and consulted Union Minister Rajnath Singh too. The swearing-in ceremony at Lucknow may be held on March 21.

## Cyclone ‘Asani’ may soon hit Andaman and Nicobar Islands

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Cyclone Asani, the first cyclone of 2022, is expected to hit Andaman and Nicobar Islands on March 21 and it will move towards Bangladesh and Myanmar after hitting Andaman. The cyclone has been named Asani as suggested by Sri Lanka. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has also reviewed the preparedness of central ministries or agencies and administration of Andaman and Nicobar in the view of impending cyclone in Bay of Bengal. The ministry also said that teams of National Disaster Response Force, Indian Army, Navy and Air Force have been asked to be on alert for any untoward situation. Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Thursday reviewed the preparedness of central ministries

and agencies and administration of Andaman & Nicobar in view of impending cyclone in Bay of Bengal and Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard have been put on alert.

Sources said the Union Home Secretary has directed all agencies to keep regular watch and be in touch with Andaman & Nicobar Administration. Fishing, tourism and shipping activities have been stopped after the IMD's alert.

Fishermen advised to return from sea. Indian Army, Navy, Air Force and Indian Coast Guard have been asked to be on high alert. The concerned ministries have also been advised to be ready with assistance if required," officials said. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has explained that a low-pressure area in the Southeast region of the Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into

a cyclonic storm by March 21. The low pressure area over central parts of the south Bay of Bengal moved east-northeast and lay centred at 8.30 am on Thursday, March 17, over the southeast Bay of Bengal and the adjoining east equatorial Indian Ocean.

It is likely to continue moving east-northeast, become a well-marked low-pressure area and lie over the southeast Bay of Bengal and the adjoining south Andaman Sea by Saturday morning, March 19.

Thereafter, it is likely to move nearly northwards along and off the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, intensify into a depression by the morning of March 20 and evolve into a cyclonic storm on March 21. On the other hand, most parts of the north, west and central India witnessed heat wave to severe heat wave conditions.

## House panel on Defence flags up concern over fund paucity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of continuing tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh and the threat of a two-front war simultaneously with China and Pakistan, the capital outlay for the next fiscal is not adequate, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence has said flagging its concern in its report tabled in the Parliament.

As against the projected demand of Rs 2,15,995 crore, the final allocation was ₹1,52,369.61 crore. The Standing Committee, which tabled its report on Wednesday, said adequate budgetary allocations must be made in view of the present scenario of heightened tensions with certain neighbouring countries. Referring to the gap between

the demand of the three defence services for capital outlay and the budgetary allocation, the panel recommended that the defence ministry should not make any reduction in the outlay in the coming years.

The report said such curtailment of funds could end up compromising the operational preparedness of the defence services. "The committee further note that at BE (budget estimate) stage in 2022-23, the gap between the projected and allocated budget for Army, Navy and Air Force is Rs 14,729.11 crore, Rs 20,031.97 crore and Rs 28,471.05 crore respectively, which are remarkably high," it said. The panel, in its previous reports, had recommended making the capital budget "non-lapsable" and "roll-on" in nature. The com-

mittee said it was apprised that a draft cabinet note for the non-lapsable defence modernisation fund is under consideration. The committee also said out of the total budgetary allocation of Rs 3,43,822.00 in 2020-21, only Rs 2,33,176.70 was utilised by the ministry up to December 2020.

The panel asked the defence ministry to expedite the constitution of the "non-lapsable defence modernisation fund - defence renewal fund" that could be used exclusively for the procurement of critical defence assets at critical times.

On the IAF preparedness, the report said the force should have "two front deterrence capabilities", which is of utmost priority as the "threat on both sides of Indian neighbourhood is a reality which cannot be ignored".

## Play Holi with caution: Doctors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

If you are planning to enjoy the festival of colours, then it is very important to know what type of colours you should use or steps you should take to prevent any respiratory, skin or eye related problems, caution the doctors.

"Proper eye care is a must as use of synthetic colours and ignorance regarding safety measures can lead to serious consequences. People enjoy throwing colors on each other while celebrating the festival of colors, but we need to be cautious, especially when it comes to eye care, as it is one of the most vital organs in the human body," said Dr Tushar Grover, Medical Director, Vision Eye Centre.

"Synthetic colours that are used in Holi may contain heavy metals which may cause corneal abrasions, infections and also severe chemical burns in the eye. It is best to avoid such colors. Eyes need extra care during

Holi, so always try to protect your eyes by wearing eye-glasses or protective eye wear. Another important thing I would advise is to try not to wear contact lenses as color may get trapped on the surface of the lens, which may lead to chemical injuries and increase the risk of infection," said Dr Grover.

Dr Vikas Mittal, senior pulmonologist, Max Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi said that as Holi comes at a time when there is a changing season, pollen grains are in the air and Asthma exacerbations can happen around this time. One must continue taking all prescribed medications and consult a doctor prior to Holi.

Doctors also advise avoiding water balloons as they put an individual at a high risk of severe sight-threatening eye injuries such as corneal tears, traumatic cataract and glaucoma, as well as the risk of retinal detachment. Dr. Partap Chauhan, Director, Jiva Ayurveda, shared herbal tips to ensure that Holi colours do



People shop for colours and other essentials ahead of Holi festival, in Delhi on Thursday

Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

not become a bane for the player. "A day before Holi, apply mustard oil all over your body. Apply generously over the face, hands and legs as these are exposed areas where colour will be thrown.

This will keep your skin protected and also allow you to remove the colours with ease," he said. To prevent colours from penetrating deep into the hair roots, one should apply plenty of coconut oil

while alternatively one can also use a lotion, he said. Also, in case a person observes rashes on the skin due to Holi colors, it is best to use face wash instead of soap to remove it, said Dr Chauhan.

### OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT DISTRICT HOSPITAL KULGAM, J&K

NIT No. 01 OF 2022 Dated : 17/03/2022  
On behalf of Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of J&K, e- tenders (through www.jktenders.gov.in), are invited from registered Agencies/firms for providing of sanitation and housekeeping Services at District Hospital Kulgam as per details given in the tender document.-  
**Important Dates and cost of EMD & Tender Fee:-**  
S.No. Particulars Due Dates  
1. Date of Issue of Tender Notice :- 17/03/2022  
2. Date of publication of NIT online :- 17/03/2022  
3. Date for downloading the NIT online :- 17/03/2022 (2.00 pm)  
4. Date for submission of Bid online :- 18/03/2022  
5. Last date for submission of Bids online :- 30/03/2022 (4.00 pm)  
6. Date for opening of bids online :- 31/03/2022  
7. Earnest Money in the form of CDR :- Rs. 20000/- (Rupees Twenty Thousand only)  
8. Cost of Tender document :- Rs. 500/- (Rupees Five Hundred)  
The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including Schedule of Requirement and terms and Conditions are available on the website **www.jktenders.gov.in**.  
The undersigned reserves the right to reject any tender or cancel the whole tendering process without assigning any reason thereof.  
No. DIPK-19743/21 Sd/- Medical Superintendent,  
Dated:- 17.03.2022 DH Kulgam

## Bhopal Municipal Corporation

### Swachh Bharat Mission (Civil)

IIInd Floor, Kushabhau Thakre Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) Campus, Ambedkar Marg, Near Chetak Bridge, Bhopal (M.P.)

No.:BMC/2022/75

Bhopal, Date 17.03.2022

Tender for online submissions are invited on website **www.mptenders.gov.in**, in under "Live Tender" and Department Name "Bhopal Municipal Corporation" for following work. Detailed NIT, Tender Schedule and other information can be seen on the website **www.mptenders.gov.in**.

S. No.	Tender ID	Name of Work	Cost of Bid Document (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rupees)	Period of Work
1	2022_UAD_191816_1	Empanelment of Agencies for Creating Awareness in all wards of BMC	15,000/-	2,11,640/-	12 months

Corrigendum and Amendment for above NIT shall not be issued separately in newspaper & correction if any, would be Published on website only.

**SUPERINTENDENT ENGINEER (SBM)**  
**MUNICIPAL CORPORATION BHOPAL**

**T.N. 1327/021/022**



# Coal scam: TMC attacks Centre as ED summons Abhishek, wife

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Centre for using the agencies like the Enforcement Directorate to harass the Opposition politicians like Abhishek Banerjee — a nephew of Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee — hours after the TMC MP and his wife Rujira Narula Banerjee were issued summons by the central investigation agency in coal smuggling case.

Abhishek Banerjee the national general secretary of the TMC has been issued summons to appear before the ED in a money laundering case related to coal smuggling.

“Abhishek Banerjee has been summoned by the ED to malign Mamata Banerjee ... this is a part of the BJP's vendetta politics ... the BJP will have to repent for this,” Bengal Minister Bratya Basu said on Thursday.

Another senior leader and minister Partha Chatterjee said that such “there were hints of such political victimizations” in the speech of Prime Minister



Narendra Modi soon after the recently concluded elections in five States.

“The BJP Government is acting to a plan ... as the 2024 elections will approach frequency of such summons will increase ...opposition leaders will be called and threatened ... this is a part of the BJP's arm-twisting politics,” the senior minister said.

The ED earlier summoned junior Banerjee and his wife in a money laundering case linked to the accused in a coal smuggling case. They have been asked to appear in the Agency's Delhi office next week. The summons was issued in the

wake of the Delhi High Court refusing to grant any relief to them in this case.

The couple had earlier been grilled by ED and CBI respectively. According to sources, the TMC leader did not cooperate with the ED during his earlier interrogation for about 8 hours in September 201. Banerjee was reportedly asked specifically about the unaccounted money which was received by two firms associated with his family. Two of his very close relatives are directors in these two firms that had alleged links with the coal money.

Meanwhile, on an unrelat-

ed issue the Bengal Chief Minister on Thursday attacked the Election Commission of India for acting according to the instructions of the central Government. Banerjee's remarks came after her Government's request to reschedule the April 12 by-elections in view of the pre-scheduled Class XII (higher Secondary) board exams.

Wondering whether the by-polls could be held during the just concluded elections to 5 State assemblies, Banerjee said “what was the problem of holding by-elections along with the polls in five states ... truth to be told the Election Commission do not give much importance to the stray local polls,” as it worked according to the directions of the central government.

Banerjee on Thursday announced the new dates for Class XII exams. As per the new schedule the higher secondary exams would run from April 2 to April 26. There would be no test from 7th to 15th April as the by elections would take place on 12th of that month.

# Police assault those protesting against Silver Line Rail in Kerala

## 500, including women with children, were brutally assaulted

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

By Thursday evening BChanganassery in Kerala's Kottayam district wore the look of a ghost city as more than 500 persons including women with tiny tots were brutally assaulted by armed cops in front of live TV cameras.

Infants, who were shocked to see blood stained faces of their mothers were sobbing incessantly even as the policemen continued threatening them. The women who had assembled to stage demonstration against the revenue officials who landed in Changanassery to lay the survey stones as part of the land acquisition for the controversial Semi High Speed Silver Line Rail connecting Thiruvananthapuram and Kasaragod were physically

assaulted and dragged along the roads to be dumped into police vehicles. Though many of them sustained injuries, they were in high spirits.

“We do not have anywhere to go. Once they take over this land for the rail project we will be thrown out in the streets,” said Annie, a homemaker who had come to stage the protest march. All the women who had assembled at the site had come with kerosene bottles and threatened to self-immolate if the officials continued with the land acquisition works.

The Kerala Government had suffered a set back on Wednesday as Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed the Lok Sabha that the Centre has not given any permission for land survey or acquisition for the Rs 64000 crore project.

This is the first time in Kerala's history women in large numbers are coming out with warning of mass immolation against land acquisition by the State Government. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had declared in the Legislative Assembly early this week that his Government would not

remain a silent spectator to any kind of agitation or protest against the 529. 45 km long project.

What has upset the owners of land which would be taken over for the rail project is the fact that they would not get alternate land anywhere near their original place of dwelling. “There are no reference to any resettlement or rehabilitation for those who stand to lose their land. The Detailed Project Report (DPR) is silent about these two factors without which one cannot go forward,” said Mary Kuriakose, one of the agitators.

C R Neelakantan, engineer-turned-environmentalist told The Pioneer that the union minister declared on Wednesday that no permission has been given for land acquisition.

“Let the State Government conduct the techno-ecological-environmental viability of the project. Though the chief minister had said that those who lose the land would be suitably compensated, what they are asking is for fair compensation,” he said.

Neelakantan, who had

been in the forefront of agitations against nuclear power plants in Kerala further pointed out that it was illegal to lay survey stones without holding sociological impact analysis. Though the revenue officials laid the survey stones after the women were driven away, the newly laid stones would be removed late evening, said the women.

People elsewhere in the State are following this patterns; officials install the stones after getting the protestors removed from the site and the protestors return with full force and throw away the stones.

E Sreedharan, former chief of Delhi Metro, said that the Government may have to build eight ft tall walls on both sides of the semi speed rail tracks and this would divide the State into two. “Waterways would get destroyed and this is certain to cause floods and landslides in future,” he said.

Neelakantan said what the State was witnessing is blatant violation of human rights. The 2013 Land Acquisition Laws are being breached to stoke the ego of some persons and this is not advisable,” he said.

# Aligarh admin covers mosque to maintain peace; move welcomed

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

In UP, the festival of Holi is celebrated with such pomp that people not only from all over the country but also from abroad come here for the festival of colors. Meanwhile, efforts are being made to protect the mosque located at Abdul Karim crossroads of Aligarh from the colors of Holi. For this the district administration has put the mosque under the cover.

It is being told that Abdul Karim Chauraha is a very sensitive area. Holi of the main market of the city takes place here. In the past years, there has been a lot of ruckus due to the color falling on the mosque on the day of Holi. Therefore, now the district administration

gets the mosque covered with tarpaulin to maintain peace and order by the regional Muslim society and the mosque committee. This action was done early in the morning.

Actually, there is an old mosque in Aligarh at Abdul Karim crossroads. This intersection is the most crowded main market of the city and comes in the very sensitive category. In such a situation, the district administration has always kept the police stationed here.

On every festival, be it Holi or Diwali, a large number of forces are deployed here along with the general public. At this crossroads, the people of the market celebrate the Holi of the market by keeping big drums. To maintain peace and

order, this time also the district administration has completely put this old mosque built at the crossroads under the cover, so that no color or gular is splattered on the mosque and the atmosphere cannot be spoiled.

It is being told that earlier there have been some clashes between the two communities on the festival of Holi. The spark rising here takes the whole city in its lap, due to which the Aligarh administration has completely covered the mosque.

Muslim community have welcomed this initiative of the administration. They said that this step has been taken under Yogi's 'Sabka sath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas' slogan. Also for this step, government and administration both are well appreciated.

# Bengal was offered Pegasus for ₹25cr 4-5 yrs ago: Mamata

PTI ■ KOLKATA/AMARAVATI

A day after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee revealed that the controversial Pegasus spyware was offered to her Government, she provided on Thursdays more details, stating the State police was approached at least four to five years back with an offer to sell the controversial Israeli spyware for just Rs 25 crore. The chief minister said she had turned it down when she came to know of it.

Banerjee also alleged that instead of using the spyware for the security of the country, it was used by the central government which she claimed purchased it, for "political" reasons against judges and officials.

However, the Telugu Desam party denied assertions made by her on Wednesday that the then chief minister of

Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu, had purchased the spyware during his tenure.

"They (NSO, the company which developed Pegasus) had approached everybody to sell their ware. They had approached our police too, four-five years ago and offered to sell it for Rs 25 crore. I had the information, but I said that we did not require it," Banerjee said at the state secretariat. "If it was used for the benefit of the country or for security reasons then it was a different matter altogether, but it has been used for political purposes, against judges, officers which is not at all welcomed," she alleged.

The Bengal chief minister had on Wednesday disclosed in the Assembly that her government was offered Pegasus spyware which she had declined as it had the potential to encroach upon people's privacy.

During her disclosure in the Assembly, the fiery leader had also claimed that the Andhra government "had it during Chandrababu (Naidu's time)". However, the Telegu Desam party denied the claim and said the Chandrababu Naidu government had made no such purchase.

"We have never purchased any spyware. We never indulged in any illegal phone tapping," Telugu Desam Party general secretary Nara Lokesh said here on Thursday.

Reacting to Banerjee's claim that the previous Chandrababu Naidu government purchased the Pegasus Spyware, Lokesh who was the then Minister for Information Technology in his father Chandrababu's Cabinet, said "I don't know whether she has indeed said this, and where and in which context. If she did say this, she is certainly misin-

formed." However, he said the software was offered to the State Government.

"Yes, Pegasus offered to sell its spyware to the AP government as well but we rejected it," Lokesh said.

Had the government purchased the spyware, there would be a record of it, he pointed out. An international media consortium had reported last year that over 300 verified Indian mobile phone numbers were on the list of potential targets for surveillance using Pegasus spyware.

A New York Times report earlier this year claiming India bought Pegasus spyware as part of a USD 2 billion defence deal with Israel in 2017 had triggered a major controversy with the Opposition alleging that the government had indulged in illegal snooping that amounted to "treason".

# Kerala records 922 fresh Covid cases, 130 deaths

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala on Thursday recorded 922 new COVID-19 infections which raised the total caseload to 65,25,032.

The southern state also reported 130 deaths which raised the toll to 67,138, according to a government release. Of the deaths, 7 were those which occurred in the last few days but were not recorded due to late receipt of documents and 123 were designated as COVID-19 deaths after receiving appeals based on the new guidelines of the Centre and the directions of the Supreme Court, the release said.No deaths were reported in the last 24 hours, it added. With 1,329 more people recovering from the virus since Wednesday, the total recoveries reached 64,50,028.

# Flexibility to switch courses, exit among options in 4-yr under-grad programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Flexibility to move from one disciplinary area to another within course duration and multiple entry-exit options with certificate, diploma or degree depending on number of credits secured are among the features of the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme, according to draft guidelines prepared by University Grants Commission. The draft, titled "Curricular Framework and Credit System for Four-year Undergraduate Programme", proposes common introductory courses in natural sciences, humanities and social sciences for the first three semesters, regardless of what the students choose to specialise in. It also includes common courses on regional languages, English, Yoga, Artificial Intelligence and

data analytics, among others.

According to the draft, a transferable credit-based system has been proposed for the FYUP with 160 credits; with one credit for 15 hours of classroom teaching. In the third year, students will have to choose a subject they want to study in-depth. Students can choose from a wide range of subjects ranging from political science to astronomy.

In the last two semesters, the student enrolled in FYUP will also undertake research based on their major subject. "Flexibility to move from one disciplinary area of study to another within the duration of study by securing required credits, opportunity for learners to choose the subject of interest, facilitating multiple entry and exit options with certificate, diploma or degree

depending upon the number of credits secured, flexibility for learners to move from one institution to another to enable them to have a multi or interdisciplinary learning."

"...Facilitating switching to alternative modes of learning (face-to-face, ODL and Online learning, and hybrid modes of learning) will be among the features of the credit system. Regulations for Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) and multiple entry and exit are already in place to facilitate implementation of the credit system. The focus of the credit system will be on introducing flexibility in choosing courses and programmes of study," the guidelines stated.

The UGC has recommended that a semester consists of 90 working days and an academic year is divided into two semesters. "Global

Citizenship Education and education for sustainable development to form an integral part of the curriculum to empower learners to become aware of and understand global and sustainable development issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies," it said.

"Preparing professionals in cutting-edge areas that are fast gaining prominence, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), 3-D machining, big data analysis, and machine learning, in addition to genomic studies, biotechnology, nanotechnology, neuroscience, with important applications to health, environment, and sustainable living that will be woven into undergraduate education for enhancing the employability of the youth," it said.

# Controversy over wearing hijab refuses to die, reaches ITI college in Aligarh

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

The hijab controversy in the city's Shri Varshney College did not cool down yet, the dispute reached ITI College in Aligarh. When the former student came in the burqa, some students objected and started protesting by wearing saffron clothes. The students started shouting religious slogans with the people coming from outside. Hours later, the matter was barely settled after the intervention of the principal.

According to the developments, some students were doing practicals on the machines related to the course. They had put a saffron-coloured cloth around his neck. The teacher asked them to take off the cloth, the students refused. The students said that when girls can come to the college wearing burqa and hijab,



then why can't they come wearing this cloth (Gamcha) . The teachers argued that wearing a gamchha and working on the machine could lead to an accident. When other teachers also asked the students to take off the cloth, the student started creating ruckus. They said that a girl student has come to the college wearing a burqa, against which they have worn this saffron. When the pressure of the college administration increased on the students, they called outside students to the campus. After which people from outside started raising religious slogans in the campus.

The students agreed upon intervention and persuasion by the principal of the college, Nawab Singh. Simultaneously, the students who came from outside returned back.

The principal told that he keeps coming to the office for administrative work like character certificate, certificate and security fee. Today the former student also came to ITI College regarding any certificate. Seeing this, the students working on the machine got furious. At the same time, putting on saffron clothes started creating ruckus. There is a complete dress code in

Government ITI College. All the students come to the campus in uniform. The college management has issued a notice to all the students and instructed them to follow the dress code. Nawab Singh, Principal, Government ITI College said that the former student had come to the college for certificate related work, seeing that some students started creating ruckus by putting on saffron clothes. Some outsiders were also involved in this. The matter has been pacified after explaining everyone. Also, a notice has been issued to come in dress.

# FIR registered against man for demanding ₹3 cr from son of Nawab Malik to facilitate his release

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai Police has registered an FIR against an unidentified person who allegedly demanded Rs 3 crore from the son of Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik to get the latter out on bail, an official said on Thursday.

NCP leader Malik was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) last month in a money laundering case. Following a complaint filed by the minister's son Amir Malik, the V B Nagar police registered the FIR late Wednesday night, he said.

According to the complainant, he received an email in which the sender, who identified himself as Imtiyaz, allegedly said he will try to get NCP leader Nawab Malik out on bail and demanded Rs 3 crore in Bitcoins.

"I have lodged the FIR, but can't share more about it as it



is a confidential matter," Amir Malik told PTI.

A senior police official said, "We have registered the FIR under various Indian Penal Code sections, including 419 (punishment for cheating by personation), 420 (cheating), and provisions of the IT Act. Further investigation is underway."

Nawab Malik was arrested by the ED on February 23 this year under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) over a property deal allegedly linked to the aides of fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim.

He is currently in judicial custody and lodged at the Arthur Road jail in Mumbai.

# Derek, Owaisi picked for best Parliamentarian award by Lokmat Group

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Eight lawmakers, including A K Antony and Asaduddin Owaisi, have been awarded by the Lokmat Group for their contributions in Parliament. AIMIM president Owaisi and Trinamool's Derek O'Brien were selected as best parliamentarian for the Lokmat Parliamentary Awards for 2022 by a jury of prominent leaders chaired by NCP supremo Sharad Pawar.

Antony, the veteran Congress leader, and Bhartuhari Mahtab have been selected for the lifetime achievement award.

BJP Lok Sabha member Locket Chatterjee and NCP Rajya Sabha member Vandana Chavan have been selected in the Best Women

Parliamentarian category.

BJP Lok Sabha member Tejasvi Surya and Rajya Sabha member from RJD Manoj Kumar Jha have been selected in the best debutant parliamentarian category.

The awards are given to outstanding parliamentarians — four from Lok Sabha and four from Rajya Sabha — every year. This is the fourth edition of the awards.

The board of jury comprising senior leaders such as Ghulam Nabi Azad, Suresh Prabhu, N K Premachandran and former Rajya Sabha Secretary General Yogendra Narain, studied the parliamentary contribution for the year 2020 and 2021 of all Members of Parliament to select the winners.

# Opp CPM MLAs walk out of Tripura Assembly

PTI ■ AGARTALA

Governor Satyadeo N Arya on Thursday expressed satisfaction over the prevailing law and order situation in Tripura even as the Opposition CPI(M) MLAs boycotted his speech and staged a walkout on the first day of the Budget session after having failed to draw his attention to the purported law and order deterioration.

The Governor in his speech highlighted a significant improvement in law and order under the BJP-led state government citing a reduction in the percentage of grave crimes, and violence against women besides an increase in the conviction rate.

"The law and order situation of the state has improved notably and is well under control which is evident from the fact that the percentage of

grave crimes has reduced by 26 per cent as compared to 2019," he said.

Crime against women has reduced by 19.60 per cent in 2020 as compared to 2019, the governor pointed out.

"The conviction rate is 52 per cent in 2020 as compared to 36.30 percent in 2019 under non-IPC and 32.40 per cent in 2020 as compared to 23.10 per cent in 2019 under IPC," he said.

The Governor also lauded the achievements of the Biplab Kumar Deb government in the areas of infrastructure, healthcare, and farmers' welfare.

Earlier, when the Governor began to deliver his customary speech, Opposition leader and former chief minister Manik Sarkar tried to draw his attention regarding the deteriorating law and order situation in the state.

However, he could not make any point since his microphone was switched off.

As Sarkar failed to draw the Governor's attention, CPI(M) legislators led by the opposition leader walked out of the House.

"We have a long tradition of listening to the Governor's speech. But this time Left Front legislators were forced to stay away," Sarkar said later.

The CPI(M) leader alleged, "A jungle raj is installed in Tripura where opposition parties are not allowed to carry out their programmes. People are scared. As head of the state, the Governor could summon the chief secretary and the DGP to advise them for improving law and order."

The former chief minister claimed that whenever someone tries to contact the Governor, it is reported that he is sick.



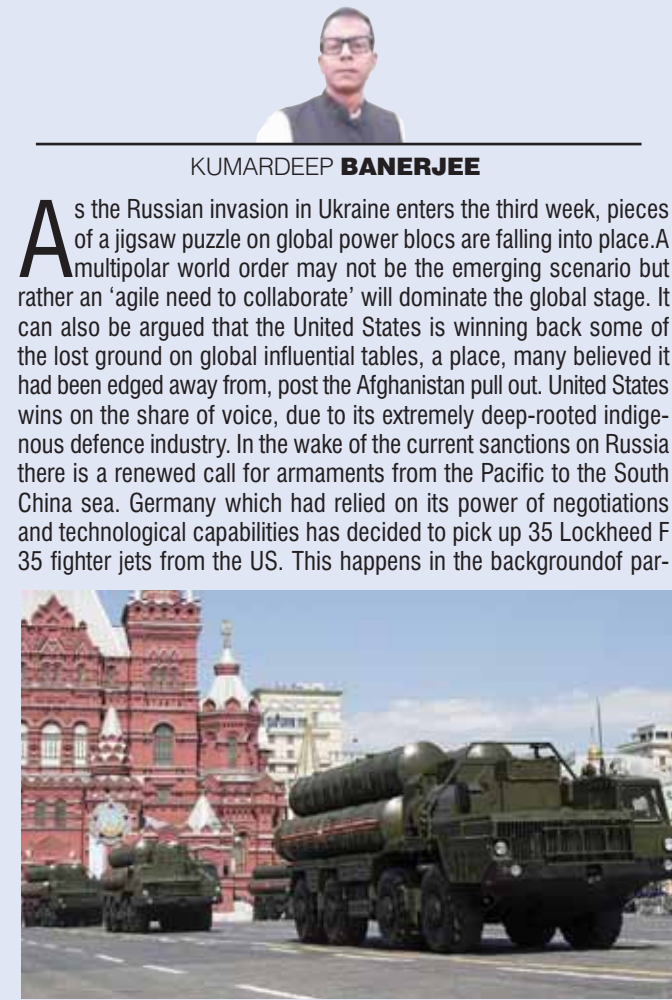




FIRST COLUMN

A CHURN IN THE GLOBAL ORDER

India must build on its alliance network for safety and peace



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

As the Russian invasion in Ukraine enters the third week, pieces of a jigsaw puzzle on global power blocs are falling into place. A multipolar world order may not be the emerging scenario but rather an 'agile need to collaborate' will dominate the global stage. It can also be argued that the United States is winning back some of the lost ground on global influential tables, a place, many believed it had been edged away from, post the Afghanistan pull out. United States wins on the share of voice, due to its extremely deep-rooted indigenous defence industry. In the wake of the current sanctions on Russia there is a renewed call for armaments from the Pacific to the South China sea. Germany which had relied on its power of negotiations and technological capabilities has decided to pick up 35 Lockheed F 35 fighter jets from the US. This happens in the background of par-

allel German deliberations with France to jointly develop a nuclear-bomb-carrying fighter aircraft. Japan, another ally of the US has already shed its nuclear stigma and is willing to host American weapons on its soil, although current Japanese PM, Fumio Kishida, hailing from Hiroshima, is against this kind of nuclearization. Australia, the UK and the US have already formed a block called AUKUS, whose primary aim is to equip Australia with nuclear power submarines, to place it as a strategic deterrent in the seas which China has repeatedly violated to showcase its growing dominance. China has bonded with Russia, on what it calls "close friendship without any boundaries of cooperation" and will increasingly start sharing strategic technology and equipment including defence with the Russian axis of nations. This bunch except for the two global powers (China and Russia) and many smaller nations could wield lesser muscle power due to the size of their economies. Russia is currently the world's second largest arms exporter. Many of Russian exports in defence sector are long-standing relationships dating back to the Soviet Union. However, take a sample of the nations to which Russia exports its weapons and the big picture emerges. India is the largest importer of Russian weapons, the other countries on Russia's list are China, UAE, Malaysia, Turkey, Algeria, Syria etc. Except for India and China, most of the nations do not claim a hefty diplomatic and economic clout on the high tables. Sino Russian axis is increasingly starting to ring alarm bells around the globe, most of all by India. It is worth a mention that the US national security advisor Jake Sullivan has recently warned China of economic penalties if the relationship with Russia gets too intimate during the time of war in Ukraine. The US in a way has called on China to choose its side firmly in the emerging global order.

India has in the past decade started to warm up to the US-led global alliance of strategic partners but misgivings in New Delhi and Washington policy circuits remain. The US has not yet asked India to firmly choose its side in the ongoing crisis in Europe as perhaps India may not overtly support Russia on global platforms. Add to this, US is well aware of India's insecurity if Russia and China emerge out as stronger allies in the revised world order. It could be an embarrassing situation for India to deter any kind of Chinese military interventions on its territory, with Russia-made weapons firing on both sides. India has tackled the situation with ample patience till now while silently building on its indigenous military equipment capabilities. However, it has to aggressively start building on its alliance network for safety and peace.

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Need to save people from packaged food

Companies use excessive sugar, salt (sodium) and saturated fats to entice buyers and make children in particular get used to, or get addicted to, their products



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

Recently the Food and Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has initiated the model of Front of Packing Label (FOPL) of food items. With this a debate has started on whether food packages should have a Health Star Rating (HAR) about the quality of the food or a warning regarding harmful food. In this regard, FSSAI, under pressure from the ultra-processed food industry, has decided that each food should be rated from one to five stars. From the minutes of the meeting, it is evident that while taking this decision, FSSAI has chose to ignore consumer interest and has given undue importance to the opinion of large food processing industries.

Why is a warning label better than health star rating?

Our country has a tradition of making and eating healthy and nutritious food. Proteins, vitamins, carbohydrates and other nutrients are found in a very balanced form in our food plate, so our diet has always been very balanced. But in the recent past, the trend of processed foods has increased and especially markets are flooded with ultra-processed foods. Scientists believe that these ultra-processed foods are causing many non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including cancer. Not only this, companies use excessive amounts of sugar, salt (sodium) and saturated fats to entice customers and make children get used to, or get addicted to, their products. In our country, diabetes, blood pressure, kidney and liver diseases are becoming common due to excess of sugar, sodium and saturated fats in the food. In our country due to lack of awareness among the people about nutrition and in this case due to absence of warning on food packets, people are unknowingly consuming these harmful food items, due to which these diseases are on rise, sometimes called lifestyle diseases.

If a warning is posted on such harmful foods stating that it contains sugar, salt or saturated fats beyond a threshold limit, consumers will be able to learn more about their side effects and make informed decisions about their food purchases. It is true that companies manufacturing these food items may face a decline in sales of these harmful foods. However, this will improve the health of the common man, there is no doubt about it. This is not only a theoretical conclusion, but it has also been experienced in different countries. Realizing the importance of this issue, many countries including Chile, Brazil, Israel decided to put such warnings on food packets. Chile has made a law after fixing the threshold limits of this harmful food and also made a law mandating printing of warning about the same.

After Chile's decision to put such warnings by law, there was a huge reduction in the sale of such harmful food there. We can understand how much benefit



THE HEALTH OF THE NATION'S PEOPLE SHOULD BE THE FIRST PRIORITY AND NOT THE PROFIT OF THE COMPANIES. THE PRESENCE OF A LARGE NUMBER OF FOOD COMPANIES IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND THEIR LONG-STANDING PARTNERSHIP WITH FSSAI, PUTS A QUESTION MARK ON THE OBJECTIVITY OF FSSAI'S DECISION

(The writer is a Professor at PGDAV College, University of Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)



Chile must have got in the protection of public health due to this. Today, when we are in the process of deciding in our country, that how consumers should be educated in the selection of healthy foods, instead of warning the consumers about the harmful food, it wouldn't be proper to legitimize the unhealthy food by giving star rating to them.

In this regard a meeting of stakeholders was organized by FSSAI on 15th February 2022, in which amongst participants, there were 17 members from food industry and their organizations, 1 from World Health Organization (WHO), two members were from Indian Institute of Ahmedabad (IIM) Ahmedabad, three members were from consumer organizations, one member was from Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a premier institution; nine FSSAI officials; and 10 belonged to the experts' category. Instead of discussing international experiences, the meeting referred to a study conducted by IIM, Ahmedabad and Dexter Consultancy Pvt Ltd and pointed out that participants in this study have given the opinion that the system of health star rating (HSR) on food packets should be adopted. Significantly, two representatives of consumer organizations and a representative of Center for Science and Environment voted against this decision. But ignoring their opinion, it was said that the opinion coming from the survey

of 20 thousand people is more important, so the stakeholders will have to give their suggestions on the health star rating only.

Even according to the survey by IIM Ahmedabad, the warning option was rated better in terms of reducing the intention to purchase harmful food, due to presence of excess of unwanted nutrients. But despite this, the report recommending HSR as the preferred option, which does not even give the consumer an understanding of the health risks, is raising doubts about the impartiality of the authors of the report.

Not only this, that there was presence of large number of representatives of companies and their organisations, in the meeting of stakeholders, in which the decision regarding health store rating was taken; even among experts, there were many people who are associated with the companies.

It is worth noting that Australia is the only country in the world where there is a system of Health Star Rating (whereas in most other countries the system of FOPL exists), and there is a provision of warning rather than Health Star rating.

A logarithm or formula is used to determine the star rating of any food item. The funny thing is that the person who created this formula named Greg Gambrell was also a part of the food industry. Hence it is a clear case of conflict of interest. There is also concern among Australian food scien-

tists that the health star rating system, adopted under the pressure from companies is putting the health of consumers at risk.

According to this formula, if any nutrient such as fruit juice, is added to any harmful food product, then its star rating can reach even up to five stars. For example, if orange juice is added to a beverage with high sugar, it will get far more stars, and the consumer will inadvertently be consuming harmful foods, because they will not have the opportunity to know that it is a harmful food. But if instead, warnings about excess sugar, excess salt and excessive saturated fats are marked, then the consumer will be facilitated to make an informed choice and his health will also be better.

Today, when the country's food regulatory body is taking a decision in this regard, the health of the people of the country should be the first priority and not the profit of the companies. The presence of such a large number of food companies in this decision-making process and their long-standing partnership with FSSAI, puts a question mark on the objectivity of FSSAI's decision. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health that, keeping a close watch on these subjects, instead of adopting the Health Star Rating, harmful to the health of the people of the country, it should make a provision to give a clear warning regarding the food items, which are injurious to health.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE HOUSE CAN'T RUN LIKE THIS. THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT BE MADE TO HARP ON THE SAME ISSUE. — BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER NITISH KUMAR



YOUR ANGER IS JUSTIFIED BUT DON'T TRY TO DEMORALISE THE CHAIR. MY JOB IS TO PROTECT ALL THE MEMBERS. —BIHAR SPEAKER VIJAY KUMAR SINHA

Innovations in vaccine science can make our lives safer

Need a more diverse immune response targeting many mutable regions and/or a strong immune response targeting select immutable regions

Are we done with Covid-19? This is a question that seems to be on everyone's mind. While the pandemic is not over, perhaps what we need is to answer the sub-text to the question - "Can we get on with a normal life, while keeping risks of severe sickness or death within the at the minimum". The short answer is - yes we can, through vaccines.

The severity of an infection is best seen through the lens of host immunity and its interaction with the invading pathogen. Chickenpox and measles, which strike no fear in our hearts today, decimated the native American population during the European colonization. It was the lack of previous exposure and immunity that made the infections much more



ANURAG AGRAWAL

(The writer is Director, Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology. The views expressed are personal.)

severe in natives compared to their European counterparts. When Covid-19 started, we had little immunity to a rapidly transmitting novel respiratory virus, SARS-CoV-2. Even then, only in a few cases the infection led to severe disease and death. The deep psychological impact of Covid-19 came not only from repeated waves of infections, where many people fell severely ill but also the information/mis-information tsunamis that have followed the global community, especially in the domain of social media. This sequence of events is what the public has in mind when they apprehensively ask, "is Covid-19 over?".

The severity and fatality rate of any infection falls once the population becomes progressively immune. Vaccination is



the preferred mechanism of acquiring immunity, when compared to infection, since infection carries the risks like progression to disease and even death. To argue otherwise, based on adverse events after vaccination, betrays a lack of quantitative understanding of immediate and long-term risks. We are continuing to discover long-term health problems after infection, but so far there have not been any such problems for vaccination despite billions of doses administered worldwide.

Last, but not least, unlike vaccination, infection transmits, putting others at risk.

All available vaccines provide a level of protection against infections by new variants that are sufficiently similar to the 'ancestral' strain. The same is true for infections. Nevertheless, people with prior immune response are at much lower risk of severe disease during infections, even with newer variants. Recovery is also faster and more complete in previously vaccinated people. However, severe disease and deaths were mostly in vulnerable people who were neither vaccinated, nor previously infected.

Today, things are very different. The level of immunity towards SARS-CoV-2 virus in the community is much higher, largely due to the one of the

largest mass-vaccination programs the world has ever seen. Health-care capacity has also been substantially upgraded. While Omicron was a less virulent variant than Delta, it was quite capable of causing severe disease and death in vulnerable people, as seen clearly in America, Hong Kong, and elsewhere. The much milder third surge in India compared to such places is thus a good sign for the future.

The main difference is immunity, and vaccines have played a critical role towards higher population immunity and minimizing the number of vulnerable people. The next wave is again likely to be driven by a highly transmissible and immune evasive variant. Whether it will be less or more virulent, is a matter of chance.

Betting entirely on progressive decline of virulence is unscientific and equivalent to playing Russian roulette. Relying on stronger immunity to reduce disease severity, independent of variants, is a much secure bet. We are currently at a point where future outbreaks are expected to be manageable unless the virus character changes drastically. The best way of minimizing the risk of major changes to the virus is by denying it opportunities to replicate, spread and evolve.

How will we get there? We need a more diverse immune response targeting many mutable regions and/or a strong immune response targeting selected immutable regions of the virus. While, such vaccines, covering both current and future variants, are under devel-

opment, given the huge strides we are making in vaccinology during the Covid-19 pandemic, the day is not far away when we speak of respiratory vaccines directed against a multitude of viruses, rather than just one virus.

To conclude, vaccines have played an important role in limiting the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and are our best way forward. Relying on natural immunity alone to stop pandemics is analogous to taking comfort in an old surgical adage - all bleeding stops.

On the national vaccine day, we must reflect on how vaccines saved lives in the recent past and imagine how innovations in vaccine-science can make our lives even safer in the immediate and far-reaching future as well.



# Russia’s onslaught continues amid optimism over talks

**AP ■ KYIV**

Russian forces destroyed a theater in Mariupol where hundreds of people were sheltering Wednesday and rained fire on other cities, Ukrainian authorities said, even as the two sides projected optimism over efforts to negotiate an end to the fighting.

The airstrike ripped apart the center of the once-elegant building, where hundreds of civilians had been living since their homes had been destroyed in the fighting, Ukraine’s foreign ministry said in a statement.

Many people were buried in the rubble, the statement said, though there was no immediate word on how many had been killed or injured.

Satellite imagery from Monday showed the word “CHILDREN” written in Russian in large, white capital letters on the pavement in front of and behind the building, the Maxar space technology company said.

“My heart breaks from what Russia is doing to our people,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly address, calling for more sanctions on Russia after the bombing.

The Russian defense ministry denied bombing the theater or anywhere else in Mariupol on Wednesday.

In Kyiv, residents huddled in homes and shelters during a citywide curfew that was set to run until Thursday morning, as Russian troops shelled areas in and around the city, including a residential neighborhood 2.5 kilometers (1.5 miles) from the presidential palace. A 12-story apartment building in central Kyiv erupted in flames after being hit by shrapnel.

And 10 people were killed while standing in line for bread in the northern city of Chernihiv, the Ukrainian General Prosecutor’s Office said.

Earlier Wednesday, Zelenskyy went before the U.S. Congress via video and, invoking Pearl Harbor and 9/11, pleaded with America for more weapons and tougher sanctions against Russia, saying: “We need you right now.”

U.S. President Joe Biden announced that the U.S. is sending an additional \$800 million in military aid to Ukraine, including more anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons and drones. He also called Vladimir Putin a “war criminal” in his sharpest condemnation of the Russian leader since the invasion began.

International pressure against the Kremlin mounted and its isolation deepened as the International Court of Justice, also known as the World Court, ordered Russia to stop attacking Ukraine, though there was little hope it would comply. Also, the 47-nation Council of Europe, the continent’s foremost human rights body, expelled Russia.

While Moscow’s ground advance on the Ukrainian capital appeared largely stalled, Putin said during a speech Wednesday that the operation was unfolding “successfully, in strict accordance with pre-approved plans.” He also decried Western sanctions, accusing the West of trying to “squeeze us, to put pressure on us, to turn us into a weak, dependent country.”

And he accused Russians who are sympathetic to the West or have adopted Western lifestyles of being a “so-called fifth column” and “national traitors.”

The anti-Western speech came as Russian law enforcement announced the first known criminal cases under a new that allows for prison terms of up to 15 years for posting what the Kremlin deems is false information about the war. Among those charged was Veronika Belotserkovskaya, a Russian-language cookbook author and popular blogger living abroad.



## ANALYSIS Zelenskyy, Biden show different styles, missions

**AP ■ WASHINGTON**

U.S. President Joe Biden and Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelenskyy are men of different generations, countries and styles — and with very different missions.

Zelenskyy is fighting to save his nation. Biden to restore a shattered world order - without igniting a world war.

The contrasts were on vivid display Wednesday. First the Ukrainian leader delivered an impassioned plea to Congress for additional military assistance to fight off Russia’s three-week old invasion. Then came Biden, with a more technocratic address promising more arms and humanitarian assistance but making clear the limits of what the U.S. is willing to do.

Zelenskyy, 44, was vigorous though unshaven and fatigued. In military green, he appealed for lethal aid via video link from a nondescript bunker. Biden, nearly 80, was staid as he spoke of sanctions and coalition building from the made-for-television set built next to the White House.

“I’m almost 45 years old; today my age stopped when the hearts of more than 100 children stopped beating,” Zelenskyy told U.S. lawmakers.

“I see no sense in life if it cannot stop the deaths.”

Speaking for 15 minutes, he invoked uniquely American moments of strife and significance: the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Sept. 11 attacks, the quest led by Martin Luther King Jr. For civil rights.

He called on Biden to be “the leader of peace.”

It marked the latest stop on Zelenskyy’s livestreamed global tour, as he seeks to portray Ukraine as defending more than just its own land and tries to elicit even tougher military and other action against Russia.

“We are fighting for the values of Europe and the world,” he told lawmakers.

Zelenskyy begged the U.S. To engage more directly to help his people - including for the U.S. To help Ukraine get Soviet-built aircraft to use against Russia and for an enforced no-fly zone over Ukraine, even if he acknowledged it was unlikely.

Biden has warned that fulfilling such requests could push Russia and the U.S. - two nuclear-armed nations - into direct conflict.

It’s a chance he’s not willing to take.

Biden watched Zelenskyy’s speech from the White House residence and called it “powerful.”

## ‘Russian invasion of Ukraine largely stalled on all fronts’



**PTI ■ LONDON**

Russian forces have made minimal progress on land, sea or air in recent days and they continue to suffer heavy losses, the UK’s Ministry of Defence (MoD) said on Thursday.

In its latest Defence Intelligence Update posted on social media, the MoD said while the Russian invasion had largely stalled, the Ukrainian resistance remained well-coordinated. “The Russian invasion of Ukraine has largely stalled on all fronts,” the MoD intelligence update reads.

“Russian forces have made minimal progress on land, sea or air in recent days and they continue to suffer heavy losses. Ukrainian resistance remains staunch and well-coordinated. The vast majority of Ukrainian territory, including all major cities, remains in Ukrainian hands,” it adds.

It comes a day after an “extraordinary meeting” of Defence Ministers was called in Brussels by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Defence ministers from across the military alliance said they addressed both the immediate crisis in Europe and the longer-term adaptation of NATO’s defence activities.

“The UK and our Allies continue to support Ukraine against Russia’s invasion,” said UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace. While in Brussels, the MoD said Wallace also held bilateral and small-group meetings with the US, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Canada, Slovakia, Sweden and the Czech Republic.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is in the Middle East for talks with the leaders of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in an effort to move away from the West’s reliance on Russian oil and gas exports for its energy needs.

## Biden brands Putin a war criminal; Kremlin decries US President’s remarks



**PTI ■ WASHINGTON/MOSCOW**

U.S. President Joe Biden has called his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin a “war criminal”, prompting an angry response from the Kremlin which denounced it as “unforgivable rhetoric” from a head of state.

Biden’s off-the-cuff remarks on Wednesday was the harshest condemnation of Putin’s actions from any US official since Russia launched a ‘special military operation’ in Ukraine three weeks ago.

Previously, President Biden had stopped short of labelling atrocities being documented on the ground in Ukraine as “war crimes,” citing ongoing international and US investigations.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki later defended Biden and said the president had been speaking from his heart after seeing “barbaric” images of the violence in Ukraine.

“I think the President’s remarks speak for themselves. He was speaking from his heart and speaking from what we’ve seen on television, which are barbaric actions by a brutal dictator through his invasion of a foreign country,” she said.

She also noted that there was a separate legal process, run by the State Department, to determine war crimes - and that was ongoing separately.

In Moscow, Kremlin described Biden’s “war criminal” remarks as “unforgivable rhetoric”.

“We consider such rhetoric from a head of the state, whose bombs killed hundreds of thousands of people around the world, to be unacceptable and unforgivable,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying by Russian state news agency TASS.

# 21 killed in pre-dawn Russian attack on school

**AP ■ MEREFA (UKRAINE)**

Twenty-one people have been killed by Russian artillery that destroyed a school and a community center in Merefa, near the northeast city of Kharkiv, officials said.

Merefa Mayor Veniamin Sitov said the attack occurred just before dawn on Thursday.

The Kharkiv region has seen heavy bombardment as stalled Russian forces try to advance in the area.

In the city of Chernihiv, northeast of Kyiv, Ukraine’s emergency service says a hostel was shelled, killing a mother, father and three of their children, including 3-year-old twins.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s speech to members of Israel’s parliament will be shown on national television and aired live in downtown Tel Aviv.

The address is part of his drive to rally popular and official support for Ukraine against Russia’s three-week invasion.

Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai tweeted that he offered to listen to the speech to Habima Square in the heart of Tel Aviv “so that the entire public can hear the president’s words live.”

Israel’s ties with both Russia and Ukraine run deep. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has managed to leverage Israel’s good relations with both countries and his personal rapport with their leaders to turn himself into an unexpected mediator, one of the few world leaders to speak regularly to both sides.

And Zelenskyy, who is Jewish and has tailored his speeches to various audiences, appears to have an affinity for Israel. Both countries have large Jewish communities.

More than 1 million Jews from the region have moved to Israel since the collapse of the Soviet Union three decades ago. The Israeli and Russian militaries have maintained close communications in recent years to prevent clashes in the sky over Syria.

In London, a group of Ukrainian lawmakers says Britain should press allies including France and Germany to do more to help Ukraine defeat Russian invasion.

Four female Ukrainian parliament members, who are meeting Prime Minister Boris Johnson in London on Thursday, urged the UK to step up military support to Ukraine and increase economic pressure on Russia.



## Ineffective treaty helped Russia’s N-threat escalate

**PTI ■ CAPE TOWN**

Russia’s nuclear blackmail is prompted by a flawed treaty and ambivalence by nuclear weapon states towards nuclear disarmament.

The invasion of Ukraine saw Russia’s nuclear forces put on high alert by President Vladimir Putin on the fourth day of fighting.

Telling the world that Russia is “today one of the most powerful nuclear states”, the rhetoric and activity goes against the spirit of the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the document that forms the foundation of international nuclear governance.

Using nuclear weapons to deter or compel action is effectively holding humanity at ransom - blackmail of the nuclear kind.

Nuclear armed states like Russia have the power to do this partly because of weaknesses embedded in the NPT and how nuclear weapon states have chosen to interpret it over the past 50 years.

Of particular relevance to the current crisis are nuclear sharing arrangements.

These see nuclear weapon states stationing their arms on the territory of their non-nuclear allies. As long as they retain custodianship and control over the weapons, this is seen as legal under one interpretation of the NPT.

The most recent referendum in Belarus voted to lift the country’s non-nuclear status and allow Russia to station weapons on its soil.

This decision comes in the context of unresolved problems with nuclear sharing arrangements: NATO stations nuclear weapons in Turkey, Germany, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands, despite criticism from non-nuclear weapon states and Russia since 2015.

Putin is not the first leader to bring nuclear weapons into a conflict: the US and Soviet Union did so on several occasions during the Cold War.

US President George Bush did not raise the nuclear alert levels during the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, but implied that the US could use nuclear arms if Iraqi forces used chemical or biological weapons.

The NPT, inked in 1968, was premised on a proposal that disarmament negotiations would be better served if nuclear weapons were contained to as few states as possible. It’s one of the most ascribed to treaties in history with only five non-member states (Israel, India, Pakistan, North Korea and South Sudan).

The treaty has three pillars: non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful use.

Non-proliferation prevents the spread of nuclear weapons by distinguishing the countries that tested nuclear arms by 1967 - the US, the Soviet Union (now Russia), China, the UK and France - and the non-nuclear weapons states who had not.

## Biden’s China ‘pivot’ complicated by Russia’s war in Ukraine

**AP ■ WASHINGTON**

President Joe Biden set out to finally complete the “pivot to Asia,” a long sought adjustment of US foreign policy to better reflect the rise of America’s most significant military and economic competitor: China.

But Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine has made that vexing move even more complicated. China’s government has vacillated between full embrace and more measured responses as Russian President Vladimir Putin prosecutes his war, making the decisions for Biden far more layered.

“It’s difficult. It’s expensive,” Kurt Campbell, the coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs on the White House National Security Council, said during a recent forum of maintaining a high-level U.S. focus in two regions. “But it’s also essential, and I believe we’re entering a period where that’s what will be required of the United States and of this generation of Americans.”

That leaves the Biden administration needing to focus East and West at the same time, balancing not simply economic imperatives but military ones as well.

The president has been deeply invested in rallying NATO and Western allies to respond to Russia with crippling sanctions, supplying an overmatched Ukraine military with \$2 billion in military assistance - including \$800 million in new aid announced Wednesday - and addressing a growing humanitarian crisis.

Eastern flank NATO allies, including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, have made clear to the Biden administration that they want the U.S. To increase its military presence in the region and do more to address the worst humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II. More than 3 million Ukrainian refugees have fled their country in recent weeks.

Though the war in Ukraine has dominated Biden’s focus of late, White House officials insist they haven’t lost sight of China - and are watching intently to see how Xi Jinping decides to play his hand.

In recent months, Biden has announced the sale of nuclear submarines to Australia and raised the profile of the Indo-Pacific security dialogue known as the Quad (Australia, India, Japan and the United States). He’s also called out China for military provocations against Taiwan, human rights abuses against ethnic minorities and efforts to squelch pro-democracy advocates in Hong Kong.





# US expels another Chinese phone carrier on security grounds



AP ■ BEIJING

Washington has expelled another state-owned Chinese phone carrier from the US market over national security concerns amid rising tension with Beijing.

The Federal Communications Commission revoked authorization for Pacific Networks Corp. To provide domestic and international service under an order issued Wednesday.

The U.S. Government is reducing Chinese access to American markets and investment over possible spying and Beijing's military development.

The FCC cited "significant national security and law enforcement risks" that Pacific Networks could monitor or disrupt U.S. Communications.

It said there were no steps that could eliminate those risks while the company operated in the United States.

President Joe Biden has extended efforts begun under his predecessor, Donald Trump, to limit access to U.S. Technology, investment and markets for Chinese companies due to concern they are security risks or helping military development.

In October, a unit of China Telecom Ltd., one of China's three main state-owned carriers, was expelled by the FCC from the U.S. Market on similar grounds.

The FCC said in 2019 it planned to revoke licenses granted two decades earlier to China Telecom and another state-owned carrier, China Unicom Ltd. It rejected a

license application by the third carrier, China Mobile Ltd.

The FCC also cited unspecified "conduct and representations" by Pacific Networks to regulators and Congress that "demonstrate a lack of trustworthiness and reliability."

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman accused American regulators of improperly invoking national security to hurt Chinese companies without providing evidence they broke any law.

Regulators are "abusing national power" to hurt Chinese companies and "severely destroying international economic rules and harming the legitimate rights of consumers including American consumers," said the spokesman, Zhao Lijian.

# Cleanup begins after 7.4 quake shakes north Japan, killing 4

AP ■ TOKYO

Residents in Fukushima and Miyagi were cleaning their homes after a sleepless night following a powerful 7.4-magnitude earthquake that struck off the northern Japanese coasts, smashing furniture, knocking out power and killing four people.

The region is part of an area devastated by a deadly 9.0 quake and tsunami 11 years ago that caused nuclear reactor meltdowns, spewing massive radiation that still makes some parts uninhabitable.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters Thursday morning that four people died during the quake and the cause of their deaths are being investigated, while 107 others were injured. A man in his 60s in Soma city died after falling from the second floor of his house while trying to evacuate, and a man in his 70s panicked and suffered a heart attack, Kyodo News reported earlier.

The Japan Meteorological Agency early Thursday lifted its low-risk advisory for a tsunami along the coasts of Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures. Tsunami waves as high as 30 centimeters (11 inches) reached shore in Ishinomaki, about 390 kilometers (240 miles) northeast of Tokyo.

The agency upgraded the magnitude of the quake to 7.4 from the initial 7.3, and the depth from 60 kilometers (37 miles) below the sea to 56 kilometers (35 miles).

Residents in hard-hit areas found new damages in daylight Thursday, cleaning their homes, putting fallen furniture and appliances back into place and scooping up broken dishes and windows.

At a hotel in Yabuki town in the Fukushima prefecture, where its wall was broken, front door thrown out of place, and dishes were broken, employees were starting to clean up. "I don't even know where to start," hotel president Mineyuki Otake told NHK.

NHK footage showed broken walls of a department store building that fell to the ground and shards of windows scattered on the street near the main train station in the inland prefectural capital of Fukushima city. Roads were cracked and water poured out from pipes underground.



On Thursday, Self-Defense Forces delivered fresh water to residents in Soma, Iitate and several other coastal towns in Fukushima where water systems were damaged.

Footage also showed furniture and appliances smashed to the floor at apartments in Fukushima. Cosmetics and other merchandise at convenience stores fell from shelves and scattered on the floor. In Yokohama, near Tokyo, an electric pole nearly fell.

The Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, which operates the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant where the cooling systems failed after

the 2011 disaster, said Thursday that workers at the site — which is being decommissioned — found some tanks holding treated radioactive water were out of alignment due to the rattling, and what could be a steel beam fell from a roof of the No. 4 reactor building, which has no fuel inside.

Japan's Nuclear Regulation Authority said a fire alarm went off at the turbine building of No. 5 reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi but there was no actual fire. Water pumps for the spent fuel cooling pool at two of the four reactors at Fukushima Daiichi briefly

stopped, but later resumed operation. Fukushima Daiichi, which survived the 2011 tsunami, is also set for decommissioning.

More than 2.2 million homes were temporarily without electricity in 14 prefectures, including the Tokyo region, but power was restored at most places by the morning, except for about 37,000 homes in the hardest hit Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures, according to the Tohoku Electric Power Co., which services the region.

The quake shook large parts of eastern Japan, including Tokyo, where buildings swayed violently.

# Italy seeks to study, sample Europe's southern-most glacier

AP ■ ITALY

Italian scientists are racing against time to study, scan and sample Europe's southernmost glacier before it melts and disappears as a result of rising global temperatures.

Researchers conducted a preliminary radar survey of the Calderone glacier in Italy's central Apennine Mountains on March 13 and plan to return next month to drill into it and take samples.

The aim is to extract chunks of the glacier and store them in Antarctica for future study. "This glacier can tell us the Mediterranean's climate and environmental history," said researcher Jacopo Gabrieli, of the Institute of Polar Sciences at the Italian National Council of Research.

The Associated Press accompanied Gabrieli and the team to the snow-covered glacier for the radar survey, arriving at the peak by helicopter

and traipsing up and down the mountainside of the Gran Sasso massif. Researchers in snow shoes probed the ground with electromagnetic equipment to determine how the glacier is stratified.

The survey will allow experts to "record the depth and morphology between snow and ice, and between ice and rock. In this way we can measure the thicknesses and reconstruct the glacier bottom morphology,"

said Stefano Urbini, researcher at the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology, who also took part in the survey.

The tiny Italian glacier, which already split into two as a result of global warming, is a crucial thermometer of climate change and a treasure trove of atmospheric information. Glaciologists are expecting to find a 25-meter (80-foot) thick layer of ice under the snow and debris that covers the

glacier.

The samples from the Calderone will be held in the "Ice Memory" world archive in Antarctica, a natural freezer that allows storage at -50 Celsius and is being built at the French-Italian Concordia station.

According to the Italian research council, glaciers located at an altitude of under 3,600 meters (11,800 feet) will disappear by 2100 if temperatures continue rising at the current

pace. The Calderone glacier, which is located at an altitude of 2,700 meters, could melt much earlier, by 2050 if drastic measures aren't taken, experts say.

"Through these glaciers, through the interest that we all have for these fantastic environments, we can explain how the climate is changing, why it is changing, how man is impacting and what we can do to reduce our impact on our planet," said Gabrieli.

# Diplomats near Iran nuclear agreement



AP ■ WASHINGTON

As the war in Ukraine rages on, diplomats trying to salvage the languishing 2015 Iran nuclear deal have been forging ahead with negotiations despite distractions caused by the conflict. They now appear to be near the cusp of a deal that would bring the US back into the accord and bring Iran back into compliance with limits on its nuclear programme.

After 11 months of on-and-off talks in Vienna, US officials and others say only a very small number of issues remain to be resolved. Meanwhile, Russia appears to have backed down on a threat to crater an agreement over Ukraine-related sanctions that had dampened prospects for a quick deal.

That leaves an agreement — or at least an agreement in principle — up to political leaders in Washington and Tehran. But, as has been frequently the case, both Iran and the U.S. Say those decisions must be made by the other side, leaving a resolution in limbo even as all involved say the matter is urgent and must be resolved as soon as possible.

"We are close to a possible deal, but we're not there yet," State Department spokesman Ned Price said Wednesday. "We are going to find out in the near term whether we're able to get there."

Also Wednesday in Berlin, German Foreign Ministry spokesman Christopher Burger said work "on drafting a final text has been completed" and "the necessary political decisions now need to be taken in capitals."

"We hope that these negotiations can now be swiftly completed," he said.

Reentering the 2015 deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, has been a priority for the Biden administration since it took office.

Once a signature foreign policy achievement of the Obama administration in which now-President Joe Biden served as vice president, the accord was abandoned in 2018 by then-President Donald Trump, who called it the worst deal ever negotiated and set about restoring and expanding on U.S. Sanctions that had been lifted.

The Biden administration argues that any threat currently posed by Iran would be infinitely more dangerous should it obtain a nuclear weapon.

Deal opponents, mostly but not entirely Republicans, say the original deal gave Iran a path to developing a nuclear bomb by removing various constraints under so-called "sunset" clauses. Those clauses meant that certain restrictions were to be gradually lifted.

# Pak anti-terrorism court separates trial of 9 juvenile suspects in lynching

PTI ■ LAHORE

An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan on Thursday separated the trial of nine juvenile suspects allegedly involved in the lynching of a Sri Lankan national in Punjab province over blasphemy allegations in December last year. Last week, the ATC Lahore indicted 89 suspects for their alleged role in the ghastly incident that sparked country-wide outrage.

A mob, including supporters of a hardline Islamist party - Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) - 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-km from Lahore.

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 has directed the prosecution to file a separate challan of nine juvenile suspects. Their trial will be held separately," a court official told PTI on Thursday. He said the prosecution had sought death penalty for remaining 80 suspects. "So far over 30 suspects have recorded their statements before the ATC since the trial began this week," he said.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles.

**VEHICLES FOR SALE**

1) CB. FORCE TEMPO  
TRAVELLER FULLY BUILT  
RAJ02TA2961-YOM-2021  
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 550000

UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/OFFLINE) WITHIN 7 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 24.03.2022 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).

BRANCH ADDRESS:  
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD.,  
PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA,  
SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELL  
CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P) UP-201313  
OR CONTACT : RAJESH ANTIL  
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD.  
CONTACT / 09711173320  
EMAIL rajesh.antil@kotak.com

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

TAKE NOTICE THAT at behest of our client, we are investigating title of Mrs. Pinky Agarwal, Mr. Pawan Kumar and Son & Up Property area measuring 275 Sq. Yds., out of Khasra 986, Situated in the extended Lal Dora, in the area of Village Rithala, Delhi ("Said Property"), who intend to sell the said property to a purchaser and the said purchaser intends to avail a loan from our Client i.e. Fullerton India Credit Company Limited by creating a mortgage against said property. Any person having any claims or rights in respect of the Said Property are/are hereby requested to make the same known in writing to the undersigned within a period of 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of Said Property and the transaction, if any shall be completed without reference to the claims, if any.

**Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)**  
206, Third Floor, 23, Sheikh Sarai, New Market, N. Delhi-15  
Ph: 011-41112527-28 kumarassociatesadvocates@gmail.com

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given to the General public that (i) Mr. Amit Juneja S/o Mr. Madan Lal Juneja (ii) Mr. Ravinder Kumar Sharma S/o Mr. Shiv Charan Sharma and (iii) Mr. Tarun Dixit S/o Mr. Ram Mohan Sharma are the owners of FIRST FLOOR, WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS, BUILT ON LAND AREA MEASURING 64. SQ. YARDS, OF BUILT UP PROPERTY BEARING NO. WZ-12, PLOT NO. 32, SITUATED AT NEW MAHARAJ NAGAR, GALI NO. 16, NEW DELHI-110018, vide registered sale deed dated 09.07.2021. All persons are hereby informed that Mrs. Sukhjeet Kaur W/o Gaganjit Singh is purchasing this property from (i) Mr. Amit Juneja S/o Mr. Madan Lal Juneja (ii) Mr. Ravinder Kumar Sharma S/o Mr. Shiv Charan Sharma and (iii) Mr. Tarun Dixit S/o Mr. Ram Mohan Sharma who is a registered Sale Deed & has approached Fullerton India Home Finance Company Ltd to take a loan for the same. If anybody has any charge/interest/claim in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

**Mrs. Prasoon Late, Advocate, SG Associates (Law Firm)**  
Unit No 7, Basement, Plot No C 78, Sector 2, Noida, UP 201301.  
E-MAIL: sgassociatespi@gmail.com, Ph: 7811172754, 8130200837

# Police: Missouri motel shootout leaves officer, gunman dead

AP ■ BONNE TERRE

A police officer and a gunman died following a shootout early Thursday at a motel in eastern Missouri that left another officer wounded, authorities said.

The Bonne Terre officers were dispatched to a disturbance at a Motel 6 about 12:30 a.M., Missouri State Highway Patrol spokesperson Dallas Thompson told the Park Hills Daily Journal. As they approached the room where the disturbance was reported, a man came out and fired at the officers with a handgun, the newspaper reported, and both officers were shot.

**कार्यालय आयुक्त आदिम जाति तथा अनुसूचित जाति विकास**

ब्लॉक 4 डी, मृगत, इन्द्रावती नगर, नया रायपुर, अटल नगर (५४००१)  
Website:- tribal.cg.gov.in ☎ :- 226378, Fax:- 2262558 E-mail:- ctd.cg@nic.in

क्रमांक / 120 / प्रयास / 2022 / 11386  
अटल नगर, नया रायपुर, दिनांक 16 / 03 / 2022

विषय:- ई प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल पर निविदा क्रमांक-94934 में आवश्यक सुधार हेतु रुद्धि पत्र जारी करने बाबत (कक्षा ७बी / 10बी)।

**रुद्धि पत्र (Corrigendum)**  
स्व. राजीव गांधी, बाल पवित्र्य सुरक्षा प्रयास बालक एवं कन्या आवासीय विद्यालयों खिला रायपुर, दुर्ग, बिलासपुर, रायपुर, बरार, कांके, कोरवा तथा जवापुर में अद्यापत एवं कोचिंग हेतु फंक्ली की व्यवस्था हेतु वर्ष 2022-23 प्रकाशित की गई है। ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> पर निविदा क्रमांक-94934 प्रकाशित की गई है। पी-बीड दिनांक 15.03.2022 में आयोजित समिति की बैठक में निचे गये निर्देश अनुसार प्रकाशित सूची की अगव्यविति में निम्नानुसार सुधार/रुद्धि पत्र (Corrigendum) जारी किया जा रहा है।

क्र.	विज्ञापन सूचना	कठिना क्रमांक	संशोधन
1.	क्रमांक / 120 / प्रयास / 2022 / 11090 एवं 11095 दिनांक 09.03.2022 (कक्षा ७बी एवं 10बी) ई प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <a href="https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in">https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in</a> पर निविदा क्रमांक / 94934	6 के स.क.-5 पर  6 के स.क.-8 1 (५) में	उपलब्ध कराये जाने वाले शिक्षकों की अधिवार्य योग्यता अंतर्गत शिक्षकों की न्यूनतम संख्या द्वितीय विषय में (200 विद्यार्थियों हेतु) 02 दशान्नी गई है।  1. शिक्षकों के दस्ता का मूल्यांकन 30 अंक निर्धारित है। जिसका विभाजन निम्नानुसार किया जाता है। 2. शिक्षण कौशल-08 अंक 3. विद्यार्थियों/विषय विशेषज्ञों द्वारा पूछे गये प्रश्नों/प्रश्नका समाधान के तरीके-10 अंक 4. (अ) संस्था द्वारा प्रस्तुत शिक्षक डेटो में नाम लेने वाले शिक्षक बी.एड होने पर 02 अंक निर्धारित होगा। (ब) इसी प्रकार शिक्षक डेटो में नाम लेने वाले शिक्षक न्यूनतम 02 वर्ष का अनुभव होने पर 02 अंक निर्धारित होगा। इस तरह कुल 04 अंक निर्धारित है।

टीप:- विज्ञापन संबंधी अन्य किसी प्रकार की सूचना विभाग की वेबसाईट [tribal.cg.gov.in](http://tribal.cg.gov.in) पर प्राप्त की जा सकती है। शेष सच स्यात रहेगी।

हस्ता /—  
(बीमती रामजी आदिदी)  
आयुक्त  
आदिम जाति तथा अनुसूचित जाति विकास  
अटल नगर, रायपुर, छत्तीसगढ़

R.O. No:- 68836/4  
R.O. Date:- 17/03/2022

**कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता, लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड, बलरामपुर जिला बलरामपुर (छ.ग.)**

**निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना**  
एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन (Online) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:- कार्य का नाम SVS OF PIPED WATER SUPPLY SCHEME under Jal Jeevan Mission as per NIT निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि 05-04-2022

स.क्र.	सिस्टम क्रमांक	निविदा सूचना क्र./ दिनांक	ग्राम का नाम	अनुमानित लागत
1	95440	115/15.03.2022	FATEHPUR	100.70
2	95447	116/15.03.2022	CHILMAKALA	114.79
3	95450	117/15.03.2022	SEWARI	271.45
4	95454	118/15.03.2022	SAHWAHI	190.75
5	95456	119/15.03.2022	BULGON	87.18
6	95460	120/15.03.2022	BADA	120.16

उपरोक्त कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।

हस्ता /—  
कार्यपालन अभियंता  
R.O. No:- 68806/4  
R.O. Date:- 17/03/2022  
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड  
बलरामपुर (छ.ग.)

**75th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**  
**पावरग्रिड POWERGRID**  
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is for the information of Public in General of the National Capital Territory of New Delhi in particular in the State/Region of North West, East, North East of Delhi and Loni Tehsil of Ghaziabad district. **Power Grid Corporation of India Limited**, has successfully constructed a transmission line by loop in-loopout of 400kV D/C Mandola-Bawana transmission line from 400/220kV GIS Maharani Bagh Sub-Station to village Pachera (Loni). The line is likely to be charged and become energized on any day from onwards 19.03.2022. The line is passing through Districts and Villages as depicted below.

No.	Name of Village	Tehsil	District
1.	Sabhapur (Seelampur)	Karawal Nagar	North-East Delhi
2.	Sonia-Vihar (Yamuna-Vihar)	Karawal Nagar	North-East Delhi
3.	Wazirabad (Civil Line)	Civil Line	Central Delhi
4.	Mandirvala	Seelampur	North-East Delhi
5.	Garhimend (Yamuna-Vihar)	Seelampur	North-East Delhi
6.	Shastri Park (Seelampur)	Seelampur	North-East Delhi
7.	Nigambodh Ghat (Kashmere Gate)	Kotwali	Central Delhi
8.	Shahdara (Seelampur)	Nand Nagri	North-East Delhi
9.	Kailash Nagar (Gandhi Nagar)	Gandhi Nagar	East Delhi
10.	Gandhi Nagar (Gandhi Nagar)	Gandhi Nagar	East Delhi
11.	Yamuna Bank Metro Station	Delhi East	East Delhi
12.	Bahilpur Khadar	Defence Colony	South-East Delhi
13.	Sarai Kale Khan	Defence Colony	South-East Delhi
14.	Pachera (Loni)	Loni	Ghaziabad
15.	Badampur (Loni)	Loni	Ghaziabad
16.	Harampur (Loni)	Loni	Ghaziabad
17.	Ilchipur (Loni)	Loni	Ghaziabad

The names of these villages are indicative and the above mentioned line is passing through/in between the Yamuna flooded belt area of the above mentioned places. Under the Electricity Act 2003 as well as the Indian Telegraph Act 1885 and the rules and regulations made thereunder, any construction of building structure (temporary or permanent) or planting of trees in contravention of the sanctions prescribed under the said Acts, rules and regulations are illegal and prohibited by law. All are advised to be aware of the guidelines of the Electricity Act and Stay away from above transmission line from 19.03.2022. Plantation of any high rise trees or construction of any building climbing towers or attempting to touch line conductors in the line corridor is extremely dangerous and therefore strictly prohibited. POWERGRID shall not be responsible for any accident/incident due to interference with the tower of transmission line. Action as per law shall be initiated against the defaulters. The public should accordingly take all precautions and should not interfere with the high voltage line in any manner.

Sudhir Kumar Singh  
(Senior Deputy General Manager)  
400/220 kV GIS Maharani Bagh Sub Station

**POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED**  
400/220 kV GIS Maharani Bagh Sub Station, New Delhi - 110013  
A Maharatna PSU

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RBI article

‘India making steady progress, global crisis notwithstanding’

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Notwithstanding the geopolitical crisis created by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, India is making steady progress as it recovers from the third wave of pandemic though downside risks remain, the Reserve Bank said in an article on Thursday.

Observing that India’s macro-economic fundamentals remain strong, the article in the RBI Bulletin on ‘State of the Economy’ said, “unfolding global developments nevertheless pose downside risks in terms of spillovers.”

It further said that the ongoing geopolitical crisis has heightened the uncertainty clouding the global macroeconomic and financial landscape even as the world econ-

omy struggles to recover from the pandemic.

Spiralling oil and gas prices and unsettled financial market conditions pose fresh headwinds to the still incomplete global recovery, it said, adding “amidst these testing times, India is making steady progress on the domestic front as it recovers from the third wave.”

The Reserve Bank said the views expressed in the article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Central Bank.

The article authored by RBI officials noted that the global economy is facing formidable headwinds from the conflict in Ukraine. Oil prices had touched multi-year highs, financial markets are on edge, driven by mass buying into



safe-haven assets, particularly gold.

“Amidst such turbulence, the global growth outlook is worsening with intensified inflation and financial instability risks,” it said.

“In the absence of an early solution to the ongoing conflict, the crisis can have adverse implications for the global recovery, necessitating downward revisions of global growth for 2022 and beyond,” the article said.

Inflation continued to rise across economies, with cost-push pressures intensifying in the backdrop of clogged supply chains, high energy, food and commodity prices and seeping wage pressures, it said. On the domestic front, the article noted that services sector outlets such as restaurants and cinema halls are gradually resuming

normal operations, and mobility indicators show significant improvement in March 2022, compared to a year ago.

“With the improvement in mobility and opening up of services sector outlets, electricity generation picked up in March, exceeding the levels of the preceding month and also pre-pandemic levels,” it said.

Also, the generation of E-way bills remained above pre-pandemic levels. Toll collections also rose in February 2022, despite the waning of base effect.

The article further said the resumption in mobility spurred diesel and petrol consumption in February 2022, although a dip in Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) dampened total petroleum consumption.

Retail sales of automobiles continued to stagnate, with high delivery times impeding registrations.

It also pointed out that the gross fiscal deficit plummeted to an all-time low of 58.9 per cent of Revised Estimate (RE) in the Budget during April-January 2021-22.

Further, as on March 08, 2022, the overall procurement of rice during the ongoing kharif marketing season 2021-22 touched 489.2 lakh tonnes cumulatively, as against 451.9 lakh tonnes a year ago.

The target for rice procurement in this complete season is 528.3 lakh tonnes.

February’s merchandise exports surpassed the USD 30-billion mark for the 12th consecutive month and the target of USD 400 billion appears within striking distance, it said.

Markets post gains maintain momentum

Despite Fed rate hike

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The BSE Sensex vaulted over 1,000 points for the second straight session on Thursday, tracking an overall bullish trend in global equities despite the US Federal Reserve hiking rates and signalling further policy tightening to tame inflation.

A reversal in selling by foreign portfolio investors and sustained recovery in the rupee further boosted domestic equities, traders said.

The 30-share BSE benchmark rallied 1,047.28 points or 1.84 per cent to finish at 57,863.93. Likewise, the broader NSE Nifty surged 311.70 points or 1.84 per cent to 17,287.05.

HDFC was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, spurring 5.50 per cent, followed by Titan, Kotak Bank, Reliance Industries, Asian Paints, Tata Steel and Maruti.

Only Infosys and HCL Tech closed lower, skidding up to 1.81 per cent.

“Global markets welcomed the Fed decision to hike rates by 25 bps as it was on expected lines. However, the Fed’s projection of another six hikes during the year is hawkish.

“FIIs turning net buyers after a long wait was also a relief for the domestic market. With crude prices receding, war tensions calming down and foreign investors back to buying, we can expect the rally in the domestic market to continue,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. Markets



will remain closed on Friday on account of Holi. During the holiday-shortened week, the Sensex climbed 2,313.63 points or 4.16 per cent, while the Nifty advanced 656.60 points or 3.95 per cent.

“The markets have been dominated by risk off sentiment in last few weeks due to concerns on high commodity prices owing to Russia-Ukraine crisis and monetary tightening by Federal Reserve. Fed undertook 25 bps hike -- first since COVID crisis -- and has guided the markets for six more hikes buoyed by the resilience of the economy and strong labour market,” said Hemant Kanawala, Head - Equity, Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance, said.

On the other hand, initiation of peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, and continued buying of Russian oil by India and China have provided some relief to commodity prices, though the situation continues to evolve and a resolution is still away, he noted.

Except IT and teck, all BSE sectoral indices finished with gains in Friday’s session, led by realty, consumer

durables, energy and finance, spurring up to 3.14 per cent.

The BSE midcap and smallcap gauges jumped as much as 1.18 per cent.

The US Federal Reserve on Wednesday approved a 0.25 percentage point increase in interest rates, marking the first hike since 2018.

It also indicated that more hikes would be needed to fight multi-decade high inflation.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong and Shanghai ended with significant gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a mixed note in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude rose 3.97 per cent to USD 101.91 per barrel.

The rupee spurted by 41 paise to close at 75.80 (projection) against the US dollar on Thursday, supported by positive domestic equities and broad dollar weakness.

Foreign institutional investors turned net buyers after their recent selling spree, picking up shares worth Rs 311.99 crore on Wednesday, as per exchange data.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee spurted by 37 paise to close at 75.84 against the US dollar on Thursday, supported by positive domestic equities and broad dollar weakness after the US Federal Reserve hiked rates.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 75.96 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 75.77 and a low of 75.97.

It finally settled at 75.84, registering a rise of 37 paise over its previous close of 76.21.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, slipped 0.39 per cent to 98.23. On a weekly basis, the

rupee appreciated 63 paise against the American currency. Markets will be closed on Friday on account of Holi.

The rupee registered the best weekly gain after December 24 amid weakness in the dollar index, rebound in risk sentiments, stable crude oil price and inflows from foreign funds, said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

The dollar index retreated after the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) delivered a 25 bps hike on Wednesday and signalled six more rate hikes this year.

“It has effectively matched the hawkish expectations of the market this year and exceeded them for 2023. The near-term



focus will remain on geopolitical news and movement of risk assets which will give direction to the local unit.

“Spot USD/INR could further fall towards 75.60 while 76.10 becomes the resistance,” Parmar added.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 5.02 per cent to USD 102.94 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex

ended 1,047.28 points or 1.84 per cent higher at 57,863.93, while the broader NSE Nifty surged 311.70 points or 1.84 per cent to 17,287.05.

Foreign institutional investors emerged as net buyers in the capital market on Wednesday as they purchased shares worth Rs 311.99 crore, as per stock exchange data.

“The Indian rupee has logged strong gains as the US Fed has hiked interest rates by one-quarter of a percentage point largely on expected lines, which boosted risk sentiments in the markets,” said Sugandha Sachdeva, Vice President - Commodity and Currency Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

Besides, there has been a

slide in the greenback even as investors continue to digest the US Fed’s hawkish outlook to stamp out inflation running at a 40-year high in the US.

“Splendid gains in equities amid hopes of a peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine are further aiding the local currency. As of now, the Indian rupee has been well cushioned by the 77 mark and as long as that is not taken out, sentiments are favouring further appreciation in the near-term,” Sachdeva added.

According to Anindya Banerjee, VP, Currency Derivatives & Interest Rate Derivatives at Kotak Securities, the US Fed was hawkish but in line with market expectations.

Advance tax collections jump 41%; net direct tax mop-up soars 48%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India’s collection from tax on personal and corporate income jumped over 48 per cent in the current fiscal after a 41 per cent surge in advance tax payments, mirroring sustained economic recovery in a year that witnessed two waves of coronavirus infections.

Net collections of direct taxes until March 16, 2022 in the fiscal year that started on April 1, 2021 stood at ₹13.63 lakh crore, compared to ₹9.18 lakh crore in the same period a year back, an official statement said.

The net collections in direct taxes, which is made up of income tax on individual income, corporation tax on profits of companies, property tax, inheritance tax and gift tax, in the current fiscal is 35 per cent higher than collection of ₹ 9.56 lakh crore in pre-pandemic year.

Moody’s slashes 2022 India growth estimate to 9.1% on lower capex

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Moody’s on Thursday slashed India’s growth estimate for the current year to 9.1 per cent, from 9.5 per cent earlier, saying high fuel and fertilizer import bill could limit the Government’s capital expenditure.

In its ‘Global Macro Outlook 2022-23 (March 2022 Update): Economic Growth will suffer as fallout from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine builds’ report, the rating agency said Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has significantly altered the global economic backdrop through three main channels — spike in commodities prices, risks to global economy from financial and business disruption and dent in sentiment due to heightened geopolitical risks.

It said Russia is the only G-20 economy that will contract this year and forecast that its economy will shrink 7 per cent in 2022, and 3 per cent in 2023, down from projected growth of 2 per cent and 1.5 per cent respectively, before the invasion of Ukraine. With regard to India, it said the country is particularly vulnerable to high oil prices, given that it is a large



importer of crude oil.

Because India is a surplus producer of grain, agricultural exports will benefit in the short-term from high prevailing prices. “High fuel and potentially fertilizer costs would weigh on government finances down the road, potentially limiting planned capital spending. “For all of these reasons, we have lowered our 2022 growth forecasts for India by 0.4 percentage point. We now expect the economy to grow by 9.1 pc this year,” Moody’s Investors Service said. It forecast growth for 2023 at 5.4 per cent.

The year-end inflation for India has been projected at 6.6 per cent in 2022.

The Indian economy grew 8.2 per cent in the 2021 calendar year, after a 6.7 per cent contraction in 2020 -- the year of COVID outbreak.

With regard to the global economy, Moody’s said the potential for new COVID waves, monetary policy missteps, and social risks associated with high inflation could dampen the growth outlook.

Moody’s projected China’s economy to grow 5.2 per cent in 2022 and 5.1 per cent in 2023.

Retail inflation for farm, rural workers rises to 5.59%, 5.94% in Feb

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation for farm workers and rural labourers rose to 5.59 per cent and 5.94 per cent respectively in February, mainly due to higher prices of certain food items, official data showed on Thursday. Point to point rate of inflation based on the CPI-AL (consumer price index for agricultural labourers) and CPI-RL (consumer price index for rural labourers) stood at 5.49 per cent and 5.74 per cent in January 2022 and 2.67 per cent and 2.76 per cent in February 2021, a Labour Ministry statement said.

Tribute to legendary Lata Mangeskar

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

The very first tribute to late Lata Mangeskar, #Metattributione went live on March 11. XR Central hosted the experience on its powerful metaverse creating platform, MetaQube. The experience allowed people to have a unique audio-visual engagement with over 80 years of Lata’s music, while being able to interact with friends and family in a radically different setting, said Anshul Agarwal, co-founder, XR Central.

India’s gold mine output 1.6 tns in 2020; may rise to 20 tns/year: WGC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India’s gold mine production stood at a mere 1.6 tonnes in 2020 but could rise to 20 tonnes per year in the long-term, World Gold Council said on Thursday.

The World Gold Council (WGC) launched a report titled ‘Gold Mining in India’, as part of a series of in-depth analysis on the Indian gold market.

The report has highlighted that India has a rich heritage of gold mining, but industry’s growth has been hampered by legacy processes and under-investments, WGC said in a statement.

“Despite India being one of the world’s largest consumers of gold, the mining market operates on a small scale and is not an easy one to enter. In 2020 gold mine production was just 1.6 tonnes.

“India’s current resources, when compared to production and resource levels in other countries, could reasonably be expected to support annual output of approximately 20 tonnes per year in the longer-term,” the council said.

The report has listed regulatory challenges, taxation policies and infrastructure as major



problem areas.

Somasundaram PR, Regional CEO, India, World Gold Council, said: “Given that India is one of the world’s largest gold consuming countries, it makes sense for it to develop mining capacity. But change is needed for this to happen, legacy hurdles must be reduced considerably, and investments encouraged.”

He noted that there have been promising signs in recent years with changes in the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act and introduction of the National Mineral Policy and National Minerals Exploration Policy.

“If this trend continues, India’s mine production is expected to increase in the coming years. That said, we see

this materialising only over the longer-term as potential investors will, for the foreseeable future, wait to see how successfully the new policies will be implemented and how effective they will be,” Somasundaram said.

He mentioned that gold mining has the potential to provide significant sustainable socio-economic development for India, not just through investment in exploration and mining for gold, but also through the legacy of training a skilled workforce.

“Furthermore, mining helps to bring infrastructure investment to a region, initiating and supporting associated service industries, many of which often persist long beyond the working life of the mine.

“It is only when investors

can see real evidence of India managing its gold mining assets more efficiently that we can expect inward investment to emerge. And at that point, the country’s gold mining sector will enjoy a much brighter future,” Somasundaram said.

On the three problem areas, the WGC report said that the process of securing approval for a mining licence is usually lengthy, involving multiple agencies and requires 10-15 approvals for a single licence.

“Applications are often subject to substantial delays, leading to a lengthy and costly hold-ups in project development. All of this dissuades investment, particularly from multi-national companies who can invest their resources into countries with similar geological perspective but with less legacy burden,” the statement said.

Import tax on mining equipment and other direct and indirect taxes remain high compared to other countries.

In the absence of domestically produced alternatives, project developers have little option other than to import specialist mining equipment, much of which comes from a small number of manufacturers.

RBI remains net seller of US dollars in Jan, sells USD 771 mn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) remained a net seller of the US currency in January 2022, selling USD 771 million in the spot market.

In the reporting month, the central bank bought USD 6.548 billion and sold USD 7.319 billion in the spot market, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Bulletin for March 2022 released on Thursday showed.

In December 2021, RBI had net sold USD 2.917 billion in the spot market.

In January 2021, RBI had net purchased USD 2.854 billion from the spot market — buying USD 18.225 billion and selling USD 15.371 billion.

During FY 2020-21, RBI had net purchased USD 68.315 billion from the spot market. It had bought USD 162.479 billion and sold USD 94.164 billion during the fiscal, the data showed.

Sebi eases algo trading rules for commodity derivatives segment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Easing algorithm trading norms for commodity derivatives segment, capital markets regulator Sebi on Thursday raised the limit for placing the number of orders per second to up to 120 by a user from the existing limit of 100.

The new limit will be effective from April 1, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular.

The decision was taken after receiving representations from exchanges along with the views of Sebi’s sub-committee -- Commodity Derivatives Advisory Committee.

“It has been decided to permit stock exchanges to further relax the...Limit up to 120 OPS (order per second) as against the present 100,” Sebi said.

Prior to that, the limit on the number of OPS from a particular user-ID was 20 orders per second. Now, the exchange can place a limit on the number of



orders per second from a particular user-ID not exceeding 120 orders per second.

For the number of orders exceeding the limit set by a stock exchange, Sebi said that the bourse needs to prescribe economic disincentives and inform the same to the regulator.

Further, the exchange will have to ensure that the limits provided are subject to its ability to handle the load.

“The limit on OPS may be further relaxed by the stock exchanges based on the increased peak order load

observed and corresponding upgrade of infrastructure capacity to ensure that the capacity of the trading system of the stock exchange remains at least four times the peak order load. The relaxation in limit shall be subject to the approval of Sebi,” it said.

Algorithmic trading or ‘Algo’ in market parlance refers to orders generated at a super-fast speed by use of advanced mathematical models that involve automated execution of the trade, and it is mostly used by large institutional investors.



# JUVE OUT OF CL



AP ■ TURIN

Villarreal reached the quarter-finals of the Champions League on Wednesday after inflicting a humiliating 3-0 defeat on Juventus in Turin to go through 4-1 on aggregate.

Penalties from Gerard Moreno and Arnaut Danjuma and Pau Torres's tap-in in the final quarter of an hour were enough for Unai Emery's well-organised side to see off the Italians at the Allianz Stadium and make Friday's last-eight draw.

Villarreal stunned Juve with three sucker punches after spending most of the match on the back foot, content to hold off the hosts' attacks which got less potent as the match wore on.

An embarrassing loss was just Juve's second since the end of November and punctures a dogged run of form which has put them back into the league title race at home.

Massimiliano Allegri's side were loudly booed off by the home crowd who watched their team shrink from a promising start and bounce off a yellow wall before being bundled out of the competition.

Italy are now without a single representative in this season's Champions League as it moves into its latter stages, as a cynical, clinical Villarreal beat a Serie A team at their own game.

Juve fired the first salvo in the 11th minute of a breathless first half when Alvaro Morata had his powerful header well saved by Geronimo Rulli.

Two minutes later Morata was involved again when he and Juan Cuadrado, who had supplied the cross for the Spaniard's header moments before, stepped on each other's toes with and allowed a huge chance to shoot go begging.

Then Vlahovic had a long-range drive pushed aside before he was denied by the crossbar, his first-time strike from Mattia De Sciglio's cross beating Rulli but thwacking out off the woodwork in the 21st minute.

Juve were almost punished for their inability to put away their chances seconds later when Giovanni Lo Celso charged forward with teammates swarming into the home team's box and with options to either side curled a shot just wide.

Villarreal clearly decided to shut up shop in the early minutes of the second half in the hope of stemming the flow of Juve chances and the game slowed down to almost a crawl until Adrian Rabiot thumped a

distance effort at Rulli and Cuadrado fired wide on the hour.

The away side easily held Juve at bay for the rest of the match and when Francis Coquelin was clumsily brought down by Daniele Rugani, recent substitute Moreno was fresh enough send his spot-kick past Wojciech Szczesny with 12 minutes remaining.

Moreno's goal, which came after referee Szymon Marciniak's pitchside video check, deflated the crowd and when Torres pushed home the second from Serge Aurier's cross in the 85th minute the game was well and truly up.

# Troubled Chelsea ease past Lille

AP ■ LILLE

Chelsea put their off-field troubles to one side to seal a place in the Champions League quarter-finals on Wednesday as a Cesar Azpilicueta goal clinched a 2-1 win at Lille in the second leg of their last-16 tie, and a 4-1 aggregate victory.

Reeling from the impact of UK government sanctions imposed on their Russian billionaire owner Roman Abramovich, the London club appeared rattled as they fell behind in northern France to a first-half Burak Yilmaz penalty.

Lille had given themselves a chance of salvaging the tie following their 2-0 defeat in the first leg at Stamford Bridge last month, but Christian Pulisic equalised on the night in first-half stoppage time and captain Azpilicueta got the winner in the 71st minute.

The reigning Ligue 1 champions go out, and following Paris Saint-Germain's stunning exit last week it means there will be no French club in Friday's draw for the Champions League quarter-finals.

In contrast, defending European champions Chelsea make it three Premier League clubs in the hat as they join Liverpool and Manchester City in the last eight.

"It has not been a normal last few weeks but we have to do what is in our hands, which is train the best we can. Tonight it was a difficult game and of course we are happy to go through," Azpilicueta told British broadcaster BT Sport.

"This group fights against everything, we know we have to do the best we can on the pitch, we stick together and hopefully end up having a very good season."

On the pitch Lille looked determined



to add to Chelsea's woes as they started at an excellent tempo and Yilmaz twice came close in the early stages.

The visitors lost Danish defender Andreas Christensen to injury just after the half-hour mark, and his replacement, Trevoh Chalobah, was booked for pulling down Jonathan David within seconds of coming on.

Lille then won a penalty in the 38th minute when Italian referee Davide Massa was alerted by the VAR to a handball in the box by Jorginho.

He pointed to the spot after reviewing the images, and veteran Turkish striker Yilmaz made no mistake.

Yet the home side, crucially, could not hold their lead until the break.

In the third added minute Jorginho slid a terrific pass into the path of Pulisic in the box, and the United States inter-

national found the far corner.

That took the sting out of the game and Lille's remaining hopes of a comeback were ended when they lost two of their defenders, Zeki Celik and Sven Botman, to injury just before the hour mark.

Keka rattled the post with a header from a Yilmaz cross in the 63rd minute but just like their only previous last-16 appearance -- a defeat against Manchester United in 2007 -- Lille found English opposition to be too strong.

Chelsea sealed the win on the night when substitute Mason Mount's cross from the left was turned in by the knee of Azpilicueta at the back post, and the skipper ran across to celebrate with the travelling support high in the far corner of the Stade Pierre-Mauroy.

# THE RACE IS ON!

## Liverpool sink Arsenal to move one point behind Premier League leaders Man City

AP ■ LONDON

Liverpool moved within one point of Premier League leaders Manchester City as Diogo Jota and Roberto Firmino inspired a crucial 2-0 win against Arsenal on Wednesday.

Jürgen Klopp's side took advantage of City's goalless draw against Crystal Palace on Monday thanks to their smash and grab raid at the Emirates Stadium.

Arsenal enjoyed a sustained period of pressure that could easily have yielded the opening goal, but Alisson Becker made a superb save to deny Martin Odegaard and Liverpool capitalised to steal the points.

Liverpool, chasing an unprecedented quadruple, have won nine successive league games, scoring 23 goals and only conceding twice.

Having trailed City by 14 points on January 15, Liverpool have hunted down the champions impressively, putting the race in their own hands as they eye a second title in three seasons. A victory against Watford in their next league game on April 2 would set the stage for a seismic showdown with Pep Guardiola's team at the Etihad Stadium on April 10.

Finding a way to subdue an in-form Arsenal side who had won their previous five league games to climb to fourth place made the victory in rain-soaked north London even more impressive.

No wonder Klopp and his players celebrated so jubilantly at the final whistle.



Klopp threw down the gauntlet to City this week when he admitted he wants Liverpool to be as "annoying as possible" in the title race.

There is no doubt Liverpool are proving extremely irritating, especially since they beat the Gunners with Mohamed Salah starting on the bench after suffering a foot injury in Saturday's win at Brighton.

Liverpool had knocked Arsenal out of the League Cup semi-finals in January.

History for Kane Harry Kane created Premier League history with his goal in Tottenham's 2-0 win at Brighton.

After Cristian Romero deflected Dejan Kulusevski's effort into the net in the 37th minute, Kane entered the record books just before the hour.

His blistering finish from Rodrigo Bentancur's pass made it 95 away goals in the Premier League for Kane, more than any other player.

The England striker also moved above Frank Lampard in the list of Premier League all-time scorers, going into fifth with 178 goals.

Antonio Conte's seventh-placed side remain in the race for a top four finish, sitting three points behind Arsenal, who have a game in hand.

# Vettel replaced by Huelkenberg for Bahrain GP

AP ■ SAKHIR

Four-time Formula One world champion Sebastian Vettel has tested positive for Covid-19 and will be replaced by Nico Huelkenberg for the season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix, the Aston Martin team said on Thursday.

German veteran Vettel, 34, is the second driver after Daniel Ricciardo to test positive for coronavirus since pre-season testing began but the McLaren driver will be fit to race.

A statement from Aston Martin read: "Sebastian Vettel has tested positive for Covid-19 and will not therefore be taking part in the 2022 Bahrain Grand Prix. "Replacing him in the AMR22 will be Aston Martin Aramco Cognizant Formula One Team reserve driver Nico Huelkenberg, who will be in the car from FP1 onwards."

# Salima Tete to lead India in FIH Women's Junior WC



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mid-fielder Salima Tete was on Thursday named captain of the 20-member Indian team for the FIH Women's Junior World Cup, starting in Potchefstroom, South Africa on April 1.

Defender Ishika Chadhary will serve as Tete's deputy for the tournament which was postponed from December last year to 2022 due to the omicron-threat in South Africa.

Mid-fielders Sharmila Devi, Lalremsiami, who were part of the Indian women's team that finished fourth in the Tokyo Olympics, are also in the squad.

# Asia Cup: India assured of six medals, recurve archers disappoint again

PTI ■ PHUKET

A second string Indian team has assured six medals, primarily in the compound category at the ongoing Asia Cup Archery Championship on Thursday.

However India's male recurve archers were once again a big letdown with not a single one of them able to reach the individual medal round. The Indians however made amends in the team events advancing into the final in both the men's and women's sections.

The high point of the day came in the compound section where India remained in line for a clean sweep.

India have sent their fringe archers for the tournament which already has lost some sheen after pull-out from South Korea, China, Japan and Chinese Taipei.

# Dortmund cut Bayern's lead to 4 points

AP ■ DORTMUND

Axel Witsel fired in a late winner Wednesday as Borussia Dortmund ground out a 1-0 victory at Mainz to trim Bayern Munich's lead at the top of the Bundesliga to four points.

The Belgium midfielder side-footed a Giovanni Reyna free-kick past Mainz goalkeeper Robin Zentner with three minutes left to claim his first Bundesliga goal for two years.

"It was a hard game, sometimes you can't play beautiful football and have to win like this," Witsel told



broadcaster DAZN.

"This was about body language and fighting spirit - for the second straight game we didn't concede a goal," he added, referring to Saturday's 1-0 home win against Arminia Bielefeld.

"I am not a goalscorer, but I was very happy to get this one."

The result saw second-placed Dortmund further reduce Bayern's lead - which was 10 points on Saturday night - with the Bundesliga's top two teams still to meet on April 23.

The original fixture was postponed 10 days ago due to an outbreak of Covid in the

Mainz squad.

Dortmund struggled to break down the home defence before Witsel struck.

Zentner had repeatedly denied Dortmund's attack, including star striker Erling Haaland, who came on for the last half-hour.

After Witsel finally broke the deadlock, Dortmund twice came within a whisker of doubling their lead in stoppage time.

Julian Brandt fired just wide with the goal at his mercy before Reyna forced Zentner into a diving save from his free-kick.

# Nadal improves to 18-0 with win

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Rafael Nadal battled past big-hitting American Reilly Opelka 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/5) on Wednesday to push his 2022 record to 18-0 and reach the quarter-finals of the Indian Wells WTA and ATP Masters.

The 35-year-old Spaniard, who won a record-setting 21st Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January and lifted the trophy in Acapulco last month, stayed on track for a fourth title in the California desert.

But he had all he could handle from the 2.11m tall American, including a raft of serves that topped the 140 mph mark and had Nadal's back against the wall - literally.

Nadal became just the second player to start a season 18-0 since the ATP Tour launched in 1990. Novak Djokovic has done it twice, starting 41-0 in 2011 and 26-0 in 2020. In other matches, Serbia's 61st-ranked Miomir Kecmanovic shocked sixth-ranked Matteo Berrettini



6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4 to book a quarter-final clash with American Taylor Fritz.

The 22-year-old Kecmanovic

equalled the biggest win of his career as he reached the last eight of a Masters level event for the second time.

Berrettini, runner-up at Wimbledon in 2021, is at a career-high sixth in the world after reaching the Australian Open semi-finals in January.

But he couldn't find the answer against an aggressive Kecmanovic, who pressured Berrettini's serve throughout.

Unable to convert two break points in the eighth game of the final set, Kecmanovic broke Berrettini to love in the final game, letting out a shout of triumph as the Italian sent a forehand wide on match point.

Kecmanovic will now be hoping to go further than his quarter-final run in the California desert in 2019.

Standing in his way will be 20th-seeded American Fritz, who shook off a slow start to beat Australian Alex de Minaur 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/5).

# Mirabai to begin CWG & Asiad preps in US this week

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Olympic Silver-medallist weightlifter Mirabai Chanu is set to begin her preparations for this year's Commonwealth Games and the Asiad with a month-long training stint in the USA, starting this week. The 27-year-old and India weightlifting head coach Vijay Sharma will fly to St. Louis, USA on Thursday night for at least a month-long stay.

"We have planned for a 4-5 week stay as of now but we can increase it also," Sharma said. "We will see how it's going there. The plan right now is to be there till the last week of April but we will assess the progress after a month and then decide whether we extend our stay or not," Sharma added. Chanu, who struggles in the snatch section due to an imbalance that



affects her right shoulder and back, had benefited immensely by consulting Dr. Aaron Horschig, a former weightlifter-turned-physical therapist and strength and conditioning coach in the US ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

In an interview to PTI last month, the diminutive Manipuri had expressed her keenness to work with Dr Horschig once again for rehabilitation and endurance training.

"We are in talks to go in March, which is our off season. I go there keeping in mind the rehab and technique. We have two big tournaments CWG and Asian Games this year," she had said. "Yes, we will be working with Dr Horschig again. We will go to him three days a week and then when he is needed we will call him for training," Sharma said.





# Edulji wants Harman to bat higher up

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former captains Diana Edulji and Shantha Rangaswamy feel the Indian women's cricket team can't afford to "blow hot and cold" in a big event like the ongoing World Cup and called for consistency in the batting department. India have two wins and as many losses to their name in the World Cup and after the defeat against England, they face the mighty Australians on Saturday. Edulji feels too many changes are being made in the batting order. Deepti Sharma batted at three in the first two games before skipper Mithali Raj replaced her in that position against West Indies and England. Mithali, who has been the team's most consistent batter over the last 12 months, is yet to fire in the tournament while Harmanpreet has roared back to form after a prolonged lean patch that saw her getting dropped from the bilateral series against New Zealand before the World Cup. Edulji, who had called for Harmanpreet's exclusion from the playing eleven last month, is happy that she was proved wrong by the senior batter who has hit a hundred and 50 batting at four in the ICC event so far. Edulji wants Harmanpreet,

who has been batting at five, and opener Smriti Mandhana to get maximum time in the middle. "When they (Harman and Smriti) are in form and have confidence between themselves, let them play as many overs as they can. They complement each other and they run well between the wickets. Opening pair (Smriti and Yastika) is fine as Shafali doesn't seem to be in form. "Harmanpreet can bat at three if you want left-hand right-hand combination, followed by Deepti, and Mithali can control the innings at five if there is a top-order collapse. "Too many changes are being made at the moment. Let the players know they are going to bat at this number, tell them they are safe at that number. Harman has to bat higher now that she is in form. "You can always be flexible in the last 20 overs with the likes of Richa and Pooja being promoted but your top four needs to be stable," Edulji told PTI. England, who had lost all three games prior to Wednesday, bundled out India for 134 after scoring 317 against the West Indies. "You can't blow hot and cold like that," Edulji added. Rangaswamy too called for consistency from the batters but

doesn't want to change the order for the game against Australia. Last year, India had ended Australia's 26-match winning streak though they lost the closely contested away series 1-2. "Both Mithali and Deepti were among runs earlier but they have not clicked in the tournament so far. Hopefully, these two, especially Mithali fires against Australia as she is the fulcrum of India's batting. "With Smriti at the top and Harman returning to form, it is a good sign for India. Our bowlers have done well throughout the World Cup. They will overcome a major psychological barrier if they can beat Australia," said Rangaswamy. "I don't see any changes in the batting order. Mithali has batted at three for the major part of her long career. I am confident that she will be back among the runs. Harman, at number five, is ideal, the team should not not risk her against the moving ball. "When she gets going, she is unstoppable. Really happy to see her back among the runs. She was dropped from one of the games and that fired her up. Everyone needs a jolt at some point in their career." Rangaswamy added that leg-spinner Poonam Yadav can be tried against South Africa and Bangladesh but not Australia as they have "found her out".



## WC loss to India in 2017 reshaped our values: Tahila

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

The shock 2017 World Cup semi-final loss to India might have "reshaped" their "values" but the Australian women's team haven't really discussed about that match in recent times, all-rounder Tahila McGrath said ahead of her team's league match against the 'Women In Blue' on Saturday. Six-time champions Australia, whose World Cup campaign five years back, ended after losing to India by 36 runs in the semifinals, are currently placed on top of the table with four wins in as many matches. "That was a long time ago, that (2017 semi-final) game, one that probably was spoken about more immediately after that. It was something that we sort of really looked (at) and reshaped our values and how we approached... sort of how we play our brand of cricket," she

was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "But over recent times, it's sort of not been something we've spoken about too much. So we're just pretty simple with our approach. Take every game as it comes and play the type of cricket that we want to play. So we're really happy with the brand we're playing at moment and hopefully more to come." McGrath was the Player of the series when Australia had defeated India 2-1 in the ODI series and 2-0 in the three-match T20 series at home last year. "We had a fair bit of success against them in the recent India series. But, it's a new location, a new tournament, so anything can happen and they're a world-class side," she said. "We will do our homework on them, do big training tomorrow and give ourselves every chance to beat them on Saturday."

## SA continue unbeaten run in Women's WC

PTI ■ HAMILTON

South Africa edged out hosts New Zealand by two wickets in a thrilling league stage match to continue their unbeaten run in the ICC Women's World Cup here on Thursday. Seamers Ayabonga Khaka (3/31), Shabnim Ismail (3/27) and Marizanne Kapp (2/44) led the way with the ball as the Proteas bowled out New Zealand for 228 despite skipper Sophie Devine's 93 at Seddon Park. Laura Wolvaardt (67) and skipper Sune Luus (51) then hit timely half-centuries before Kapp (34 not out) ensured South Africa crossed the line for their fourth win of the tournament. South Africa thus consolidated their second spot on the points table while New Zealand, who have just two wins from five outings, continued to remain fourth and will need to win their remaining two fixtures to stay in the mix for a semifinal spot. Chasing 229, openers Lizelle Lee (17) and Wolvaardt started positively for South Africa. But a bit of hesitation in running between the wickets cost the former her wicket. Wolvaardt, however, remained unper-



turbed and kept finding the boundaries. She was lucky on a couple of occasions with a dropped catch and almost dragging on to her own stumps but along with Luus, kept the chase on track.

Amelia Kerr (3/50) trapped Wolvaardt leg before to put an end to the 88-run partnership between the opener and Luus in the 36th over before dismissing Mignon du Preez (1) in her next over.

## Stress free Kohli could be dangerous news for opposition, says Maxwell

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli nowadays looks "stress free" without the burden of captaincy weighing him down, a dangerous sign for the opposition teams in the upcoming IPL, feels Royal Challengers Bangalore team-mate Glenn Maxwell. Kohli, who relinquished RCB captaincy after last year's IPL, has also resigned from T20 and Test captaincy while being removed from ODI leadership role. Maxwell feels that Kohli now is no longer the "in-your-face" aggressive cricketer that he used to be and that has been pleasantly surprising. "He knows he's handing the captaincy over, which I think is potentially a big burden for him. It might have been something that's been weighing him down for a while and now



that he's been able to release it, it might be dangerous news for opposition teams," Maxwell told RCB Podcast. The flamboyant Australian is happy that Kohli is

in that phase when he would actually be enjoying being out there in thick of things. "It is amazing for him to be relaxed a bit and actually enjoy

the next few years of his career without any of that sort of external pressure. I think playing against him in earlier days, he was a fiery competitor, getting in your face. He's always trying to impose himself on the game. Impose himself on the opposition." The Australian all-rounder is loving the cricketing conversations he is having with Kohli and is himself surprised that the former India skipper has become a close friend. "Something I've noticed more from him this year is he's been really measured with his emotions. He's actually been really measured with his decision-making. He's certainly really surprised me and probably how close we've both gotten to each other as well this year. Being able to talk about the game in a calm manner," Maxwell said.

## RR has two best spinners in IPL and competent squad: Sangakkara



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rajasthan Royals director of Cricket and head coach Kumar Sangakkara believes they have a "very competent" squad at their disposal to script a turnaround after three dismal IPL seasons. Rajasthan finished 7th, 8th and 7th in the last three seasons. The IPL's upcoming edition begins on March 26. "We know we had quite a bit of work to do in the off-season with regards to our team. I think we managed to identify the key areas which needed our attention and having had a proper process when it comes to selecting players at the auction, we managed to kind of hit the markers that we set for ourselves," said the Sri Lankan legend in a team statement. "I think the franchise has

done an amazing job to put this exciting and strong squad together," he added. Commenting on the make-up of his squad, Sangakkara said the presence of Yuzvendra Chahal and R Ashwin will make a huge difference. "We've got the two best spinners in the IPL in terms of off-spin and leg-spin in Chahal and Ashwin. We have Boult, Prasidh, Saini, Coulter-Nile, McCoy, which makes up for a very exciting pace unit supported by of course the retentions of Yashasvi, Samson and Buttler. "We have secured depth in every department, with Neesham, Mitchell and van der Dussen being exciting cricketers. We've got some really exciting and young cricketers from India as well. The main thing is that we have a very competent side.

## Powell keen to learn from Ponting

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Delhi Capitals' batter Rovman Powell is keen to "learn a thing or two" about every aspect of the game from head coach Ricky Ponting when he works with the former Australian skipper during the upcoming season of the IPL. The IPL 2022 will begin on March 26 and matches will be played in Mumbai and Pune. Delhi Capitals will take on Mumbai Indians in their first match of the season on March 27. "As a child I watched Ricky Ponting bat a lot. We know the type of leader he was when he captained the Australian team and I think he is the same type of leader as a coach as well," the 28-year-old Powell, who also plays for the West Indies, was quoted as saying in a release issued by the franchise. "He is really good and hopefully I can learn a thing or two from him," he added.



Powell and wicketkeeper-batter KS Bharat attended their first practice session with the Delhi franchise here on Wednesday. "It's been very good to be in the Delhi Capitals camp. I have heard a lot of good things about this franchise. The players have welcomed me with open arms. "I had a chat with Rishabh during the T20 series in Kolkata as well. He told me that he is excited to have me in the Delhi Capitals team," said Powell, who has played 39 T20s. Bharat said he is looking to keeping things simple this season. "It's amazing to be back in the Delhi camp. I am looking forward to a fantastic season as a unit. It's been good to interact with some of the players during our first training session as well. "I am looking to keep things simple and follow my process this season," said Bharat.

## MI 'welcomes home' rival IPL franchises

PTI ■ MUMBAI

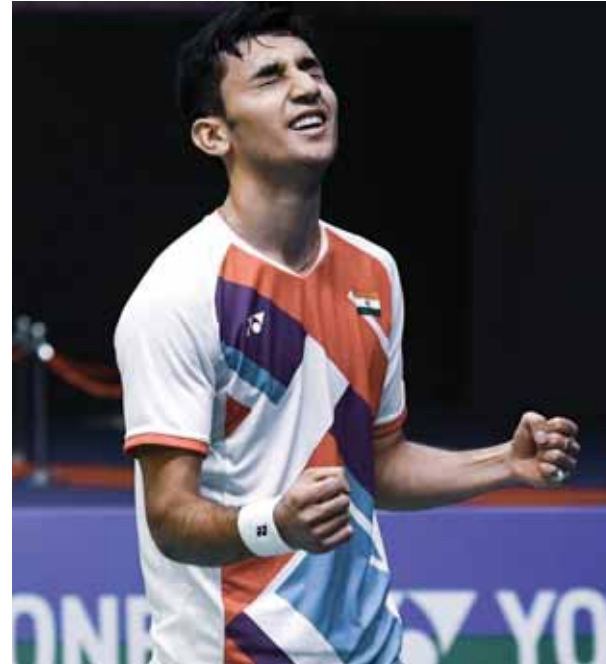
The vibrant city of Mumbai and its five-time champions IPL outfit Mumbai Indians have splashed in a hue of colours covering the city, in welcoming the fellow nine franchises. "The 'WelcomeDilKholKe' billboards, customised to each of the visiting teams, have been set up across key locations in the city," the franchise stated in a media release. A dash of yellow to 'Welcome Chennai Super Kings - Whistle Podu Dil Khol Ke', while Kolkata Knight Riders are welcomed with their iconic 'Korbo Lorbo Jeetbo Dil Khol Ke slogan'.

## Sen stuns world No 3 Antonsen, enter All England q/f

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

World Championships bronze medallist Lakshya Sen stunned world No. 3 Anders Antonsen of Denmark in straight games to progress to the men's singles quarterfinals of the All England Championships here on Thursday. The 20-year-old from Almor, who had claimed his maiden Super 500 title at India Open in January and then reached the finals of German Open last week, notched up an upset 21-16, 21-18 win over third seed Antonsen, a two-time medallist at World Championships in 2019 Basel and 2021 Huelva respectively. It was their first meeting at the international stage. Sen will face either Hong Kong's eighth seed Ng Ka Long Angus or China's Lu Guang Zu in the quarter-final.

Earlier, India ace Saina Nehwal produced a gallant fight before going down to second seed Japanese Akane Yamaguchi in a thrilling three-game match in the second round. Former world No 1 Saina, the London Olympics Bronze medallist, lost 14-21, 21-17 17-21 world No 2 Yamaguchi in a 50-minute women's singles clash. It was a much improved performance from the Indian, who had lost in straight games to Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon at German Open last week. Sen gave amply display of his tactical acumen as he dished out a defensive game and kept Antonsen away from the net to lead 11-9 at the first break. He kept things in his grip after the interval to move to a 13-9 advantage and maintained the lead to pocket the opening



game. Sen kept his clears close to the baseline and tried to use his smashes judiciously to jump to a 9-5 lead early on before grabbing a four-point advantage at the breather. Antonsen fought his way back to 14-14, riding on six points on the trot. The duo moved 14-14 to 16-16 before Sen managed to eke out a two-point lead at 18-16. He kept his nerves and unleashed a cross court smash to grab three match points. Antonsen saved one after an exciting rally but the Indian shut the door next to make it to the last 8. On Wednesday, Lakshya wins an all-Indian battle against Sourabh Verma in straight games. Close-ish first game followed by a breeze in the second, 21-17 21-7 in 33 minutes. Led 10-0 at the start of the 2nd game.



who has taken 97 wickets in 95 matches for Sunrisers Hyderabad, said in a video posted by the franchise on Twitter.

## Steyn arrives in India to start new chapter as SRH bowling coach

PTI ■ MUMBAI

South African pace legend Dale Steyn on Thursday arrived in India to kickstart his new journey as the bowling coach of Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League beginning here on March 26. The 38-year-old, who hung his bowling shoes last August, will join the SRH coaching staff that comprises head coach Tom Moody, batting coach Brian Lara, and spin bowling coach Muttiah Muralitharan. "Yeah, very happy to be back. I've been in India for quite some time so I'm quite excited to be back. Just driving from the airport brought back so many memories," Steyn,