**OPINION 6** 

LOOKING BACK AT

TRADE WITH RUSSIA

2ND MONTH OF WAR

**MONEY 9** 

PLI SCHEME TO ACCOUNT FOR 13-15%

CAPEX IN KEY INDUSTRIAL SECTORS

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**ASH BARTY RETIRES** FROM TENNIS 11 SPORT

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY MARCH 24, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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#### **CAPSULE**

#### **4 KIDS DIE AFTER EATING** POISON-LACED TOFFEES

Lucknow/Kushinagar: Four children, including three siblings, died after allegedly consuming poisonous toffees in Kasya area of Kushinagar district on Wednesday morning, officials said.

#### 11 FROM BIHAR KILLED IN SCRAP GODOWN FIRE Hvderabad: Eleven migrant workers were charred to death in a major fire accident at a scrap godown here in the early hours of Wednesday. The deceased workers, hailing from

Bihar, were sleeping in a room constructed above the godown at Bhoiguda here when the incident happened. HERO MOTORCORP CHIEF

#### RAIDED FOR TAX EVASION New Delhi: The Income Tax Department on Wednesday conducted raids at multiple

nremises of Hero Motorcorp as part of a tax evasion probe against the country's largest two-wheeler automobiles manufacturer, officials said. P10

#### START MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME AGAIN: SONIA

New Delhi: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday made a strong demand for restarting mid-day meals in schools as they open after the long closure due to Covid.

#### **RUSSIAN OLYMPIANS FACE BACKLASH**

London: Russian Olympic athletes who took part in a rally supporting President Vladimir Putin and the Ukraine invasion are facing a backlash, including facing a disciplinary probe.

# **Survivors recount details of** ghastly Birbhum massacre



Police detain Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) activists during their protest against the alleged mass killing at Bagtui village in Birbhum district, outside West Bengal Legislative Assembly in Kolkata on Wednesday

#### 'My grandsons cried for mercy but they....'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA

It was well past 9 pm ... They came from nowhere, rained bombs ...frightened... the males like us took shelter in the paddy fields leaving back our women and children with hope that normally they are not touched...The women had shut themselves inside the houses... unable to catch them. the men of Anarul Sheikh cut open the grills... first hacked the inmates ... my two grandsons cried for mercy but they

would not listen ... I helplessly watched these from distance... then they poured diesel on them and set them afire... all in front of my eyes... 10 people screamed as they died bit by bit... we cried hiding in the darkness watching the mayhem?

That is how Mihilal and Manirul Sheikh describe the Tuesday night's horror of Bagtui village in Birbhum district where a retaliatory attack by rival Trinamool Congress gangs allegedly fighting over the control of coal, sand and stone racket left 10 people, including 6 women and two children dead.

Continued on Page 2

### HC asks Delhi CFSL to collect evidence, orders CCTV at crime spots

PNS KOLKATA

Taking suo motu cognizance I of Birbhum carnage that saw 10 people burnt to death in an alleged intra-party feud, the Calcutta High Court on Wednesday asked the State Government to produce the case diary/report in the case before it by 2 pm on Thursday when the matter will be taken up for hearing again.

The court also directed Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) Delhi to immediately collect necessary materials for forensic examination at Bagtui village in Birbhum

The HC asked the DGP to ensure safety of witnesses, including that of a minor boy injured in the arson, in consultation with the district judge, Purba Bardhaman.

The Division Bench of Chief Justice Prakash Srivastava and Justice Rajarshi Bharadwaj said, "Let no evidence be destroyed. The district court and the State DGP will have to

ensure the safety of every villager and witnesses. If any post-mortem is pending, it will have to be videographed."

The court also directed the administration to install CCTV in the area. Continued on Page 2

#### Don't spare thugs,

Modi tells people

PNS NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday urged the people of West Bengal not to forgive the perpetrators of such incidents and the those who encourage such criminals.

Virtually addressing an event on Shaheed Diwas in Kolkata's Victoria Memorial, he said, "I am pained by the violent incident in Birbhum, West Bengal. I express my condolences. I hope that the State Government will definitely punish those who commit such heinous sins.

### No Covid zone, but mask must from March 31

Citing the continuous dip in coronavirus cases for the past seven weeks, the Union Home Ministry on Wednesday decided to end all Covid-19 containment measures across the country from March 31.

However, as a precautionary measure in keeping with the WHO warning due to the consistent rise in cases in pockets of European and Asian nations, the Government has decided to continue with Covid appropriate behaviour such as wearing of masks and maintaining social distancing norms as earlier.

On Wednesday, though, the Covid cases were around 11 per cent higher (1,778) compared to Tuesday's figures.

The overall tally of Covid-19 cases stands at 4,30,12,749. According to the data, 62 deaths have been reported in the last 24 hours, taking the toll to 5,16,605. The active cases further declined to 23,087.

Continued on Page 2

### India crosses \$400 bn milestone in exports

**New Delhi:** The country's exports for the first time crossed the USD 400 billion mark in a fiscal on healthy performance by sectors such as petroleum products, engineering, gems and jewellery, and chemicals, according to the commerce ministry's data released on Wednesday. The merchandise exports rose by by 37 per

cent to USD 400.8 billion in 2021-22 until March 21 against USD 292 billion in 2020-21. Previously, the outbound shipments had touched a record of USD 330.07 billion in 2018-19. Imports during the period stood at USD 589 billion, leaving a trade deficit of about USD 189

billion. Hailing the country's success in achieving its goods export target, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that this is a key milestone in India's "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" journey. The highest ever goods export target was achieved nine days ahead of the March 31 dead-

line. "India set an ambitious target of USD 400 billion of goods exports and achieves this target for the first time ever. I congratulate our farmers, weavers, MSMEs, manufacturers, exporters for this success. This is a key milestone in our Aatmanirbhar Bharat journey. #LocalGoesGlobal," Modi tweeted.

Detailed report on P10

#### **Dhami takes oath as U'khand CM**

Dehradun: Pushkar Singh Dhami took oath as the 12th Chief Minister of Uttarakhand in a ceremony organised at the historic Parade Ground in Dehradun on Wednesday afternoon. Along with him eight Cabinet Ministers took oath of office and secrecy.

The Governor of Uttarakhand, Lieutenant General (retd) Gurmit Singh, administered the oath to CM Dhami and his Cabinet Ministers.

Continued on Page 2



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Uttarakhand CM-designate Pushkar Singh Dhami before the oath-taking ceremony in Dehradun on Wednesday

# PATANJALI



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# Delhi to enforce lane discipline for HMVs

**STAFF REPORTER** NEW DELHI

¬he Delhi Government will start **I** an intensive enforcement drive for bus drivers and goods carriage vehicles to ensure their adherence to the lane discipline. The Transport Department, in consultation with Delhi Traffic Police and other stakeholders has already identified 46 major corridors for implementation of the drive.

As part of the drive, the Public Works Department (PWD) has been directed to mark and properly identify the selected corridors by placing warning signage and boards at suitable places, the Office of the Transport Minister said in a state-

"The segregated and marked bus lanes will be exclusively reserved for buses and goods carriage from 08.00 AM to 10.00 PM and no other vehi-

cle will be permitted to ply in the said bus lanes during this period," it said.

Transport Minister of Delhi Kailash Gahlot further stated "Safety of citizens on Delhi roads is of paramount importance to us. Over the last couple of years with a vision to ensure safe, accessible, smart, and sustainable transport to citizens of Delhi, we have upgraded our technology and infrastructure in our buses such as installation of CCTV camera and panic buttons in buses, its two-way connection with integrated command-and-control center, live tracking, presence of bus marshals etc.

By assigning dedicated lanes to buses and enforcement of the safety measures, we are further committed to make Delhi roads safe for our citizens, motorists, Non-motorized transport and pedestrians. It would also help with reducing the traffic congestion on the road," he said.

It further said that during the period from 10.00 PM to 08.00 AM, other vehicles may be allowed to ply in bus lanes, however the buses and goods carriage will confine and ply in the segregated and marked bus lanes for 24 hours. "Vehicles found plying on the other lanes, will be liable for prosecution under section 192-A of Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 which prescribes a fine of INR 10,000, with an imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months," it said.

Transport department will deploy two enforcement teams in two shifts to enforce traffic discipline in bus lanes. Each enforcement team will cover the entire road length or stretch of that road, allotted to such a team. In addition, cranes will also be deployed with the teams for impounding and removal of vehicles which are found parked/obstructing

### Demand for Ahir Regiment in Army: Protest leads to traffic jam on Delhi-Jaipur e-way

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ GURUGRAM

protest called by the Ahir A Community, from the Kherki Daula toll plaza to Hero Honda Chowk in support of the creation of an 'Ahir Regiment' in the Indian Army on Wednesday disrupted the traffic movement on the Delhi-Jaipur (NH-48) throughout the day.

The commuters on the Expressway faced huge traffic congestion on the National Highway as the Gurugram police had diverted the route to avoid traffic congestion.

But despite this, the commuters faced huge inconvenience due to the spreading of the protesters at Kherki Daula toll plaza fill the Hero Honda Chowk on the carriageway.

barricades at several entry points on the national highway at Shankar Chowk, Iffco Chowk, Signature Tower, Rajiv Chowk and Hero Honda Chowk on the expressway.

As a result, traffic going towards Jaipur was particularly slow and

The Gurugram Police had put up

nessed at the Golf Course Road, Kherki Daula Toll Plaza, Hero Honda Chowk, Southern Peripheral Road (SPR), Rajiv Chowk, Signature Tower Chowk, Iffco Chowk, Shankar Chowk and Delhi-Gurugram border on the expressway.

The officials of the Gurugram traffic said that the traffic movement on the expressway was slow due to the protest and have taken up several measures to avoid any congestion.

Police was updating people about the traffic situation in Gurugram through the official social media handles," said Subhash Boken, spokesperson of the Gurugram

Apart from this, a large number of protesters were present around the Kherki Daula toll plaza.

At the Kherki Daula toll plaza, the protesters parked their vehicle on the Expressway and even were arguing with the drivers of the public transport to stop them from heading towards Delhi from Jaipur.

Meanwhile, the Gurugram traffic police had also issued an advisory for the commuters to avoid any inconvenience on the national highway but it seems the commuters were unaware of the protest and faced huge traffic congestions on the national highway.

Moreover, the protest was joined by several party leaders including, Congress MP Deepender Singh Hooda, Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Haryana in-charge and Rajya Sabha MP Sushil Gupta, Rewari MLA Chiranjeev Rao, Former Haryana cabinet minister Rao Narbir Singh, Former BJP MLA Umesh Aggarwal, TMC leader Ashok Tanwar and oth-

While addressing the gathering, Gupta said, "We heard that 'Modi hai to Mumkin Hai' now where is the prime minister Narendra Modi. We are demanding the creation of an 'Ahir Regiment' in the Indian Army and AAP will provide all possible support to Ahir Community in this protest, he said.

#### Woman held for forcing 12-yr-old into child labour

Her husband booked for sodomy

**PTI** ■ JAIPUR

A couple has been booked for allegedly forcing a 12-year-old boy into child labour here, with her husband also being charged with sodomising him,

police said on Wednesday.

While the woman has been arrested, her husband is absconding, they said.

The man had also branded the boy's foot with a hot knife so that he did not escape, they said. Shastri Nagar police station SHO Dileep Singh said the couple — Ruhi Parveen and Mohammad Riyaz — brought the boy from Bihar to Jaipur about six to seven months ago. Recently, the boy somehow managed to drag himself to the roof of the house where he was kept, and jumped across to a neighbour's house.

"He reached the roof of the house and jumped across to reach the roof of the adjoining house and requested the neighbours to save him," SHO Singh said. He shared his ordeal with them, who in turn, contacted the child helpline, the officer said. "He was forced to make bangles from 4 am to 1 am (the next morning). He did not even see sunlight for months. There were scratch marks on his throat," child helpline coun-Shanti Berwal

#### HC asks Delhi...

Last time a similar cog-

Additional Solicitor General YJ Dastur, represent-

#### Mamata links Birbhum carnage with Hathras

Aligarh: Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, in her statement, has linked the incident of burning of ten people alive after the murder of TMC leader in Rampurhat of Birbhum district of Bengal with Hathras of UP. Mamta Banerjee has said in a statement given in the media that she will go to Rampurhat on Thursday. Anyone can come to Rampurhat, but they were not allowed to enter Hathras in

Various discussions are taking place after this statement. The special thing is that the leaders of political parties had gone to Bulgarhi and made rhetoric regarding the Hathras incident. Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, Rashtriya Lok Dal's Jayant Choudhary and Bhim Army's Chandshekhar etc, had also visited the family members of the deceased girl in Bhulgarhi.

On September 14, 2020, a girl belonging to a Scheduled Caste was attacked in Buolgarhi of Hathras district of Uttar

The girl's brother had filed a case against Sandeep of the village itself. Later, on the basis of the girl's statements, the names and sections of the village's Ravi, Ramu and Lavkush were extended. The girl was treated at the Jawaharlal Nehru (JN) Medical College of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). On September 28, the girl was referred from Aligarh to Delhi. She died on 29 at Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi. The incident had brought the Buolgarhi village of the district into the limelight. For two weeks, Bulgarhi remained a political battleground.

The family of Hathras victim welcomed the statement and step taken by Mamta Banerjee and are happy. PNS

#### With no way to escape, 11 migrant workers lose life in scrap godown blaze in Hyderabad

**Hyderabad:** It was a tragedy waiting to happen at the ill-fated scrap godown in Hyderabad's Bhoiguda as 12 migrant workers from Bihar were staying in a single room above the godown that had a sole access point.

A spiral staircase in the godown was the only way to enter and exit from the room and a kitchen attached to it.

Making matters worse for the hapless workers, the shutters of the godown (on the ground floor) remained closed when the deadly fire mishap happened in the early hours of Wednesday.

Unsurprisingly, they could not come out and save their lives though one of the 12 people managed to escape by jumping out of the window. It was a heart-wrenching scene as bodies, charred beyond recognition, were found in a heap as they apparently collapsed upon inhaling the smoke, a fire official said. Eleven among the 12 workers perished in the fire the exact cause of it would be known after an investigation, the officials said. Burnt scrap material, including old papers, empty liquor bottles and fiber cable wires, were found scattered at the scene. The godown owner has provided accommodation to them in the room upstairs, but no one was, actually, supposed to stay there, a police official said. The 12 workers, aged between 22 and 35 years, were sleeping in the room when the tragedy struck.

The fire appeared to have broken out in the godown and soon spread to the room above, the police official said.

The site of the fire tragedy was sealed and cordoned off as authorities removed the burnt scrap material from

The migrant workers, who came to the city to eke out a living, hailed from different villages of Bihar's Chhapra and Katihar districts.

Some of them were working at the scrap godown for the past two years, while others had joined recently. *PTI* 

### Ramapati Shastri picked as pro tem UP Speaker

overnor Anandiben Patel appoint-Governor Anancioca Lace III leader Ramapati Shastri as the pro tem Speaker of Uttar Pradesh Legislative

Assembly on Wednesday.

A BJP MLA from Manakpur in Gonda, Shastri will administer the oath to the newly-elected legislators.

The governor has also constituted five-member panels for administering oath of office to the newly-elected MLAs of the 18th UP Legislative Assembly. The panel members are Suresh Khanna, Fateh Bahadur, Jai Pratap Singh and Rampal (all BJP) and former assembly speaker Mata Prasad Pandey of Samajwadi Party.

Principal Secretary, UP Assembly, Pradeep Dubey, said that Ramapati Shastri had been appointed pro-tem speaker by the Governor and he would be administered oath of office by the governor at Raj Bhawan on Saturday. Shastri is an eight-time MLA.

member panels for administering oath of office to the newly-elected MLAs of the 18th UP Legislative Assembly

In the recently concluded UP assembly elections, Ramapati Shastri defeated Ramesh Gautam of Samajwadi Party by a margin of over 42,000 votes. Shastri had earlier served as social welfare minister in the Yogi Government and also the previous BJP-led regime headed by Rajnath Singh in 2000-2002. Shastri was born in Vishnoharpur

village of Nawabganj (Gonda) on

October 15,1952. He had his primary

education at a state-run school in the vil-

lage and later passed secondary and

intermediate examinations from Gandhi Vidyalaya Inter College, Nawabganj. In 1984, he received Shastri degree from Sampurnanand Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi and during his student days, he joined Jana Sangh before taking the plunge into politics in

#### From Page 1

nizance had been taken by the HC was in 2009 after the Nandigram police firing saw 14 people dead. The court had then ordered a CBI investigation in the Nadigram case.

ing the CBI, submitted that the CBI is ready if an investigation by it is ordered by the court.

#### GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SAMBALPUR

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Due to unavoidable circumstances following changes have been made in respect of the Bid ID No

	12.12.10.00 to word	Bid	Bid
From 24.03.2022 at 11.00 AM to 07.04.2022 up to 5.00 PM	02:04:2022 Up to 1:00 P.M.	08.04.2022 At 10.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later
	Inste	ad of	
From 15.03.2022 at 11.00 AM to 30.03.2022 up to 5.00 PM	25.03.2022 Up to 5.00 P.M.	31.03.2022 At 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later
14 Dec 114			

All other terms and condition remain unchanged



#### छत्तीसगढ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19,

नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर (छ.ग.)

#### // सर्व संबंधित को सूचना //

भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय की ई.आई.ए. अधिसूचन दिनांक14/09/2006 (यथा संशोधित) के अंतर्गत सर्व संबंधित को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेसर्स श्री श्याम वेंचर्स (गोंडपेण्ड्री लाईम स्टोन माईन), ग्राम-गोंडपेण्ड्री, तहसील-पाटन जिला-दुर्ग स्थित खसरा क्रमांक 383, 384, 393(पार्ट), 394/1, 394/2, 395/1, 395/2, 396, 397, 398, 399(पार्ट), 401, 402/1, 402/2, 403/3(पार्ट), 437 एवं 438(पार्ट) कुल क्षेत्रफल-4.98 हेक्टेयर में चुना पत्थर(गौण खनिज) उत्खनन क्षमता - 55,500 टन प्रतिवर्ष के पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति हेतु लोक सुनवाई बाबत् छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, नवा रायपुर में आवेदन प्रस्तुत किया गया है। उक्त परियोजना के संबंध में आपत्ति। सुझाव / विचार / टीका टिप्पणी, इस सूचना के जारी होने के दिनांक से 30 दिवस के अंदर क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, 5/32 बंगला, भिलाई,जिला-दुर्ग वे कार्यालय में मौखिक अथवा लिखित रूप से कार्यालयीन समय में प्रस्तुत की जा सकती है इस परियोजना के लिए लोक सुनवाई दिनांक 28/04/2022 को समय दोपहर 12:00 बजे, स्थान-शासकीय उच्चतर माध्यमिक शाला, ग्राम-गोंडपेण्ड्री, तहसील-पाटन, जिला-दुर्ग (छ.ग.) में नियत की गई है। यह भी सूचित हो कि :-

(1) लोक सुनवाई के दौरान सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों को फिजिकल / सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग का पालन करना अनिवार्य होगा।

(2) लोक सुनवाई में सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों द्वारा मास्क का उपयोग किया जावेगा तथा समय-समय पर सेनेटाईजर का उपयोग किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

(3) लोक सुनवाई स्थल पर सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों की बैठक व्यवस्था कम से कम 02 मीटर की दूरी रखना अनिवार्य होगा। (4) कोरोना वायरेंस के नियंत्रण एवं रोकथाम हेतु शासन द्वारा जारी समस्त दिशा-

निर्देशों का अक्षरशः पालन किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

ई.आई.ए. नोटिफिकेशन 14 सितम्बर 2006 (यथा-संशोधित) के अनुसार संबंधित व्यक्तियों के अवलोकन / पठन हेतु ड्राफ्ट ई.आई.ए. रिपोर्ट, कार्यपालक सार हिन्दी एवं अंग्रेजी भाषा तथा सी.डी.(साफ्ट कॉपी) डायरेक्टर, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार, इंदिरा पर्यावरण भवन, जोर बाग रोड, नई दिल्ली, क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी, एकीकृत क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार, अरण्य भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, रायपुर छत्तीसगढ़, कलेक्टर, कार्यालय कलेक्टर, जिला-दुर्ग, मुख्य कार्यपालन अधिकारी, जिल पंचायत, जिला-दुर्ग, मुख्य महाप्रबंधक, जिला व्यापॉर एवं उद्योग केन्द्र, जिला-दुर्ग, सरपंच *।* सचिव, ग्राम पंचायत गोंडपेण्ड्री, जिला-दुर्ग, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण

मंडल, 5/32 बंगला, भिलाई, जिला-दुर्ग एवं मुख्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल

पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर में रखी गई है। सदस्य सचिव छत्तीसगढ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, नवा रायपर, अटल नगर, जिला- रायपर (छ.ग.

#### No Covid zone...

From Page 1 In a communication to

Chief Secretaries of States, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said, "National Disaster Management Authority has taken a decision that there may not be any further need to invoke the provisions of the DM Act for Covid containment

The Central Government for the first time orders and guidelines under the Disaster Management Act, (DM Act) 2005 for the containment of Covid-19 in the country and these were modified on various

The States and Union Territories have also developed their own capacities and systems and implemented their detailed specific plans for managing the pandemic, said the Home Secretary, adding over the last seven weeks or so there has been a steep decline the number cases

Accordingly, Bhalla said, after the expiry of the existing order on March 31, no further order will be issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare advisories on Covid containment measures, including on the use of face mask and hand hygiene, will continue to guide the overall national response to the pandemic, he said.

The Home Secretary, however, said that in view of the nature of the disease, people still need to remain watchful of the situation.



I, R. Prakash S/o P. Rajenderan

R/o Flat No. 433 IP colony, Faridabad, Haryana has changed my name from R. Prakash to Rajendiran Prakash for all purposes.

PD(9165)A

### **Dhami takes oath...**

From Page 1

The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, national president of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) JP Nadda, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister various BJP ruled States, senior leaders of the BJP and former CMs of Uttarakhand and other StatesIn his Cabinet Dhami picked Satpal Maharaj, Prem Chand Agarwal, Ganesh Joshi, Dhan Singh Rawat, Subodh Uniyal, Rekha Arya, Chandan Ram Das and Saurabh Bahuguna as Ministers. Dhami dropped three senior Ministers Bishan Singh Chufal, Banshidhar Bhagat and Arvind Pandey from his last Cabinet. BJP State president Madan Kaushik was also included in the Cabinet. The Cabinet still has three vacancies left which can be filled later.

The ceremony started at 2.36 PM with the oath of office and secrecy by CM Dhami. The whole ceremony lasted for about thirty minutes. Thousands of BJP workers and the people from all parts of the State attended the ceremony braving the blazing afternoon sun.

Uttar Pradesh caretaker CM

Yogi Adityanath, Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Harvana CM Manohar Lal Khattar, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Himachal Pradesh CM Jai Ram Thakur, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu and CM designate of Goa Pramod Sawant, for-Raje, Central Ministers Sanjeev Baliyan, Meenakshi Lekhi, Ajay Bhatt, former CMs Uttarakhand Trivendra Singh Rawat, Vijay Bahuguna and Tirath Singh Rawat, national general secretary and Dushyant Gautam and co in charge Rekha Verma attended the ceremony.

One of the key features of the swearing-in ceremony was the presence of a large number of Hindu saints. A special stage was set up for them and their presence lent a saffron colour and religious fervour to the ceremony. Before taking oath of office Dhami went up to the saints, showered petals on them and took their blessings.

Earlier, the arrival of Prime Minister Modi on the stage electrified the crowd. However maximum applause was reserved for Uttar Pradesh caretaker Chief Minister Yogi who sent the crowd into ruptures.

Jammu: PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti alleged on Wednesday that the BJP is promoting "The Kashmir Files", a film on the plight of displaced Kashmiri Hindus, to incite people on religious lines and called for the the circumstances that led to the exodus of Pandits from the

after National Conference (NC) chief Farooq Abdullah also called for setting up a panel to investigate the killings and the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley. Asking people to watch the film but not harbour hatred

towards Muslims, Mufti said

the circumstances that led to

the 2020 Delhi riots and the

Her demand came a day

communal violence in Gujarat in 2002 should also be probed. "Of course, the govern-ment of India should take a decision in this regard (probing the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits)," she told reporters on the sidelines of her party's

convention here. The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said the Centre should set up a "truth and reconciliation commisAsking people to watch the film but not harbour hatred towards Muslims, Mehbooba said the circumstances that led to the 2020 Delhi riots and the communal violence in Guiarat in 2002 should also be

BJP promoting 'The Kashmir Files' to instigate

people on religious lines: Mehbooba Mufti

sion" to probe not only the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, but also the Gujarat and Delhi

"I have not seen 'The Kashmir Files'. I have heard that the film shows a lot of violence and bloodshed and that it has painful scenes. What happened with the Kashmiri Pandits was horrible. We feel their pain. But you cannot hate every Kashmiri Muslim (for the exodus of Pandits)," she said.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief recounted the massacres of Sikhs in Chittisinghpura, Hindus in Bairala (Doda) and Kotdhara, and Muslims in Surankote and said, "Every community faced the worst oppression in Jammu and Kashmir. The people of Jammu and Kashmir were caught between the guns of Pakistan and India. The

the makers of the "The Kashmir Files" have to make money, Mufti accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) people on religious lines. "The prime minister and the BJP are promoting it by

Kashmiri Pandits were also victims of it."Maintaining that

giving free tickets and making it tax-free. They are inciting people. They divide people on religious lines," she said. Taking a dig at the

saffron party for its "failure" to address the concerns of Kashmiri Pandits, Mufti said had it done anything for the Pandits in the last eight years, their situation could have improved.

"Whatever was done for them -- employment packages, rehabilitating them in flats after bringing them out of tents (refugee camps), transit accommodation facilities at Vessu, Sheikhpora, Mattan or Tulmulla -- all of it was done when Mufti Mohammad Saveed was the chief minister during the rule of Atalji (former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee) in the country," she added. *PTI* 

### Survivors recount details of ghastly Birbhum massacre

From Page 1

Anarul Sheikh is the local TMC block president and was hand-in-glove with deputy anchayat pradhan Bhadu Sheikh who was bombed to death barely two hours before the retaliatory attack. Bhadu and Anarul's gang control the entire coal-sand-stone racket in the Bengal Jharkhand border, Manirul

allege.
"Bhadu was a 'don' and very close to TMC district president and national working committee member Anubrata Mondal for whom he would 'manage' the elections in Rampurhat and other adjacent towns," complains Mihilal, who has lost his mother, wife, a daughter and two grandchildren in the blood curdling attack.

More horrific is the fact that the posse of policemen posted as a precautionary measure outside the village would not rush to protect the

"Anarul stopped the police from coming ... he even stopped the fire brigade personnel in the initial hours," says Manirul demanding CBI investigation and "phansi" (death sentence) for the accused.

"We have no faith in this police force ... when they could not save small children how can they conduct free and fare investigation ... we want CBI and we want Phanshi for the culprits," he says crying inconsolably.

The remaining members of the family have left the village and are hiding in a distant locality (name not to be disclosed). "Even here they are calling us up and issuing death threats," he complains.

Not only the rival groups but almost half of the village has fled the area along with their poultry, cattle and

"We are refugees in our own country dada ... please tell Narendra Modi, Mamata Banerjee and whoever is there to help us ... we have been reduced to insects," he cries even as one hears about 20 km away the district SP silently leaves Bagtui as the sun touches the western rim. One wonders whether even the senior IPS officer is terrified of what might come after some down.

Meanwhile, a team of BJP led by

Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikar and the Left leadership led by CPI(M) State secretary Md Salim on Wednesday visited the Bagtui

Complaining that the Government was ignoring the treatment of the burn victims "who can be prime witness," Adhikari said, "I visited the victims who are undergoing treatment and have offered help by way ofgetting them admitted to appropriate hospitals in Kolkata because there is no burn unit in Rampurhat hospital ... the doctors told me to see that the patients are removed from here ... but I am told that the Health Department has asked them to continue the treatment here in Rampurhat."

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### **Delhi's GDP up 50% since 2016-17**

This was even after fiscal disruption due to Covid-19 pandemic, says L-G

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW

Delhi's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) went up by 50 per cent in five years since 2016-17 even after facing economic disruption due to the Covid pandemic in 2020-21, Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal said on Wednesday.

The economy of national Capital was adversely affected due to Covid in 2020-21, Baijal said in his address to Delhi Assembly. "In 2021-22, Delhi's Gross

State Domestic Product (calculated) on current prices was Rs 9,23,967 crore and in last five years it grew by 50 percent as compared to Rs 6,16,085 crore in 2016-17. This shows the strong position of Delhi's economy," he said in



Delhi Lt. Governor Anil Baijal being received by Delhi Speaker Ram Niwas Goel and CM Arvind Kejriwal as he arrives for the Budget Session of the Assembly, in New Delhi on Wednesday, RANJAN DIMRI/THE PIÓNEER

Delhi's per capita income in 2021-22 was Rs 4,01,922 which is three times higher than that of the country. In his address, the L-G mentioned the Delhi Government's achievements in various fields including electricity, educa-

his address. He also said that tion, pollution remediation, in-situ slum development, green energy and so on. He also said Delhi has the cheapest electricity rates in the country and that 91.4 per cent households availed the benefit of power subsidy in

the education sector, the L-G said that the pass percentage in class 10th and 12th has registered successive growth 'The pass percentage in class 10th and 12th was 97.52 per cent and 99.14 per cent respectively," Baijal said.

He also said that the Delhi Teachers University Bill, 2022, was also passed to provide professional training to teachers by establishing a dedicated university.
In his address, Baijal said

that the Delhi Government's Public Works Department was constructing 784 multi-storey flats in Devanagar area for slum-dwellers under its in-situ rehabilitation policy.

He also said that the

Delhi Government was supplying 945 million gallons per day of water across the city with a network of 15,000 km water pipelines.

"Water is also being supplied in 1,577 unauthorised colonies by the Government. Where there is no water pipeline, the Government is supplying water through tankers," Baijal said.

### **Delhi's fight against pollution**

### Real-time data on source to be available from August 1

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Leaving no stone unturned to make Delhi pollution-free, the AAP Government has announced that real-time data on pollution sources would be available from August 1 in the national Capital. The real-time identification of pollutants will significantly help in taking mitigating measures and reducing pollution, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said.

Delhi will become the first city to identify the real-time source of air pollution through its apportionment system. The project will help in identifying the factors responsible for the rise in air pollution at any given location

It will help in understanding the impact of pollution sources like vehicles, dust, biomass burning and industrial emissions. Based on these results, the Delhi Government will be able to take necessary steps to curb the specific sources of pollution. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had reviewed the progress of Delhi's Time Source Apportionment System' and directed officers to ensure that no loopholes are left in this system.

Notably, a supersite will be established in Delhi by the end of July to identify actual sources of pollution in real time. Along with the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister, Manich Sisodia Minister Manish Sisodia, Environment Minister Gopal Rai, Delhi Dialogue Commission vice-chairperson Jasmine Shah and other high-ranking officials were present in the meeting. Kejriwal chaired a review meeting with teams from IIT-Kanpur, IIT- Delhi, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) on the ambitious Real Time Source Apportionment System and Pollution Forecasting Project. During the review meeting, Professor Mukesh from IIT-Kanpur informed the CM that a suitable location had been iden-

tified for the establishment of the supersite apparatus. "They have proposed to set up a supersite at Pandara Road in Central Delhi. The work of setting up the super-site will begin by the end of July. It will be built in an area totaling up to 36 square metres," the Chief Minister's Office said in a state-

"The supersite will be built about nine to 14 meters above the ground. As part of this system, a mobile app will also be developed. Under the whole apportionment system the exact sources of pollution at specific locations will be discovered," it

The Chief Minister was also apprised about the progress of the procurement process of equipment required like the 'Real Time Ambient Air Analyser' and 'Online Particulate Matter and Ion Analysis System'. A global procurement process for acquiring state-of-the-art equipment is being ensured under the project.

The team also informed the Chief Minister of the developments that have taken place in the Air Pollution Forecasting System project. This system will provide accurate hourly, daily and week-ly forecast data on air pollution. Kejriwal said, "In Delhi pol-

lution remains in the 'Moderate Category' around October 9 every year. After that, the pollution level starts increasing suddenly. Looking at NASA's photos, it has been noticed that a large amount of stubble was burnt during that period, whereas the figures every time say that only five per cent of Delhi's pollution is due to stubble burning.""In such a situation it is important to ascertain the actual contribution of stubble in Delhi's pollution and how much other factors contribute to

This would enable real-time detection of factors causing pollution in the State and help in controlling that source of pollution," he added.

### Kejriwal: Will quit politics if BJP holds MCD polls on time and wins

BJP first coerced State **Election Commission** to defer municipal polls and is now trying to delay them: CM

SAURAV GUPTA NEW DELHI

Attacking the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for allegedly delaying municipal elections, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Wednesday that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will quit politics if the BJP gets these polls conducted in a timely manner and wins them.

Kejriwal said that the BJP claims to be the largest political party globally but runs away from a small municipal election fearing defeat at the hands of the AAP. "I challenge the BJP to hold the MCD elections immediately if it has the courage. We (AAP) will leave politics if you (BJP) win," he said. The Chief

Minister alleged that the BJP first coerced the State Election Commission (SEC) to defer the municipal polls and is now on track to delay them for months through an amendment.

"The BJP's shameless act of deferring elections is downright disrespectful of the sacrifice our martyrs made for this country and its

Election the Commission so fickle that the BJP can make it defer elections in the name of unification of corporations? Today the BJP is getting MCD elections cancelled; tomorrow it'll do the same for State and national elections too," he

es, Kejriwal said, "It was on this very day that Bhagat Singh Ji, Sukhdev Ji and Rajguru Ji were hanged to death by the British. These martyrs made the supreme sacrifice to bring freedom to this nation. India won inde-pendence and made one of context of municipal elec-tions reflect their political frustration and lust for power

the strongest Constitutions in the world. The Constitution gave the public the power to elect governments of its choice, who run as the people say. But for the last few days, what has transpired because of the BJP is nothing short of

a travesty."

The Delhi CM further said, "The way the BJP is coercing institutions like the EC for political gains is a direct attack on this democ-

I appeal to the Prime Minister with folded hands in the future there may not be a BJP or an AAP, there may be no Modi or Kejriwal for the public to see. Our parties don't matter, we don't matter.

This country is all what Addressing the media at Delhi Vidhan Sabha premis- what matters. Our social fabric is what matters. Our democracy is what matters." Replying to Kejriwal, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that the statements of Chief Minister and other AAP leaders in

in civic bodies. "The level of the statements of the Chief Minister and other AAP leaders shows that they have no concern for improving municipal services or betterment of service conditions of civic employees. The AAP

added. Kapoor further said that the Centre is trying to improve the financial health and working of the civic body by unifying the three

leaders are just hungry for power at civic bodies," he

#### **Let MCD elections take place** if they have courage: Sisodia

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader and Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday challenged Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to let municipal elections take place if they have courage. The Minister said that BJP leaders are trying to run away to avoid defeat.

Sisodia said "Delhi residents as well as civic body's employees are now determined to throw BJP out of power. The people of Delhi are least bothered about unification or trifurcation of MCD; they just want a corporation that will

work in their interests Corruption has been sole focus of BJP for past 17 years.' The BJP-ruled corporations has not once focused on important issues like development, sanitation, health, education and paying timely salaries to their employees," Sisodia said. "The BJP has been highly incompetent in managing sanitation system, running its own schools as well as health institutions. It has not paid salaries to doctors, sweepers, and teachers for months. The Delhites need a corporation that is free of corruption," he said. SF

### Martyrs' Day: CM pays tribute to Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal paid tribute to freedom fighters Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru on Shaheed Diwas at the Delhi Legislative Assembly. Every Indian will forever be indebted to these immortal heroes of the country for their supreme sacrifice. No party or government worked towards realising Bhagat Singh or Babasaheb's dreams in over 70 years since India gained independence," he said. "Government offices in

Delhi and Punjab will now solely bear displays of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Babasaheb Ambedkar, not of any party leaders or ministers. I appeal to the BJP to do the same in their party offices as well. The Delhi Government

has put an end to dirty politics of corruption and discrimination, and introduced an honest model for progress in educa-tion, health, electricity, water



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal pays floral tribute to shaheed Sukhdev, Bhagat Singh and Rajguru on their death anniversary, at Old Secretariat in New Delhi on RANJAN DIMRI/THE PIONEER

and roads," he added. Paying tribute to eminent freedom fighters, the Chief Minister said, "Today, the entire country is celebrating Shaheed Diwas, a prominent day of martyrdom in the history of the Indian freedom struggle. Bhagat Singh laid his life down

for the country at a very young age, made the supreme sacrifice, and he has been the heartbeat of every young Indian ever since. The youth of the country has drawn a great deal of inspiration from his life and his ideals over the past 100 years,"

### Make 'The Kashmir Files' | Govt installs Urodynamics lab in LNJP Hosp | Formulate national policy on tax-free, demands BJP



Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta, with other senior leaders and supporters. protests against the Kejriwal Government outside the Delhi Assembly in New Delhi on Wednesday,

RANJAN DIMRI/THE PIONEER

**STAFF REPORTER** NEW DELHI

 $B^{\text{haratiya Janata Party MLAs}}_{\text{on Wednesday interrupted}}$ Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal's address in Delhi Assembly as soon as he began his address, demanding that 'The Kashmir Files' movie be made tax-free.The BJP MLAs started raising slogans with demand to make movie tax-free

Session on Tuesday. Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel asked BJP MLAs to stop sloganeering, saying that it is happening for first time in his tenure as a Speaker in last seven years that LG's address has been interrupted by legislators.

"It was an indecent behaviour by BJP legislators to create noise and trying to interrupt LG's address," Goel said later in House. He warned opposition legislators not to repeat such behaviour in future. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia also reacted to development and asked BJP MLAs to approach Centre for waiver of central GST on movie. "If you want film to be tax-free, why are you fighting for SGST? Go to Centre for waiver of CGST," Sisodia said in assembly. After this, the LG's address began after BJP legislators calmed down.

n a significant overhaul of the **I**health infrastructure in Delhi, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government has installed a state-of-the-art Urodynamics lab for diagnosing and treating urological conditions in children up to 12 years of age. Health Minister Satyendar

Jain while inaugurating this system at Delhi's Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital (LNJP) stated: "We have installed a urodynamic video system at the hospital which is an essential machine used for diagnosing and treating urological conditions in children up to 12 years of age."
"This will help the doctors

in detecting the conditions at an early stage in children which can prevent serious complications later in life. The system can be used to diagnose and treat other gastrointestinal diseases as well," he said.

Jain visited LNJP Hospital

the video-urodynamic system, machinery required for doctors to perform urodynamic testing with precision. "This system has advanced equipment for studying urinary bladder dynamics and is essential for managing children with urological anomalies and diseases," the Government said in a statement. Jain said, "Diagnosis and treatment of such diseases at an

early stage not only saves a patient's money but also increases the chances of saving their life. On the other hand, if diagnosed late, it leads to many serious health conditions and the treatment becomes even more expensive.'

A senior Government official said that the urological anomalies take up a major share of the volume of pediatric surgical cases. Hence, this system helps in the early detection of any such diseases, and in doing so can even prevent the need for renal transplants, he capable of taking real-time images of the abnormal physiology related to these conditions which are otherwise not possible with ordinary urodynamic machines and will improve diagnostic accuracy immensely," he added.

Apart from urological conditions, this versatile, muftifaceted system can also be used to treat and diagnose gastrointestinal diseases such as measuring pressures of anal canal and the oesophagus. It is also useful for therapy and per-forming biofeedback crucial for improving urinary and fae-cal control in affected chil-

Since there are only a few centres in the country which have such equipment, common people will greatly benefit from this addition. This advanced equipment will prove to be a boon for people and the urology department as well, by enabling detection of urologi

#### using the same for research **AAP Govt to soon**

#### operationalise 7 new hospitals

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Government will soon operationalise seven new hospitals with a combined bed capacity of 6,834, Health Minister Satyendar Jain said on Wednesday. At present, the Delhi Government has 37 hospitals.

"The Delhi Govt is all set to make a new record in the field of healthcare by opening up seven new hospitals with a total capacity of 6,834 new beds in the next few months," he tweeted.

The new hospitals will be Shalimar Bagh Hospital, Kirari Hospital, Sarita Vihar Hospital, Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalya, GTB Hospital, Raghubir Nagar Hospital and Sultanpuri Hospital.

# unemployment, stresses Rai

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday said that there is a high rate of joblessness among country's youngsters, while lakhs of Government posts are lying vacant at same time due to non-recruitment. The Minister stressed need to formulate a national policy in order to tackle issue of unemployment.

Addressing a two-day national-level conference on employment, Rai said, "The need of hour is to formulate a national employment policy to solve problem of unemployment.

Our country is facing a dreadful crisis of unemployment as young people are knocking on doors for work, despite having advanced degrees." The governments, instead of generating employment opportunities, are not fill-



ing up vacant posts, leading to resentment and anger among the youngsters, he said, citing incidents of lathicharge on people demanding that recruitment exams be held on time. Rai said absence of a national policy on employment for seven decades since independence has led to a high rate of unemployment and exacerbated economic challenges for the country.

#### **Retired J'khand HC** judge sworn-in as **Lokayukta of Delhi**

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

 $R^{\text{etired Jharkhand High}}_{\text{Court judge Harish}}$ Chandra Mishra was on Wednesday sworn in as the Lokayukta of Delhi.

The oath of office was administered by Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal at a solemn ceremony held at the Raj Niwas. The post of Lokayukta in Delhi has been lying vacant since the retirement of Rewa Khetrapal in December 2020.

According to the notification dated March 15, Baijal appointed justice (retired) Mishra as the Lokayukta. Mishra will hold office for a term of five years from the date of his joining. Mishra was also the Acting Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court.

### City to develop 3K acres as world-class facilities

#### **KEY AREAS**

Public conveniences including adequate lighting, CCTVs, toilets, etc

Dedicated play area for toddlers, children and adolescents with child-friendly play equipment, open air gyms, gazebos and covered

Walking, jogging and cycling tracks, open air gyms, water bodies

Composting, rainwater harvesting, irrigation supply, power backup

Native trees, flowers and shrubs

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Tn a move to transform Delhi Linto a city of world-class parks, the Delhi Government will develop about 3,000 acres of area as state-of-the-art facilities across 17 city forests of the national Capital. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday reviewed the status of parks of

Delhi and directed officials to submit a detailed project report within 15 days Currently, 1,500 parks are

being redeveloped in collaboration with 450 RWAs under the Mukhyamantri Park Saundaryakaran Yojana. The Kejriwal Government will also fund the development of 5,000 parks in Delhi. A high-level



and gardens of Delhi was held on Wednesday at the Delhi Secretariat under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. In this meeting, discussions were held regarding development of parks of international standards in Delhi.

surveyed in Delhi.

Kejriwal directed officers to transform 17 city forests to world class levels in the first phase. These world class city forests will be developed in an

17 locations of Delhi. Along with Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, Environment Minister Gopal Rai, DDC Vice Chairperson Jasmine Shah and other highranking officials were present in the meeting. of

As part Mukhyamantri Saundaryakaran Yojana, 1,500 parks are being transformed in collaboration with 450 RWAs under a unique community parks initiative. Under the scheme, 16,828 parks will be

So far 6,396 parks have been surveyed. Of these, 3,565 parks have been identified as those not being maintained upto standards. After surveying all locations, appropriate steps will be taken with the help of RWAs/NGOs to transform them into world-class parks.

### DTCP notice to 17 projects for not obtaining Occupation Certificate

**GURUGRAM** 

The Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) has issued show-cause notices to 17 projects for not obtaining an Occupation Certificate (OC) and still being partially occupied.

In the notices, District Town Planner (Enforcement) RS Batth said, "The builders have offered the possession of the flat/plot and units and even towers at the projects which have been occupied without obtaining OC, which is clearly in violation of the condition of approved building plans. The builders had also violated the Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas Act, 1975." The developers have been

directed to appear before the DTP's office by March 30 to reply why action may not be initiated against them. According to a list provid-

ed by the department, these projects include Uniworld City in Sector-30, 41, World Spa in Sector-30, 41, Uniworld Garden Sector 47, Fresco Sector 50, Escape Sector 50, Harmony Sector 50, The Close-South, The Close-North Sectors 49,50 and 57, The Residences Sector 33, 48, BSF Housing Sector 2, Gwal Pahari, Ansal Housing Sector 92, Ansal Heights Sector 92, Aloha Sector 57, Gurugram 21 Sector 83, Lifestyle Homes Sector 81, 82, 82A, 83, 84 and 85, Vatika City Sector 49, Exotica Sector 53, 54, 57, Gopal Dass Estate and Housing Pvt Ltd Sector 51, 52,

53, 57 and Vipul Lavanya

The notice further said Section 3B of the Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Area Act, 1975, provides that "no person shall erect or re-erect a building in a colony save in accordance with the approved plans and subject to such restrictions and condition as are contained in licence or as may be specified by Government or Director." "The building has been

occupied without obtaining OC, the department is also not aware of Fire Safety NOC regarding functionality of fire fighting system, Structural Stability Certificate i.e. about strength and safety of the structure, fulfilment of environment guidelines etc, which are a prerequisite for grant of OC for any building," Batth said.

## 66 airports added to aid regional links: Minister

Stating that regional air connectivity is rapidly increasing in the country and the aviation sector is registering an 11 per cent growth vis-à-vis 5.6 per cent of the railways, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Wednesday informed the Lok Sabha that till 2014, there were 74 airports in the country while in the last seven years 66 new airports were added taking the total number to 140.

"Our resolve is to take this number of airports to 220 by 2025," said Scindia replying to the Demands for Grants, 2022-23, for the Ministry of Civil Aviation in the lower house.

Scindia said the Indian civil aviation sector is the third largest in the world and 15 per cent of its pilots are women.

As many as 3.82 lakh passengers undertook air travel daily in the last seven days, giving hopes of revival of the sector scarred by Covid-19, Scindia said as he set a target of nearly tripling the total passenger traffic by 2023-24 to 40 crore.

Ścindia further said that at a time when the airline industry world over is facing turbulence, two new airlines, Jet and Akasa, will soon launch their services.

He said the government has brought about a paradigm



shift, a structural change in the sector in the last two years and it will focus on inclusion, access and affordability to increase the demand among common man.

The total number of passengers travelled increased from 6.70 crore in 2013-14 to 14.50 crore in 2018-19. The number of planes too increased from 400 from 2013-14 to 710 by 2018-19

As per DGCA data, 8.38 crore people travelled on domestic flights in 2021, as compared to 6.3 crore in 2020 - the year which saw the outbreak of Covid-19.

Detailing the decline and loss in the aviation sector during the UPA's time, the minister said 111 aircrafts were purchased in 2005 and Rs 55 crore debt earned

Scindia said the aviation sector started to look up post growth in the railways.

the second Covid wave and the number of air travellers in the country increased to 3.90 lakh per day in November 2021, compared to 4.15 lakh per day in pre-Covid times.

"But, due to Omicron it came down to 1.60 lakh per day. I am happy to report that in last seven days we are again back to 3.82 lakh per day. There is a hope of revival and based on that we expect that by 2023-24 we will take the number of 40 crore," he said.

Scindia said the aviation sector's competitiveness can be compared to AC-1 and AC-2 services of Indian Railways. Last year, 18.5 crore people travelled AC-1 and 2.

The incident occurred during a routine inspection. We later He said 14.5 crore people travelled in the aviation sector came to know that it had landwhich registered 11 per cent ed in Pakistan." Informing Parliament that growth vis-à-vis 5.6 per cent a high level probe was initiat-

'IAF conducting court of inquiry into accidental Brahmos firing' ed, the defence minister assured the members the missile system is trustworthy and The IAF is conducting the mandatory court of inquiry the armed forces are fully com-

petent to handle such systems. into the accidental firing of a He said during inspection. During routine maintenance Brahmos missile which crashed into Pakistan and a few officers and inspection, a missile was including a Group Captain may be held responsible. An accidentally released at around Air Vice Marshal is heading the

It was later learnt that the missile had landed inside the territory of Pakistan.

"While this incident is regretted, we are relieved that nobody was hurt due to the accident. I would like to inform the august House that Government has taken serious note of the incident.

A formal high level inquiry has been ordered. The inquiry would determine the exact cause of the said accident. I would also like to state that a review of the Standard Operating Procedures for operations, maintenance and inspections is being conducted in the wake of this incident. We attach highest priority to safety and security of our weapon systems. If any shortcoming is found, the same would be immediately rectified.

I can assure the House that the missile system is very reliable & safe. Moreover, our safety procedures and protocols are of the highest order and are reviewed from time to time. Our Armed Forces are welltrained and disciplined and are well experienced in handling such systems," he said.

Pakistan had lodged a strong protest against the

reported accidental firing of the missile and summoned the Indian Charge d'Affaires in Islamabad.

It also called for a joint robe and China backed it. However, the US said it was accident and the Indian defence ministry had given the details. "We have no indication, as you also heard from our Indian partners, that this incident was anything other than an accident," State Department spokesperson Ned Price had said..

China's Foreign Ministry, responding to a question from

Pakistani media about the incident, said it "called on relevant countries to have dialogue and communication as soon as possible and launch a thorough investigation into this incident, strengthen informa-

miscalculation." Pakistan termed the Indian defence ministry statement regretting the accident as a "simplistic explanation" while

tion-sharing and establish a

notification mechanism in time

to ensure the non-recurrence of

such incidents and prevent

BRAHMUS

calling for a joint probe.

Major General Babar

Iftikhar, the Director-General of the Inter-Service

Public Relations (ISPR) of Pakistan, had claimed that an unarmed projectile launched from India entered the Pakistani airspace travelling 124 km and fell near Mian Channu. No loss of life was

Noting that the missile that landed in Pakistan was fired "accidentally" due to a technical malfunction, the Indian defence ministry had said it had also ordered a Court of Enquiry into the inci-

### Both Houses disrupted over fuel price hike

 $F^{\text{or the second-day in a row}}_{\text{both the houses of the}}$ Parliament on Wednesday witnessed disruption in the proceedings on account of steep hike in fuel prices and were adjourned for sometime during the early hours of busi-

In the Rajya Saba the agi-tated members displayed placards and shouted slogans demanding suspension of other business to discuss hike. The Lok Sabha proceedings too were adjourned for about 20 minutes as opposition members protested the spiraling-up of oil and cooking gas prices and staged a brief walk-out from the house.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu disallowed the demand for suspension and said the members can raise the matter during other discussion on demand for grants. He also Opposition M Mallikarajun arge tried to raise the issue.

Sensing the mood of the house, Naidu then adjourned the proceedings for nearly an hour shortly after 11.000am when the house met for the day. The Question Hour later func-

tioned smoothly.
Congress, Left and Samajwadi Party leaders wanted their notices admitted under rule 267, requiring setting aside of the listed business of the day to take up the issue of rise in prices of petrol, diesel, cooking gas LPG, kerosene and other essential commodities like pulses and edible oils.

Ramgopal Yadav (SP), Mallikarjun Kharge, Shaktisinh Gohil, Śyed Naseer Hussain and K C Venugopal (all Congress) and Binoy Viswam (CPI) had given notices under rule 267.

In the Lok sabha as the Question Hour began, mem-

stormed the Well of the House, raised placards "janata ki roji roti par prahar" and showed cooking gas price rising to Rs 1000. They kept shouting "we want justice" and sought to

> ing placards in front of them. The opposition members began the protest soon after the House assembled for the day. Members from the TRS, BSP and SP also joined the protest but remained on their seats.

block ministers' sight by plac-

The Congress members, who were most vocal were seen at the forefront of the protest and staying put in the well of the house. Amid the bedlam , Speaker Om Birla repeatedly urged the members to go back to their seats and allow the House to function.

With opposition refusing to relent, he adjourned the proceedings till 12 noon.

Intervening from the treasury benches, Union

Goyal alleged that the opposition has no commitment for the development of Jammu and Kashmir and their "discrimination" against the Union Territory continues as before.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

**NEW DELHI** 

investigation.

Giving this information

here on Wednesday, sources,

however, said these are the ini-

tial pointers and the final result

of the court of inquiry will take

some more days. The accident took place on March 9 when the

supersonic cruise missile fired

from a base near Sirsa crashed

into Mian Channu in Pakistan

after travelling a distance of

nearly 140 kms. However,

there were no casualties on the

ground and the Indian gov-

seriously "deeply regretted it."

Rajnath Singh gave a statement

in Parliament on March 15 nar-

rating the sequence of events.

In this backdrop, the Air Vice

Marshal was appointed to con-

duct the inquiry, sources said

adding he is very experienced and highly qualified. In his statement in

Parliament, Rajnath had said "A

missile was unfortunately acci-

dentally launched on March 9.

ernment said it had viewed it

In fact, Defence Minister

Goyal made the allegations in Lok Sabha after an MP from Jammu and Kashmir, Hasnain Masoodi, could not ask a supplementary question during the Question Hour due to the protests and sloganeering by the opposition over the fuel price hike.
"This shows their (opposi-

tion) commitment towards Jammu and Kashmir. The Congress and its allies have been discriminating against Jammu and Kashmir for years and they are doing the same even now. They are not allowing an MP from Jammu and Kashmir to ask a question, Goyal said.

However, the unrelenting opposition continued their protests in the Well of the

### Parl panel suggests SOP for evacuation of Indians

PNS NEW DELHI

n view of the recent political crisis in Afghanistan and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for evacuation of Indian nationals stranded in exigencies must be chalked out and it may be made available to all Indian Missions/Posts abroad, a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Éxternal Affairs in its report "Demands for Grants -2022-23" suggested on Wednesday.

The Committee has also suggested that India should set up resident missions in the remaining 48 of the 193 UN member-nations in a timebound manner in line with its aspiration to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

The Committee has suggested that a database of Indian nationals abroad may be prepared and updated on a regular basis for emergency situa-

and spread of overseas Indians, there is a high possibility of them getting stranded in a crisis situation. The recent political crisis in Afghanistan and conflict in Ukraine is a gross reminder about the implications on safety and security of Indian nationals in such a volatile situation. The role played by the Ministry in Afghanistan and Ukraine in the recent past has been commendable," the report said.

The report further stated that the Committee are aware that during outbreak of conflict or any other exigencies, the evacuation of Indian citizens is planned on a case-to-case basis and evacuation is dependent on a number of factors. The report was tabled in Parliament on Wednesday. Under the Operation Ganga mission, over 22000 Indian nationals have returned from Ukraine till date. The evacuation exercise involved a whole of the Government approach with regular coordination meetings and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) taking the lead role. Prime Minister spoke to Presidents of Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Romania and Slovakia to ensure safe return of Indian nationals from Ukraine.

Under the Operation Devi Shakti, a total of 669 people were evacuated from Afghanistan including 448 Indians, 206 Afghans (includ-ing Hindu Sikh minority members) and 15people of foreign nationalities (Nepal, Lebanon and Uganda). These people were evacuated in seven flights;

August 16 to 25, 2021 and the last flight on December 10, 2021.During the Operation Devi Shakti, both Indian Air Force and commercial flights were used which included six IAF flights (C-17 and C-130), two Air India flights and 1 Kam Air flight.

Evacuation Afghanistan under these circumstances was a difficult and challenging exercise mainly due to fast deteriorating security situation in the country which prevented people from reaching airport and led to extreme chaos at airport

### Sonia demands restart of Mid-day meals when schools open post Covid

ongress president Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday made a demand for restarting the mid-day meals in schools when they open in the postpandemic phase.

Sonia said that the midday meal scheme was stopped when schools were shut down due to the Covid pandemic.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, the Congress leader also said better nutrition should be provided to children as they start returning to schools.

Stating that children were given dry rations during the pandemic and food grains were

also provided under the National Food Security Act, she said dry ration is not a substitute for a proper meal.

ration is no substitute for hot cooked meals," she said. The Congress leader said children have been the worst

"But for children, dry

affected due to the pandemic as schools were the first to be shut down and the last to open. This is the second-time in the ongoing session that Sonia has raised an issue in the Zero Hour. Earlier, she had raised the issue of social media favouring the ruling party and

urged the government to pre-

vent its alleged misuse.

### DCGI gives its nod for phase-3 trial of Covovax

The country's top drug reg-ulator, Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), has granted permission for conducting the phase-3 clinical trial of Covid-19 vaccine Covovax as a booster dose in adults, according to official sources in the Union Health Ministry.

The Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on Covid-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Organisation Control (CDSCO) had, on March 5, recommended permission for conducting the phase-3 clinical trial for Covovax as a booster dose in adults who have been



fully vaccinated with either Covaxin or Covishield at least three months ago

The DCGI approved Covovax for restricted use in emergency situations in adults on December 28 last year and for inoculating the beneficiaries in the 12-17 years age group, subject to certain conditions,

The vaccine has not been included in the country's inoculation programme against Director, Government and Regulatory Affairs at the Serum Institute of India (SII), Prakash Kumar Singh, submitted an application to the DCGI in February, seeking permission to conduct a phase-3, observer-blind, randomised, controlled study to evaluate the safety and immunogenicity of Covovax for booster doses in adults who had received primary vaccination either with Covishield or Covaxin at least three months ago, according to the official sources.

### CTUs call for nationwide strike on Mar 28, 29 against Govt policies

A joint forum of central trade nions has given a call for a nationwide strike on March 28 and 29, to protest against Government policies affecting workers, farmers, and people. The joint platform of central trade unions held a meeting in Delhi on March 22, 2022, to take stock of the preparations in various states and sectors for the proposed two-day all India strike on 28-29 March 2022 against "the anti-worker, antifarmer, anti-people and antinational policies" of the central government, a statement said.

The statement said that roadways, transport workers and electricity workers have

in his name or in the name of

his family members, which

were disproportionate to his all

known and legitimate sources



decided to join the strike in spite of the impending threat of (Haryana and Chandigarh, respectively). Financial sectors, including banking and insurance, are joining the strike, it stated.

The strike notices have been given by unions in the sectors such as coal, steel, oil, telecom, postal, income tax, copper, banks, insurance among others, it also stated. The unions in railways and defence sector would be making mass mobilization in support of strike at several hun-

Sanjay Kumar Singh deposited

the proceeds of crime into his

bank accounts in order to con-

ceal the actual nature with

intent to launder money and

projected it as untainted," it

case, the ED has arrested

Meanwhile, in a separate

dreds of spots, it stated.

### BJP MPs urge Centre to use Constitutional provisions in WB

 $F_{\mathrm{eight}}^{\mathrm{ollowing}}$  the death of at least houses were set ablaze, BJP MPs from West Bengal on Wednesday sought the Centre to use the constitutional provisions in the State. They alleged in the Lok Sabha that law and order has collapsed in the State under the Trinamool Congress dispensation.

As soon as the Zero Hour began, several BJP MPs showed placards and raised slogans against the West Bengal government.

Rejecting the allegations, the TMC leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay said whatever happened in West Bengal's Birbhum district had nothing to do with any political fight and noted that around 20 people have been arrested by the state police in connection with

He asked the BJP not to do politics over the incident and said his party has sought an appointment with Union Home Minister Amit Shah regarding the matter. Shad met a delegation of BJP MPs from the state on Tuesday.

Sukanta Majumdar, the state unit chief of the BJP, said the deaths of so many people as an act of revenge following the killing of a panchayat leader of the TMC have "ashamed" humanity and cited locals to allege that the houses of the victims were set ablaze in the presence of police personnel.

Twenty-six people have been killed in a week in West Bengal as law and order has collapsed in the state, he

Political violence had also exploded in the state following the TMC's victory in the May,



2021 Assembly polls, the BJP leader alleged, urging the Centre to intervene

He noted that all the victims in the fire tragedy were members of a minority

(Muslim) community. 'We want the central government's intervention in the state of West Bengal to stop the state-sponsored terrorism," a

MPs in the House read. BJP MP Dilip Ghosh also

lashed out at the West Bengal government. He told reporters that even Muslims, who are seen as dependable supporters of the TMC, are not safe in the state as the goons allegedly affiliated to the ruling party target people indiscriminately.

### ED attaches properties worth ₹1.58 crore of Bihar PHED ex-engineer under PMLA

■ Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached immovable and movable properties worth Rs 1.58 crore belonging to Sanjay Kumar Singh, the then Executive Engineer, Public Engineering Health Department (PHED), Samastipur, Bihar Government, his wife Pushpa Singh, and his sons Abhishek Ashish and Anunay Ashish under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in a disproportionate asset case.

The ED had initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR registered under Prevention of Corruption Act against Singh by Bihar Police.



During the period July 15, of income, the ED said in a 1987 to September 4, 2013, it was alleged that Singh had statement. acquired huge assets, both movable and immovable, either

"Investigation under PMLA revealed that Sanjay Kumar Singh had made huge

cash deposits in his bank

account and in the bank

accounts of his family members

from unexplained sources.

absconding accused Gudem Madhav Reddy on the basis of a Non-bailable Warrant (NBW) issued by the PMLA Special Court Hyderabad, the agency

Reddy is wanted in the ongoing trial in 2018 cases based on the prosecution complaint (chargesheet) filed by the

Reddy was produced

before the court which has remanded him to 14-day judi-

### **BJP MLAs to elect** Yogi as leader today

Aday before the swearing in of the new Government in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP Legislature Party meeting of newly-elected lawmakers will be held in Lucknow on Thursday wherein they will formally elect Chief Minister-designate Yogi Adityanath as its leader.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and former Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das have been appointed as observers for this important meeting. In-charge of UP and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan will also be present in the meeting.

"Letters have been sent to all the 250 newly-elected BJP legislators asking them to attend the meeting on Thursday at 4 pm. In the meeting Yogi Adityanath would be formally elected as leader of the BJP Legislature Party.

Later in the evening, a BJP delegation led by Yogi will call on Governor Anandiben Patel and put its claim to form Government," state BJP vicepresident Vijay Bahadur Pathak said.

"As per the statutory provision, the governor will invite the leader of the BJP Legislature Party to form the Government and announce the time of

It is almost after three decades that a chief minister will get a second consecutive term after completing the first term of five years.

In fact, Yogi will be the first chief minister from BJP to have completed five years in office.

Sources claimed that around 50 ministers are also likely to take oath of office and secrecy with the chief minister on March 25. After attending the swearing-in ceremony of Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Dhami in Dehradun on Wednesday, Yogi flew to Delhi to finalise the list of

"The formation of the cabinet would be a tight rope walk for Yogi Adityanath as he has to strike a balance among different castes and regions before finalizing the list. Seniority of members will also be under consideration for ministerial post," a BJP

"Besides Yogi, some leaders from the alliance are also likely to be accommodated in the Cabinet. A meeting with alliance partners will be held after the BJP Legislature Party meeting. Sanjay Nishad has also been invited for that meeting," the leader said.

### Lucknow decked up for oath ceremony

The State capital Lucknow has been painted saffron as it prepares for the mega oath-taking ceremony of second time Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Stadium on March 25.

The function will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Bharatiya Janata Party president JP Nadda and other VVIPs. Among the dignitaries, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Chief Ministers and deputy Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled States, governors, industrialists, opposition leaders and over 50,000 BJP workers and commoners are expected in the programme. Newly-elected legislators of the BJP will elect Yogi Adityanath as their new leader in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other senior leaders. The BJP has managed to win 255 seats in the 403-member UP Legislative Assembly.

Yogi will take oath as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh for the second consecutive term and 50 Ministers will be administered the oath of office and secrecy by Governor Anandiben Patel at the function at 4 pm on Friday.

Mahants of various maths and temples will also be present in the swearing-in ceremony along with Yoga Guru Baba Ramdev. Besides, all leading industrialists, who set up industries and operate industries in UP, have also been invited for the function. A senior BJP leader said that Chief Ministers of Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Manipur and Goa have been invited. Chief Ministers of States ruled with the support of the BJP in Bihar, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Pondicherry have also been invited. Apart from BJP ruled States, Chief Ministers of all States are being invited by the Government.

### BJP using goons to attack democracy: Akhilesh Yadav

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday accused the ruling BJP of misusing power and alleged that it is using its "goons" to attack democracy.

"The BJP has done no

the state legislature.

work for the welfare of the common man. The entire country is watching the hooliganism the BJP is doing to get majority," Yadav said referring to the election to the upper house of

"The party is using goons to attack democracy. The BJP is enchanted by power and misusing it to attack the democratic process in the MLC elections," Yadav said at an event held to pay tributes to socialist leader Dr Ram Manohar Lohia on his 112th birth anniversary. The leader's statement came a day after nomination papers of the party's two candidates for the state Legislative Council polls were rejected. On Wednesday, a party candidate from Budaun withdrew his papers. had on Tuesday demanded that the nomination process for the elections to the state Legislative Council be started again, with Yadav alleging "either

or the election or its results will be influenced". According to a press statement issued on Wednesday by the Samajwadi Party here, Yadav visited Lohia Park and offered flowers to the leader's

the nomination forms will not be allowed to be filed

#### LS bypoll: SP may field Dimple from Azamgarh

The Samajwadi Party is likely to field former Kannauj MP Dimple Yadav as its candidate from Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat which fell vacant after her husband and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav resigned from the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. Akhilesh has been elected to the UP Assembly from Karhal Assembly seat in Mainpuri.

Samajwadi Party sources said that the by-poll to Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat was likely to be held in the next six months. They said that the party will also have to take a call for deciding the candidate for Rampur Lok Sabha seat which has fallen vacant due to the resignation by MP Azam Khan, who was elected to UP assembly from Rampur during the recently concluded state elections.

Akhilesh had visited Azamgarh on March 21 and consulted party MLAs and district leaders before resigning from Lok Sabha. Though the Samajwadi Party won all 10 Assembly seats in Azamgarh, it faced a tough challenge from the BJP, which finished second in all these seats.

Meanwhile, SP ally Suheldev

Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) has demanded that SP leader Dimple Yadav be fielded from Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat vacated after the SP chief's resignation.

"Akhilesh Yadav's resignation as Azamgarh MP is a welcome move. His presence in the UP assembly is necessary for a strong role of the opposition to counter the BJP in the state. In the assembly, SP-SBSP alliance MLAs will raise all important issues related to people," commented SBSP president, Om Prakash Rajbhar on Wednesday.

Rajbhar further said that Azamgarh has been known as a stronghold of SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, who was elected from this Lok Sabha seat in 2014. In 2019, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav was elected MP and worked for the development of Azamgarh. As a result, the Samajwadi Party won all 10 Assembly seats in the recently concluded state elections.

'As an ally of the SP, we (the SBSP) demand that SP leader Dimple Yadav be fielded from the Azamgarh Parliamentary seat whenever by-elections are held there. It would help strengthen the SP and its allies in the entire Purvanchal region," he added.

### 4 kids die after eating toffees laced with poison

PNS LUCKNOW

ragedy struck Kushinagar I when four children, including three siblings, died after consuming poisonous toffees they picked up outside their homes at Latur Tola village in Kasya police circle on Wednesday morning.

The victims' parents belong to the Scheduled Tribe and are daily-wage labourers.

Additional Superintendent of Police of Kushinagar, Ritesh Kumar Singh, said the police were informed that the children died after eating the toffees at Latur Tola village and an investigation had initiated.

The police have seized toffee wrappers for examination and locals are being questioned. The police suspect that someone had thrown the poison-laced toffees on the road. The police are now awaiting the autopsy reports to know about the poison used to lace the tof-

Quoting the villagers, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Varun Kumar Pandey said that Devi, the head of Latur Tola, was sweeping the house in the morning when she stumbled upon five toffees and nine rupees in a polythene bag. She gave three toffees to her grandchildren and a toffee to a neighbour's child. But soon after consuming the toffee, the four children fainted on the

"The sick children were taken to the district hospital by the locals where doctors pronounced all four dead. The deceased include three siblings Manjana (5), Sweety (3) and two-year-old Samar. The other victim was five-year-old Arun, the only son of Balesar, who lives in the neighborhood," Pandey said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the incident and ordered a probe and directed officials to provide relief to the bereaved families and take necessary

The locals alleged that the delay in the arrival of an ambulance was one of the reasons for the deaths of the children. Meanwhile in Ghaziabad, three labourers were killed and two others seriously injured when the boundary wall of an under construction building of a school collapsed at Pratap locality Vihar Tuesday

Officials and workers of Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation were getting sewer lines laid late in the night when the boundary wall of the adjacent school collapsed on the five labourers working there. Soon, local police and fire brigade teams rushed to the spot and took the labourers to MMG hospital where doctors pronounced three of them

The deceased were identified as Munkesh, Ahjaz and Tauqeer of Bihar. Two other labourers were injured and are undergoing treatment at the hospital. In Bulandshahr, a man and his two sons were killed in a road accident in Secunderabad Kotwali area on Wednesday.

As per reports, Shakir was heading to Bulandshahr from Meerut with his two sons, Sanib and Uzair, when their speeding car rammed into a tree near Gulavathi. All three died on the spot. Later police personnel reached the spot and shifted their bodies to the

### Congmen want Priyanka to settle in Lucknow

PNS LUCKNOW

The decision of Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav to resign from the Lok Sabha and retain his Assembly seat to take the party forward by staying put in Uttar Pradesh has now raised demands within UP Congress that Priyanka Gandhi adopt a similar stand and not just make occasional presence.

"Akhilesh had taken a right decision and now Priyanka Gandhi Vadra should also immediately take a similar stand as UP politics cannot be done by staying in Delhi. One has to join the day to day struggle with the people of the State by staying amongst them," opined a former UP Congress pres-

"During the last two years, Priyanka has been active as far as other Opposition party leaders are concerned. But she chose to work from New Delhi and only made occasional presence during protests in the state which sent the wrong message amongst the masses that she preferred doing politics from the national capital,' the Congress leader said.



"We fought the assembly poll showcasing Priyanka's face but when questions rop up of her leading the party as a chief ministerial candidate, she outrightly denied it which spoiled all the hard work made by her to strengthen the party organization in Uttar Pradesh," the former UP Congress chief said.

The Congress desperately needs a face' which the people could look forward to as an alternative. Take the example of four-time chief minister and BSP chief Mayawati. During the last five years and even during the pandemic, the BSP chief was seen nowhere and as a result her party performed worse than the Congress getting just one assembly seat," he

Another senior Congress leader Zeeshan Haider, who was expelled recently, supported Priyanka Gandhi taking command in UP and not working from

"I demanded Priyanka's resignation as she too was responsible for the worst ever poll defeat of the Congress in UP. She worked and took all decisions on the advice of her secretary Sandeep Singh. Had Priyanka camped in UP and taken decisions in consultation with senior party leaders, the poll outcome would have been better. How can the country's oldest political outfit be run by a non-political staff," asserted Haider.

Earlier in 2019, after the humiliating defeat in the last Lok Sabha elections, Priyanka had announced to make Lucknow as her base to strengthen the party. She also made her permanent office here at UPCC headquarters besides temporarily shifting to the `Kaul House'.

But she never made Lucknow her base and only made short visits to attend meetings demonstrations.

#### Kerala launches WhatsApp chatbot tor tourists

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Tourism on Wednesday bot 'Maya' to enable tourists get information and updates on tourism eco system in the State by sending a 'Hi' to the WhatsApp no: 7510512345 or by scanning the QR code. Launching the service here,

Tourism Minister P A Mohamed Riyas said Maya would act as a virtual travel assistant of tourists to ask and get complete information for hassle-free travel experience.

"The chatbot service, which leverages the potential of technology for tourism development, will help attract more tourists to Kerala. The tourists can easily access a whole lot of information regarding the prime attractions in each place, our cultural diversity, culinary traditions of different regions and the routes and means for transport to reach various places, said the Minister. Maya would assist tourists to also know about experience-oriented locations, never-miss spots, historical places, etc, said a press release from Kerala Tourism.

### Defamation suit: Interim relief refused to Salman

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

A Mumbai court on Wednesday refused to grant interim relief to Bollywood actor Salman Khan in his neighbour Ketan Kakkad, a Non-Resident Indian (NRI) from the US, and others seeking to restrain them posting any objectionable content on social media against him and his family members over a land parcel adjacent to his farm house at

Additional Sessions Judge Anil H Laddhad of the Mumbai City Civil Court passed a brief order on Salman's plea, seeking interim relief for blocking/suspending/withdrawing the social media accounts of Kakkad and other defendants on the ground that the latter (Kakkad) allegedly shared derogatory content against the actor and his fami-

While pronouncing the order, the Judge noted that he would give the reasons for rejection of the plea in a detailed order to be published soon.

In notice of motion, the actor had sought injunction against one Kakkad, YouTuber Sandeep Phogat, Paras Bhat, Ujjwal Narain, Facebook Inc,

Facebook India Online Services Private Ltd, Twitter Inc, Twitter Communications India Private. Twitter International Company, YouTube LLC, Google LLC and Google India Pvt Ltd from and his family members in matters relating to a land parcel located adjacent to the actor's 100-acre farmhouse at Panvel in the neighbouring Raigad dis-

Opposing the actor's pleas, Kakkad's lawyers Abha Singh and Aditya Pratap told the court that there was "substantial truth" in the allegations made by their client that the actor had carried out substantial "illegal" constructions on his Panvel farmhouse which falls within the Matheran Eco-Sensitive

Zone Notification. On his part, Salman's lawyer Pradeep Gandhy argued that the defendants had made "false, disparaging and defamatory allegations" in videos, posts and tweets causing harm and loss to the actor, his family members and his business ven-

Gandhy told the court that Kakkad had attempted to purchase a plot of land adjacent to the actor's farmhouse Arpita Farms' at Panvel, but the local

authorities cancelled the land transaction on the grounds that it was illegal.

Gandhi went on to tell the court that Kakkad subsequently made "false and baseless" allebeen cancelled at the behest of the actor and his family members. Opposing interim relief to the actor, Kakkad's Advocate Abha Singh argued that her client's statements "revolved around" the actor's property and did in no way amount to

defamation. On their part, Kakkad's lawyers told the court that their client had purchased a plot of land measuring 2.5 acres adjoining the actor's palatial farmhouse from the actor himself in 1996. They told the court that he had been denied access to the land owned by him by the

actor since 2014. Kakkad's lawyers told the court that they client had made various statements on social media in public interest as environment was part of the fundamental right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India and further, under Article 51(A)(g) it was the fundamental duty of every citizen to protect the environment. further it was the duty of every Indian and the state to protect Wildlife.

Kakkad lawyers also told the court that the actor's counsel had approached Kakkad offering him money to give up the Panvel land and the actor client refused the offer.

The lawyers appearing for the various social media platforms opposed the interim relief to the actor saying that they had no control over what was posted by users on their social media platforms. They contended that scanning all posts and contents on their websites to remove the defamatory content against Khan was "unreasonable and meaningless".

It may be recalled that in mid-January this year, the actor had joined issues with his neighbour Kakkad over the latter's social media comments.

An aggrieved Salman subsequently filed a civil defamation suit against Kakkad and also made Google YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and other social platform content creators as parties in the case and also sought an order restraining Kakkad from posting objectionable statements pending the outcome of the defamation suit filed by the actor against his



A huge crowd of people shopping at Narwal wholesale vegetable and fruit market on the outskirts of Jammu on Wednesday

#### Rajasthan offers helpline service for counselling of Ukraine-returned students

**Jaipur:** In a first, the Rajasthan Government has Russia-Ukraine crisis. These students have started a special helpline service to provide men-tal and emotional counseling to Indian students returning from Ukraine and other war-torn

Health Minister Parsadi Lal Meena said the Mansamvad' toll-free helpline will prove to be very effective in the development of the emotional and mental health of these students.

'Most of the Indian students studying there (Ukraine) are returning home due to the

seen the war very closely and it has had an adverse effect on their mind. To save them from any more trouble, the state government has started 'Mansamvad' toll free helpline service," he said

in a statement. Elaborating further, Meena said subject experts will provide counseling and other information on mental and emotional issues, to the callers. The helpline service will operate from

9 am to 5 pm on all working days.

# Asia's largest tulip garden opens for visitors in Srinagar

**MOHIT KANDHARI JAMMU** 

With over 1.5 million tulips of 68 varieties in its lap, Asia's largest Tulip garden over-looking the world famous Dal Lake was on Wednesday thrown open to visitors, marking the beginning of new tourism season in the Valley.

Lt-Governor Manoj Sinha personally invited tourists from all over the world to make a plan to witness the sublime beauty of nature. "J&K is calling. Welcome to Asia's largest Tulip Garden, with over one million blooms, opened to the public today. Make a plan to witness the sublime beauty of nature and enjoy the warm hospitality of the people of J&K UT", office of LG Manoj Sinha

thronged the garden soon after was thrown open by the Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, in the presence of senior officers from Floriculture department, Tourism department and J&K

The Chief Secretary, while speaking on the occasion, stated that the Government is expecting a heavy tourist influx this year as compared to last year. "The later part of 2021 had broken past records of tourist arrival to the region and we are optimistic of an incredible tourism boom this year

Director Tourism Kashmir GN Itoo said "it is the main attraction for tourists who visit Kashmir. Without visiting the



tulip garden they think their tour is incomplete. Besides, it has preponed the tourist season of Kashmir by about one

Garden In-Charge Inaam Ahmad said " we work hard round the year to give our best to tourists and other visitors who come when it's in bloom. This time we have 1.5 million tulips here with 68 varieties, we have added some other flowers here to make it more attractive.

Besides, extra plants like daffodils, hyacinths, narcissus and other ornamental plants are being planted here to decorate the area making the tulip garden one of the main attractions for tourists from different

parts of the country and world. Referring to major initiatives aimed at boosting tourist

Mehta said the Government under a comprehensive policy has explored and developed hidden and virgin tourist destinations and tourists will have more places to visit beyond Gulmarg, Pahalgam and other He said that the govern-

traffic in the Union territory Dr

ment has added 75 new virgin destinations, 75 new adventure treks, 75 heritage sites, and 75 religious sites. Later, the Chief Secretary

also inaugurated J&K Bank enabled e-ticketing facility for the visitors becoming the first visitor to generate E-ticket. He said that queuing up for a long time was cumbersome for the visitors, so E-ticketing was introduced to make the visit of tourists hassle free.

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- PAPER WITH PASSION-

### **Between the lines**

Joe Biden's remarks on India's response to Ukraine's invasion mask the complete truth

ow to interpret President Joe Biden terming India's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine as "shaky"? His remarks came in the midst of him hailing the strong condemnation of Russia by Japan and Australia, with the exception of India "being somewhat shaky on some of this". This is the second time that he has singled out India. Last month he said "we haven't resolved that completely" when asked why India's stand is not in sync with his. Is there a note of caution in Biden's latest statement? Or is it exasperation or a grudging recognition of India's geopolitical reality? It is not as if India has stuck out on its own on the matter of Russia, doggedly pursuing a lone-star course of action. Yes, India did abstain from the votes on the Security Council and United Nations resolutions condemning Russia. Indian refiners have since floated tenders to buy discounted oil from Russia. But India has also openly supported Ukraine, is sending medical and emergency aid to that country, insisted on respecting territorial integrity and has pushed the cause of diplomacy to end the conflict. India is simply trying to put its national interest first while trying to stay true to its long-standing relationships with both Russia and the United

States. It has done everything short of openly condemning Russia. And that makes it stand out. It began with the recent Quad meeting when the Russian threat to Ukraine was raised.

On its part, India underlined that Quad must focus on its core objective of promoting peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The Quad joint statement did not mention Russia at all, an indication that unanimity eluded the members. Prime Minister Narendra Modi subsequently had a virtual meeting with his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison, who is said to have understood the reasons for India's stand

on the conflict. Modi also met Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida who unequivocally flayed Russia. At the same time, in a signed article, he linked Quad with Ukraine: ...we concurred that any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force, such as this time, must not be tolerated in the Indo-Pacific region." Did he also hint at China and the Ladakh situation in the context of the Indo-Pacific? If so, it means there is an unlettered understanding between all Quad members on what the context is for Kishida's phrase, to "change the status quo by force". It applies as much to Ukraine as to Ladakh. It also underlines India's empathy for Ukraine notwithstanding its singular stand on Russia. The US understands the importance of India for Quad in the Indo-Pacific and that even if they do differ on Russia, their relationship is deep and resilient. Or else, someone would have asked by now where the world's democracies were when China entered Ladakh. For now, however, that does not mean the pressure has eased on India to take a stronger stand against Russia.



People shopping at Narwal wholesale vegetable and fruit market, on the outskirts of Jammu

### A conundrum

The unbundling and reunification of MCD seems like an exercise in futility

n Indian polity, it's a classic example of being back to square one. Or re-inventing the wheel, if you please. To start at the beginning, the erstwhile Municipal ■ Corporation of Delhi (MCD) was in 2011 trifurcated into the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, North Delhi Municipal Corporation and East Delhi Municipal Corporation as per the Delhi Municipal Corporation Amendment Act, 1911. Now, all eyes were on the State Election Commission for the dates of polling, which was last held in 2017. The exercise was to be completed by May 18, when the term



of the three civic bodies would expire, to elect 104 councillors each to the NDMC and SDMC as well as 64 councillors of EDMC. The commission on March 9 called a press conference to announce the schedule but, in a dramatic twist, deferred it saying it has received a communication from the Centre that the latter intends to unify the corporations. According to rules, if the three bodies are merged then the election deadline will no longer apply. It is also not known whether the number of existing wards will remain 272 or will change, requiring a fresh delimitation exercise.

Amid this suspense, fresh from the boost to its electoral prospects in Punjab, the AAP has taken affront to the Centre's unification move. Perhaps taking it a tad too personally, AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister first appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "not cancel" the corporation elections but it didn't bear any dividends. Now, a day after the Union Cabinet gave its nod to the Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2022 — a Bill that proposes to merge the three corporations, and likely to be tabled in the ongoing Budget session next week — a miffed Kejriwal threw down the gauntlet to the BJP, saying the AAP will quit politics if the saffron party gets these polls conducted on time and still manages to win. His frustration at the delay in the conduct of polls notwithstanding, this entire exercise of reuniting the corporations after an 11-year experiment raises questions. What was the need to unbundle the MCD, at significant cost to the taxpayer, if it were to be remerged? The assets, staff and revenue earning potential of the carved out corporations were not proportionate since the beginning, leading to heartburn and the experiment's failure.

# Looking back at trade with Russia PRAFULL GORADIA



Since the turn of the last century, the export volumes of Indian tea to the erstwhile USSR have experienced highs and lows on several occasions

or nearly 30 years, Indian producers enjoyed the incidental generosity of the Soviets. 'Incidental', because the rouble was valued low. In 1991, the RBI treated the rouble as worth ₹18 whereas it was not worth even 28 paise. With the collapse of the USSR and the end of the rupee trade, Indian tea exports had declined by one-third. The result was a slump in prices, hopefully to not last long. It should be interesting to pursue this nostalgia further back and recount the highlights of the Indo-Russian trade.

1897 was a year of anxiety in Indian tea exports to Russia. Plague had broken out in the country and import of Indian tea into Batoum, Georgia, was prohibited. Calcutta made a timely intervention and persuaded Russians to recognise that tea is no carrier of plague. In 1903-04, nearly 29,000 pounds of tea were exported from Bombay to Russia. Two years later, the quantity had trebled.

About this time, it was discovered that lately there was a strong bias in Russia in favour of land-borne teas and they realised higher prices than their sea-borne counterparts. Nevertheless, the Indo-Russian trade continued to grow. A British report from Odessa said the Russian tastes had undergone an extraordinary change in the last decade. His preference had swung from China to Indian and Ceylon tea. Purchases from China had declined by one-third. The consular report went on

to add that there had been a steep rise in the demand of green tea between 1904 and 1912; imports had grown by nearly 20 times. The Central Asian provinces had taken to green tea as a kind of substitute for intoxicants, which were forbidden by Islam. A whole new market, over and above that of black tea, had been created. When everything was hunkydory, WWI ended and there was a general recession, the crash in tea prices was unprecedented. to have turned down the Between 1919 and 1920, the price for common teas had

dropped to one-third. This slump was attributed to the Revolution in Russia. Imports by this consumer had stopped all together. In due course, the Soviet

Union resumed imports on a limited scale. A big enough alternative home had not however been found for the surplus tea even a decade later. The annual imports by this country in 1930 ranged around 60 million pounds when contrasted with the pre-war figure of 200. Too much was therefore being shipped to Britain, causing a continual indigestion there. Trade circles felt that to save the industry from ruin, an urgent outlet for up to 100 million pounds had to be found. The Capital of July 2, 1937, reminded that the USSR was the obvious home for this surplus. And this country was willing to import more, provided it was granted long-term credit. Apart from relieving the glut, the worry was of generations growing up in Russia without the tea-drinking habit.

The Ceylon Association was reported in October 1931 proposal to extend two years' credit to Russia. The reason



THE USSR WAS WILLING TO IMPORT MORE, PROVIDED IT WAS GRANTED LONG-TERM CREDIT. APART FROM RELIEVING THE GLUT, THE WORRY WAS OF **GENERATIONS GROWING UP IN RUSSIA WITHOUT** THE TEA-DRINKING

was that a single Soviet agency bought all the tea. In the event of a default, the loss would be total. Meanwhile, negotiations between the producers and the Soviet Government had been going on. The purpose was to ensure continuity of sales of black tea to Russia. The supply was plentiful and the Soviets were keen to buy; the missing link was money. It was finally in July 1934 that a tentative scheme of credit was reported. A trading company was to be formed by the producers of India, Ceylon and the Dutch Indies. The main producers of these countries were to subscribe to the share capital of the company on the basis of £3,750 per million pounds of tea grown. £938 were payable in cash and £2,872 were to cover any default by the Soviets.

The joint company was to be known as the Anglo-Russian Tea Trading Company which would buy tea for cash at the auctions in London, Colombo, Calcutta and Amsterdam and sell it in Russia on 12 months' credit. Those nopes dashed to the ground when the negotiations were suddenly suspended. In June 1944, it was

reported that the Soviet Union had received more than 35 million pounds of Indian and Ceylon tea through the British Ministry of Food. The trade therefore wondered whether the Russian market might be reopened. The Manchester Guardian opined that there was a bigger opportunity after the war for re-developing the Russian market.

On July 12, 1948, in New Delhi, the first Indo-Russian food agreement was signed. India would receive 50,000 tonne of wheat. In return, it would supply 11.5 million pounds or 5,000 metric tonne of high-grade tea. Some in the trade felt that this would put Indian tea at a disadvantage in the hard currency markets. This conflict between barter and hard currency trade increased as the volume of trade with the Soviet Union went up. In the agreement signed in 1949, 200,000 tonne of wheat and 100,000 tonne of food grains were to be exchanged for tea, iute and castor oil.

(The writer is a wellknown columnist, an autho and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

#### LETTERS TO T

#### THE NEED TO 'INDIANISE' INDIA

Sir — Recently, Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu asserted the need for 'Indianising' the nation's education system. Similarly, in September last year, CJI NV Ramana stated that 'Indianisation' of the country's legal system was the need of the hour. What is this 'Indianisation' and why have demands for it cropped up across institutional spaces? In simple terms, 'Indianisation' is the process of changing the character of an institution, policy or practice to make it consonant with India's social realities. It is needed because despite having been liberated from colonial rule, India continues to follow their spirit which has only hindered the country's development.

From our language policy to our legal system, everything continues to operate the way it did under the British Raj. Their objective was to mould the colonised into the worldview of the coloniser by radically altering their indigenous systems. Even after India attained Independence, attempts were barely made to dilute the colonial influence on indigenous practices and institutions. As a consequence, the Indian mind was indoctrinated into extolling western values. It will continue to be the case as long as this colonial influence exists. Therefore, 'Indianisation' is required to restore the self-esteem of Indians and make India consistent with its social ethos

Nissim Aggarwal | Chandigarh

**BENGAL VIOLENCE NEEDS TO BE DOUSED** Sir — It is unfortunate that at least eight people were charred to death in a political conflagration in Birbhum after the killing of Trinamool leader Bahadur Sheikh. The heinous incident is a setback to the State Government, which has often been blamed by the BJP for political mayhem in Bengal. The orchestrated violence shows the deteriorating condition of law and order in the State, which was hijacked by unruly elements in the TMC. It will malign CM Mamata Banerjee's image who is often faced with difficult situations

#### Akhilesh betting big on 2024



perhaps in an apprehension of sorts. political heavyweights from every party do occasionally file their nomination papers from more than one constituency but, at times, those winning in Assembly polls while already holding parliamentary seats have to put in their papers before being sworn in as MLAs. Hence, SP chief and former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav and his party's Muslim face Mohammed Azam Khan have resigned from their parliamentary posts. This strategic decision, coming in the

The recent skirmish has put Governer Jagdeep Dhankhar and the CM at loggerheads, indulging into scathing attacks against each other. The prompt action by the State Government in arresting 11 people involved in the violence, murder and arson will send a strong message to the wrongdoers who take law in own hands through reckless violence and hooliganism with impunity. The suspension of the officer in-charge and setting up an SIT is the need of the hour to pacify the anger of the aggrieved families. It will be the only way forward to restore peace in the tense village and restore people's faith in the Chief Minister.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Jalpaiguri

**HANDLE CUET WITH DUE DILIGENCE** Sir — It refers to the editorial, 'Shifting goalposts'. The proposed CUET has its own advantages and disadvantages. It will definitely provide equal opportunity while marks given in board exams do not have equal parameters across the counowing to political turf war and rivalries. try. And it should also not be forgotten

### backdrop of the SP's debacle in the Assembly

cial 2024 parliamentary elections.

polls, obviously comes across as a shot in

the party's arm and is being seen as an

attempt to boost its morale ahead of the cru-

Adityanath and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav chose

to face the Assembly polls rather than tak-

ing the easier MLC route for the first time,

Interestingly, both UP Chief Minister Yogi



and won. Hence, CM Yogi Adityanath has also sent in his resignation to the Chairman of the Legislative Council so that he can become the Chief Minister again. However, politics is said to be a game replete with myriad uncertainties, a lot of twists and turns, surprises springing upon the electorate and last-minute decisions upsetting the political equations following some last-minute calls leading to chagrin for some and glee for the others. Let's wait and watch which way this political cookie in Uttar Pradesh crumbles again

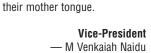
Azhar A Khan | Rampur that purely on the basis of marks in threefour subjects, admission is decided for a specific course while the student may miss out on that seat due to fewer marks in one subject. For example, if a student wants to pursue Physics (Hons), he may miss out on it due to poor marks in Chemistry.

As for disadvantages, it will surely reduce the importance of the CBSE board and students will have to additionally prepare for this entrance test. As rightly mentioned in the editorial, a new kind of coaching industry will emerge. But in a nutshell, the CUET will definitely create a huge disadvantage for rural students. If it leads to more students dropping out after 12th Board exams, that will be disastrous, to say the least. All efforts should be made in the direction of ensuring that rural students go on to complete their graduation or vocational courses so as to become independent.

**Bal Govind** | *Noida* 

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

I'd like to see a day in my lifetime when Indians talk to their fellow countrymen in





This is the time to talk. time to renew territorial integrity and fairness for Ukraine.

**Ukrainian President** Volodymyr Zelenskiy

Getting laughed at for what you wear is very common. We should take it as a compliment.



— Chunky Panday



We probably shouldn't have.

**England cricketer** — Nat Sciveı





**Punjab Chief Minister** - Bhagwant Mann

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### **FIRST COLUMN**

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### IRAN, NUKES, ISRAEL, OIL, RUSSIA

It's a complex deal involving a very large, very old UK debt



The news that the obscurely named Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is back in force may reach you even before this article does, but the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe on Wednesday was a clear signal that the Iran nuclear accord is back in effect. Zaghari-Ratcliffe, an Iranian-born British citizen, was arrested in Tehran in 2016 while visiting her mother and jailed as a spy. She was actually being taken hostage in an attempt to make the United Kingdom to pay the Islamic Republic a very large, very old debt. Then suddenly, on Wednesday, she was on her way home, and another British hostage of Iranian descent was on the same plane. The news leaked out that Britain had finally paid its \$540 million debt after 45 years of stalling. (The Shah had ordered British tanks before he was overthrown. Britain cancelled the order, but kept the money.) So, the



JCPOA is back on. In the 2015 deal, Iran agreed to do no work that would get it closer to building nuclear weapons for fifteen years in return for the lifting of international trade sanctions. It was Barack Obama's great foreign policy success - which may be why Donald Trump, seeking to erase every achievement of America's first black president, cancelled the deal in 2018.

The other signatories of the JCPOA - China, France, Germany, Russia and the UK - promised to try to bring the Americans back, but effectively most obeyed the trade sanctions that Trump had unilaterally slapped on Iran. Iran waited for a year, and then started ratcheting up its nuclear research every three months, getting closer and closer to a weapons capability. The JCPOA treaty said that Iran would not enrich uranium higher than 3.67%. By last month it was up to 60%. Trump and Netanyahu were both gone, and both Israeli and US senior military officers had concluded the old deal was better than nothing. President Joe Biden was of the same mind, and he was also worried about a looming confrontation with Russia over Ukraine, so last autumn he instructed his diplomatic people to stop trying to screw extra concessions out of the Iranians. Just get on with it! Things moved quickly after that, and by late last month Josep Borrell, the European Union's foreign affairs chief, was saying that "a final text is essentially ready and on the table." However, he added, "a pause in the Vienna talks is needed due to external factors." The external factors were the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Western sanctions on Russia that followed. Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov demanded that Washington pledge not to impose sanctions on any bilateral trade deal between Russia and Iran after the JCPOA comes back into effect. At the moment Iran exports less than a million barrels per day of crude oil, almost all of it to China. It could sell at least another million and a half bpd internationally if sanctions are finally lifted, and that extra supply would certainly drop the oil price sharply. Oil and gas sales are about the last remaining major source of foreign currency for Russia. The benchmark Brent oil price today is \$95 a barrel, already down by more than \$40 from last month's panic-stricken peak. The extra Iranian oil could knock it down another \$20 or \$30 bpd, cutting Russia's income further and letting Europe buy more of its oil from Iran, not Russia. There are so many moving parts to this deal that it could still fall apart at the last second, of course. But for now it looks good, and Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is already home with her family.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'The Shortest History of War'. The views expressed are personal.)

thought out planning is done for creating the infrastructure. Around 24 percent of our landmass is under forests and tree cover out of which around 4.8 million hectares is covered by 103 National parks and 544wild life sanctuaries. We have innumerable scenic spots integrated in the over-

# Popularising planned ecotourism in India



Ecotourism is responsible tourism and in tune with the ethos of living in harmony with nature

he Indian landscape is endowed with diversified scenic beauty having unmatched natural fea-tures ranging from hot desert to cold deserts to verdant tropical and temperate forests to sea beaches andglaciers, all with rich in flora and fauna. In the modern life style, relaxation in the midst of scenic landscape is every global citizen's dream.

Many European countries with historical monuments and features have exploited the business potentials of their landscape and making tourism as their major source of revenue. More than 10 per cent of the world's GDP and seven per cent of the world's total exports come from tourism. The industry is worth over \$1.1 trillion. The money earned from expenditures by foreigners is a key driver of economic development and important source of earning foreign exchange. In 2018 France led the world with 89.4 million tourists' footfalls followed by Spain

Among Asian countries Thailand had 38.2 million footfalls. India had in 2018 received a little more than 17 million tourists with an annual growth rate of about 5 percent and is poised to leapfrog. However, tourism has a negative streak of damaging the environment and polluting land and water resources and due to climatic vagaries being notices all over the world there is more emphasis on promoting ecotourism all over the world.

Ecotourism is responsible tourism and in tune with the ethos of living in harmony with nature. It is therefore, based on learning and enjoying the varied components of ecosystem and promoting the pristine environmental attributes of an area. Ecotourism is deeply entrenched with local culture and a great source of community livelihood. It is a win-win situation for the tourists as well as the local people and the environment. The global ecotourism market is valued at \$181 billion in 2019 and is likely to grow to \$350 billion in 2027. The question resource managers are asking whether India is prepared to give a big lift to ecotourism not merely on policy front but concrete results in terms of revenue generated, conservation of forests and livelihood created. It creates of environment. With India's rising middle class the potential of earning from ecotourism is huge provided well

all landscape of the country. In order to exploit the multifaceted potentials of



FOR ACHIEVING SUCCESS, THE

LOCAL PEOPLE **ESPECIALLY** WOMEN SHOULD BE TRAINED IN HANDLING TOURISTS, **PREPARING** HYGIENIC FOOD & MAINTAINING SANITATION ALL **AROUND BECAUSE CLEAN** DRINKING WATER, TOILETS AND BEDS ARE THE BASIC **FEATURES** WHICH ATTRACT PEOPLE TO A DESTINATION. WELL-PLANNED **ECOTOURISM** SHALL ALSO **GARNER** 

(The writer is Chairman of Centre for Resource Management and Environment. The views expressed are personal.)

**REVENUE FOR** 

**GOVERNMENT** 



ecotourism a key feature of forest conservation strategy. Let us examine some of these aspects in relations to some of the States who had great potential to set an example.

In terms of ecotourism Madhya Pradesh and some other Tiger states are noticed by people quite often in national media but some of the best features in North Eastern states like Tripura had remained neglected and under exploited. Indian landscape has to offer much more than tigers and elephants. In Tripura the Clouded Leopard National Park, Bison National Park, Rubber estates, Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary, Elephant Reserve, Hornbill Conservation Reserve combined with scenic undulating geography and other cultural features like Ujjayanta Palace (an IndoandChabimura rock carvings are an ideal place to enjoy the serenity of the environment.

Chabimura is famous for its panels of rock carvings on the steep mountain wall on the bank of Gomati. These are 15 to 16 centuries carvings. Home to the largest bas relief sculptures in India, Unakoti is famous for its massive stone and rock-cut sculptures dedicated to Lord Shiva that hillside during 11th century. The Heritage Park in Agartala is of recent making and it depicts the geographic features of Tripura. There are several beautiful parks with water bodies all over Tripura which can be developed as ecotourism destinations. The bamboo and wooden handicrafts of Tripura are very popular outside. The tourist flow in Tripura has been picking up slowly. During 2018-19, total 5, 29,879 tourists visited Tripura including 1, 12,955 foreign tourists. However, though the footfall is increasing steadily during the last three years it is nowhere near its vast untapped economic and ecological potential.

The state is one of the first in the country to have announced the Ecotourism policy in the hygienic food and maintaining year 2004 but nothing substantial 1901), Unakoti rock temple the ecotourism in terms of infrastructure. Excellent physical infrastructure in place, like an International swanky airport, good rail connections and better roads have given the state's tourism potential a big boost. In the last few years as Agartala has emerged as one of the fastest developing statecapitals in the North Eastern part of the country. Now the time is ripe for the State Government to issue

tourism activities inside and outside the forest areas and also to create an independent body to manage the ecotourism in the state integrating the concept with local livelihoods, conservation and culture. The Joint Forest Management (JFM) has been quite successful in Tripura and elsewhere in the country in promoting forest-based livelihoods; the government must empower these JFM committees to oversee the ecotourism and make the people real stakeholders. There are 18 tribes in the state, their food items and culture should be part of any tourist resorts and destination. For achieving success,the local people especially women should be trained in handling the tourist, preparing sanitation all around because it is toilets and beds are the basic features which attracts the people to a destination. A well-planned ecotourism shall also garner revenue for the Government and it is necessary that business sense is enthused in our national forest conservation programmes and policies for which the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change must act in a proactive manner to encash the scenic beauty of our landscapes.



IF THE BHAGWAD GITA IS INCORPORATED (IN TEXTBOOKS), IT WILL IMPROVE THE CHILDREN'S INTELLIGENCE LEVELS. — KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER **BASAVARAJ BOMMAI** 





EXCERPTS FROM THE RAMAYANA AND OTHER EPICS ARE ALREADY PART OF SCHOOL SYLLABUS. THERE IS NO NEED TO CHANGE THE CURRICULUM. — KARNATAKA CONGRESS CHIEF **DK SHIVAKUMAR** 

# AAP should not fritter away Punjab people's trust

What was the need to stage the (swearing-in) drama for a party that came to power because of genuine love and affection of the masses?

→he resounding victory of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) defeating the two mainstream parties, Congress and Shrimani Akali Dal (SAD),in the recent Assembly elections in Punjab has created a history and kindled a new hope amongst the people of the state. Bhagwant Mann was sworn in as the 28th Chief Minister at an impressive ceremony attended by thousands of his followers at Bhagat Singh's village Khatar Kalan. Addressing his supporters, the new Chief Minister promised to fight widespread unemployment and corruption in the state and usher in reforms in agriculture. improve health infrastructure,transform the educational system by introducing quality education to suit innovations in the job sector and

provide job security to the



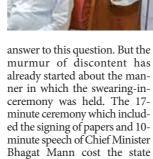
greeted by hundreds of employees gathered on the balconies of Punjab Civil Secretariat with claps and cries of joy as soon as he reached the secretariat. The people of Punjab have extended whole-hearted support

youth. After the oath-taking

ceremony, Bhagwat Mann was

to AAP which is an offshoot of the social movement launched by Anna Hazare against corruption in 2014. Fed up with the misrule of Congress and Akali Dal, the masses of Punjab "voted for change". Carried away by the Delhi Model of governance, hoping for better days, the people felt that they were investing in their own future by voting for APP. Now, the pertinent question is: "Will the AAP party be able to come up to the expectation of the people of Punjab?".

It will take a while to get an



exchequer more than Rs 3 crore

which far exceeds the Rs 2 crore earmarked for the ceremony. Standing crops on acres of land was destroyed for the event. The fleet of Punjab Roadways buses were used to transport people to Amritsar for the victory march causing inconvenience to the general public as public transport services were hampered.

Spending crores from the state exchequer for the victory rally, swearing -in-ceremony and print and TV advertisements is criminal misuse of taxpayer's money for personal and political purposes. What was the need to stage all this drama for a party which has come to power because of genuine love and affection of the masses and with a thumping majority?

The vigilant public and the opposition parties are already up in arms asking questions:"Is this the sign of change?" "In what way the AAP party is different from other political parties?"The leadership of AAP should realise that the issues of accountability in public life, good governance and appointment of Lok Pal to end corruption were the hallmark of the Anna Hazare movement out of which AAP

The new government in Punjab should take positive steps to win the hearts of the taxpayers who are alreadyhard-pressed due to years of mis-governance by

changing the style of working in sharp contrast to the previous governments functioning in the State. The focus of the government should be in setting an example by providing good, transparent governance, focussing on job creation by establishing industries, setting up agro-food processing units which will engage rural youth, eliminating the drug and mining mafia, controlling pollution of rivers, resolving the problem of the water table going down, and dwindling forest cover. The new incumbent should not forget that he has to take care of the

was born. So, it has to prove

itself as a party with a difference.

debt-ridden farmers and depleted treasury.

AAP has attracted the common man because its composition is different from other cadre-based parties. The party has a people-centric character. It provides equal opportunities to one and all to organize and evolve in a spontaneous manner. The biggest regret of AAP which has been in power in Delhi has been that they have not been provided full autonomy to rule the state. In Punjab, they are getting this opportunity. The people of Punjab have brought them to power with high hopes by providing an absolute majority and the electorate of other states are also looking up to them as an alternative to the mainstream parties. Now, is their chance to prove their worth.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

# Ukraine fights into 2nd month of war

One month of war, still defi-ant. With its government still standing and its outnumbered troops battling Russian forces to bloody stalemates in multiple places, Ukraine is scarred, wounded, mourning its dead but far from beaten as it braces for a second month of bombing, combat, casualties and resistance.

When, on Feb. 24, Russia unleashed its Ukraine invasion force in Europe's biggest offensive since World War II and floated the prospect of nuclear escalation if the West intervened, a lightning-swift toppling of Ukraine's democratically elected government seemed possible

But with Wednesday marking four full weeks of fighting, Russia is instead bogged down in an increasingly attritional, costly and uncertain military campaign, with untold numbers of dead, no immediate end in sight, and encircled by western sanctions biting hard on its economy and currency. U.S. President Joe Biden and key allies meeting in Brussels and Warsaw this week will discuss possible new sanctions and additional military assistance for Ukraine.

Repeatedly pushed back by hit-and-run Ukrainian units armed with Western-supplied weapons, Russian troops are



shelling targets from afar, falling back on tactics they previously used in reducing cities to ruins in Syria and Chechnya. Major Russian strategic objectives remain unfulfilled: The capital Kyiv has been repeatedly hit but not taken or even encir-

Wednesday, with plumes of black smoke rising from the western outskirts, where the two sides battled for control of multiple suburbs. A shopping mall and buildings were hit, injuring four people, the city administration reported.

In the south, the port city More shelling and gunfire of Mariupol has seen the worst shook the city again devastation of the war, under

weeks of siege and bombardment. So far, the Ukrainian forces' defense has prevented its fall. That is thwarting the Russian aim of opening up another permanent and secured land link from the Crimean peninsula, seized from Ukraine in 2014, to

Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy says 100,000 civilians remain in the shattered city that has been struck from the air, land and sea. Repeated efforts to get desperately needed food and other

"They bombed us for the past 20 days," said 39-year-old Viktoria Totsen, who fled from

supplies to those trapped have

often failed.

Mariupol into Poland. "During the last five days, the planes were flying over us every five seconds and dropped bombs everywhere - on residential buildings, kindergartens, art schools, everywhere."

Zelenskyy, speaking Tuesday in his nightly video address to his nation, said efforts to establish stable humanitarian corridors for Mariupol residents are almost all being "foiled by the Russian occupiers, by shelling or deliberate terror."He accused Russian forces of seizing one humanitarian convoy. Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said the Russians were holding captive 11 bus drivers and four rescue workers along with their vehicles.

The head of the International Committee of the Red Cross traveled Wednesday to Moscow for expected discussions with Russian foreign and defense officials on prisoners of war, the conduct of hostilities, aid delivery and other humanitarian

"The devastation caused by the conflict in recent weeks, as well as eight years of conflict in Donbas, has been vast," Peter Maurer, the ICRC president,

A senior U.S. Defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to give the Pentagon's assessment, said Russian ships in the Sea of Azov added to the shelling of Mariupol.

The hands of one exhausted Mariupol survivor shook as she arrived by train in the western city of Lviv. "There's no connection with the world. We couldn't ask for help," said Julia Krytska, who was helped by volunteers to make it out with her husband and son. "People don't even have water there.

Russian forces also bombed and destroyed a bridge in the encircled northern city of Chernihiv that crossed the Desna River and connected the city to Kyiv, regional governor Viacheslav Chaus said Wednesday. Deliveries of humanitarian aid and evacuations of civilians went through that bridge. Local authorities have warned of a humanitarian disaster in the city, with no water or electricity.

But as Biden embarked

Wednesday on a four-day trip to Europe to shore up pressure on Russia, the Kremlin said Russian President Vladimir Putin hasn't yet achieved his aims in Ukraine. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov insisted that the military operation was going "strictly in accordance with the plans and purposes that were established beforehand."Putin's aims remain to "get rid of the military potential of Ukraine" and to "ensure that Ukraine changes from an anti-Russian center to a neutral country," Peskov said.

#### Governor: Russians destroyed Chernihiv bridge used for evacuating civilians

humanitarian disaster.

Explosions and bursts of Russian forces bombed and destroyed a bridge in the gunfire shook Kyiv on Wednesday morning, and heavy artillery fire could be heard encircled city of Chernihiv, the from the northwest, where region's governor, Viacheslav Chaus, said. The destroyed Russian forces have sought to bridge had been used for evacencircle and take the capital's suburbs.Russian military forces uating civilians and delivering humanitarian aid. It crossed the destroyed a laboratory at the Chernobyl nuclear plant that Desna River and connected the worked to improve manage-ment of radioactive waste, the city to Ukraine's capital, Kyiv. Chernihiv authorities said on Ukrainian agency responsible for the Chernobyl exclusion zone Tuesday that the encircled city has no water or electricity and called the situation there a said on Tuesday.

# Allies meet in Europe for Ukraine summit

**AP** BRUSSELS

 $E^{\text{ven before Air Force One}}_{\text{touches down in Brussels to}}$ bring President Joe Biden to three Ukraine summits on Thursday, Western allies have already found what they are looking for - that all too rare sense of unity.

They have Russian President Vladimir Putin to thank for that.

After Russia's invasion of neighbouring Ukraine on Feb. 24 and its brutal war since then over the past month, allies from Washington to Tokyo and Brussels have acted in unison.

And they did it with such staggering speed to hit the Kremlin with unprecedented sanctions and offers of help to space to trump urgent problemfixing this week.

With staccato rhythm, Biden will attend a NATO, Group of Seven and European Union summits all within 12 hours of driving around Europe's diplomatic capital from one headquarters to another. The only reason this is possible is because all agree on the major issues so, basically, little time will be needed to paper over deep differences.

On Friday, Biden will be traveling to Poland, the humanitarian hub of the crisis where more than 2 million Ukrainian

refugees have arrived, and where U.S. Forces have shored up NATO's eastern flank.

WHAT BIDEN WANTS

Beyond the all-important handshakes, group photos and warm scenes of togetherness, Biden will use his time in Brussels to announce new sanctions against Russia while underscoring the importance of closing possible loopholes in the avalanche of Western measures that have already been enacted.At a time when it is essential to avoid fissures in what's been a largely unified Western response to Russia, the U.S. President will look to press important allies like Poland to dial back the idea of deploying a Western peacekeeping mission to Ukraine. It's an idea that members see as too risky as they seek to deny Russia any pretext to broaden the war beyond Ukraine's borders.

For his domestic audience, look for Biden to once again underscore the heroics of the Ukrainian military and volunteers who have managed to hold off an imposing Russian military. He will highlight those remarkable efforts - as well as the generosity of the Poles and other allies at the front lines of the humanitarian crisis - as he redoubles his calls for Americans to stand firm against a Russian war that is spurring

gas price hikes and adding to inflationary pressures in the

> Overall, Biden also wants to revel in the scenes of unity at the headquarters of NATO and the EU, where memories of an unraveling trans-Atlantic bond riven with disputes under former President Donald Trump are far from forgotten. WHAT NATO WANTS

That show of unity will also

be paramount at NATO headquarters, where the United States has traditionally given orders, with the rest, sometimes grudgingly, going along. The summit on Thursday

will be a new opportunity for the 30-nation military organization to publicly show that Washington is consulting its ly lacking under the Trump administration.Biden and his counterparts are expected to discuss the kinds of "red lines" that might draw NATO out of its defensive posture - the world's biggest security organization has mostly bolstered its own defenses since the invasion a month ago - to respond with

Nuclear, chemical or a massive cyberattack appear the most likely triggers, but NATO remains wary of any response that might draw it into a fullscale war with nuclear-armed

### UN taking up 3 resolutions on Ukraine humanitarian tragedy

AP UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations will face three resolutions Wednesday on the worsening humanitarian situation in Ukraine after Russia decided to call for a vote on its Security Council resolution that makes no mention of its attack on its smaller neighbour.

The General Assembly is scheduled to start considering two rival resolutions Wednesday morning - one supported by Ukraine and Western nations that makes clear Russia is responsible for the escalating humanitarian crisis and the other sponsored by South Africa that doesn't mention Russia.

The Security Council will vote on the third resolution, which is sponsored by Russia referring to its invasion of Ukraine. Russia had cancelled a council vote on the measure last Friday as diplomats predicted it would be overwhelmingly defeated, with many abstentions and very few "yes" votes when at least nine are needed for approval along with no vetoes.

Russia's deputy UN ambassador, Dmitry Polyansky, told reporters Tuesday that Russia had now asked for a vote Wednesday. It was scheduled to be held after the Security Council's scheduled meeting Wednesday morning on its



cooperation with the Arab

Polyansky said if Western nations don't support the Russian resolution it will be "a reflection of their hypocrisy' and refusal to support a purely humanitarian measure "without any politicisation," just like other humanitarian resolutions adopted by the 15-mmber US Ambassador Linda

Thomas-Greenfield countered that Russia cancelled Friday's vote on its resolution "because they knew that they didn't tion." She said there still is no support.France and Mexico decided to take their humanitarian resolution to the 193member General Assembly after Russia made clear after two weeks of negotiations in the Security Council that it would veto their draft. It makes clear the aid crisis is a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A letter sent to the assembly president Monday from the two countries and 20 others, including Ukraine and the United States, asked for a resumption of the General Assembly's special session on Wednesday to put the resolution to a vote. South African on Monday

circulated a rival draft resolution that is similar to the Russian text before the Security Council and makes no mention of Russia's aggression. It was sent to the General Assembly on Tuesday. The South African draft

calls for "an immediate cessation of hostilities" as a first step in ameliorating the deteriorating humanitarian situation and encourages "political dialogue, negotiations, mediation and other peaceful means aimed at

achieving lasting peace".

According to the speakers list obtained Tuesday night by The Associated Press, 61 countries planned to address the assembly on the matter. That meant the vote could take place Wednesday evening or

The first two speakers were Ukraine, to present the Western-backed resolution it supports and helped draft, and South Africa. Unlike Security Council resolutions, General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding, but there are no vetoes and they do have clout in reflecting international opinion. The US ambassador said supporters of the French-Mexican resolution hoped to get the same vote for the draft as for a resolution adopted by the assembly March 2 that demanded an immediate halt

to Russia's military action.

# Britain pledges to respond to war, cost-of-living crisis

AP LONDON

 $B_{\text{pledges}}^{\text{ritain's Treasury chief}}$ Russia's war in Ukraine and a cost-of-living crisis hitting working families while delivering his spring budget statement on Wednesday.

Rishi Sunak did not offer details on specific policy proposals but said Britain would continue its "unwavering" support for Ukraine and seek to strengthen the domestic economy to counter the threat posed by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"So when I talk about security, yes, I mean responding to the war in Ukraine," Sunak said the statement.

He added that he "also mean the security of a fastergrowing economy, security of more resilient public finances, and security for working families as we help with the cost of living".

Sunak has come under increasing pressure to announce further measures to help consumers facing what one economist has called "the biggest year-on-year fall in household incomes in a generation".

Utility bills are set to rise by more than 50 per cent in April, on top of a planned income tax increase and an acceleration of consumer prices for everything from fuel to food at the fastest pace in decades.

Some politicians also are calling for increased defence spending amid rising tensions between NATO and Russia due to the conflict.

The spring statement Sunak will deliver to the House of Commons is a midyear update on public finances that often includes policy announcements responding to new challenges facing the government.

The economic and security picture look much bleaker now than when Sunak released

Economists now estimate inflation will peak at close to 9 per cent this year -- double the 4.4 per cent forecast government advisers made in October - as the war in Ukraine boosts food and energy prices.

Accelerating inflation is also likely to curtail economic growth and squeeze government finances, with economists forecasting that gross domestic product will grow less than 1 per cent next year, compared with the 2.1 per cent forecast by the Office of Budget Responsibility when Sunak released his fall budget.

deputy secretary general.

"Otherwise, it's a hollow

Since Russia invaded

victory. If you neglect or lose that

civil society piece, you've lost

what this was ultimately all

Ukraine on February 24, the

philanthropy research organisa-

tion Candid has catalogued

USD440 million in grants and

USD333 million more in pledges

er, include individual donations

or from non-profits and corpo-

rations that have not yet publicly

reported their gifts, meaning that

Those totals do not, howev-

for the victims.

discovery.

#### **Red Cross chief to hold Moscow talks about aid**

AP GENEVA

of the head International Committee of the Red Cross has arrived in Moscow for talks at the Russian foreign and defence ministries on humanitarian issues caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Peter Maurer, the ICRC president, was expected Wednesday to take up issues

Name of the Borrower/ Number

(DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN)

conduct of hostilities and the delivery of aid.

"The devastation caused by the conflict in recent weeks, as well as eight years of conflict in Donbas, has been vast," Maurer said in a statement, referring to the region of eastern Ukraine held by Russianbacked separatists.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) R/w Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, (on underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security in respect of a housing loan facility granted

pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the borrower, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the

below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to dea

with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd. 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road.

"There are practical steps

such as prisoners of war, the humanitarian law that the parties must take to limit the suffering," Maurer said.

Maurer travelled to Ukraine last week. While in Moscow, he was also expected to meet with the head of the Russian Red Cross, which has been helping people who have fled eastern Ukraine into

The Russian parliament guided by international has passed a law expanding

military veteran status to troops taking part in the invasion of Ukraine.

Veteran status brings various benefits, such as monthly payments, tax breaks, discounts on utilities and preferential access to medical treatment, among other things. Russia's lower house of

parliament, the State Duma, passed the law on Wednesday, four weeks since the start of the war in Ukraine, with the three required readings taking place at once. Britain's defence ministry

says the war in northern Ukraine is largely "static", with Russian forces trying to reorganise before resuming a large-scale assault. Elsewhere in Ukraine, UK

defence officials say "Russian forces are attempting to envelop Ukrainian forces in the east of the country as they advance from the direction of Kharkiv in the north and Mariupol in the south".

In an update posted Wednesday on social media, Britain's defence ministry said Russian troops in the south are trying to circumvent the city of Mykolaiv as they push west towards Odesa, a key Black Sea port that has so far been spared major attack.

### France sends rescue cars, supplies to Ukraine

 $F^{\text{rench authorities say a convoy}}_{\text{voy of rescue vehicles and}}$ emergency equipment is to leave Paris on Wednesday to be provided to Ukraine's emer-

A statement from the French foreign and interior ministries says 100 firefighters and rescue staff will dispatch the vehicles and equipment to Romania, at the border with Ukraine. They include 11 fire engines, 16 rescue vehicles, and 23 trucks transporting 49 tons of health and emergency equipment.

It comes in addition to a convoy of 21 new ambulances. which left on Tuesday.

The statement savs the operation is meant to support rescuers from Ukraine's Emergency Situations Service "mobilized day and night to provide relief to victims.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has reiterated that his country will not support a nofly zone over Ukraine or send troops to intervene in the war and Shevchenkivskyi. launched by Russia.

Four people sustained Scholz told German law-

Still, the German leader said Ukraine could rely on Germany's help, citing the financial and military aid already provided, the harsh sanctions on Russia and the reception of hundreds of thou-

makers on Wednesday that

"NATO will not become a

party to the war. We are in

agreement on this with our

European allies and the United

sands of Ukrainian refugees. Scholz said Germany would not support a boycott of Russian oil, coal and gas, but is seeking to wean itself off those imports by seeking out other suppliers and ramping up the use of renewable energy.

The Kyiv city administration says Russian forces shelled the Ukrainian capital overnight and early Wednesday morning, damaging buildings in two districts.

Kyiv authorities said on Telegram that a shopping mall, some private sector buildings and high-rises came under fire in the districts of Sviatoshynskyi

alive absolutely is the key bit, said Malloch-Brown, who has also served as the United Nations

#### New fund directs its support to Ukraine's long-term needs

**AP** ■ NEW YORK

The humanian more than 10 million dis-The humanitarian needs of placed Ukrainians have quickly become staggering, and longerterm problems resulting from Russia's invasion will grow ever larger if they are not sufficiently addressed now, warned Mark Malloch-Brown, president of the Open Society Foundations.

Experts report an "unprecedented" outpouring of aid for food, medicine and other essential needs of Ukrainians, but comparatively only few donations have been earmarked for maintaining the country's culture or democratic foundations.

Open Society Foundations has launched the Ukraine Democracy Fund with a USD25 million pledge, in hopes of raising USD100 million to address that cause.

The foundations, launched by billionaire investor George Soros, are now one of the world's largest funders of democracy, human rights and justice groups.

"Keeping their civil society

the actual amount of aid is much higher. 'By many measures, this has been an unprecedented philanthropic response by organisations, by individuals," said Laia Grino, Candid's director of data

"Some groups have said that this has exceeded what they were able to raise for COVID-19. what they raised for racial equity, the response to the crisis in Afghanistan," Grino noted, adding that the bulk of those donations are for immediate needs - food, shelter, safety.

Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.) H No- 108, Shiv Colony, Khasra No 15/25 Gali No 02, Ballagarh, Haryana, Faridabad 121004/ March 21. 2022 June 25, 2021 Vijay Kumar Garg/ Kamla Garg (20000042572 & QZNOD00005015822) The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

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Authorized Officer

# Biden to attend emergency NATO Summit, hold G7 meet

### US President to address EU leaders in Europe tour

**PTI** WASHINGTON

S President Joe Biden would attend an emergency NATO Summit, address European Union leaders and hold meetings with G-7 leaders, his national security advisor has said on the eve of his departure for Brussels and Poland.

Biden is scheduled to leave for Europe to show a united front and take stock of the situation in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"He will attend an emergency NATO Summit, joined by the leaders of the other 29 NATO Allies. He will join the G7 leaders. And he will address the 27 leaders of the European Union at a session of the European Council. He will have



the opportunity to coordinate on the next phase of military assistance to Ukraine," National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters at a White House news conference on Tuesday.

"He will join our partners in imposing further sanctions on Russia and tightening the existing sanctions to crack down on

evasion and to ensure robust enforcement," Sullivan said, adding that Biden will work with Allies on longer-term adjustments to NATO force

posture on the eastern flank. "He will announce joint action on enhancing European energy security and reducing Europe's dependence on

Russian gas at long last. He will announce further American contributions to a coordinated humanitarian response to ease the suffering of civilians inside Ukraine and to respond to the growing flow of refugees," he From Brussels, Biden will travel to Poland, where he will

engage with US troops who are now helping to defend NATO territory, and he will meet with experts involved in the humanitarian response. He will also hold a bilateral meeting with President Andrzej Duda of

"For the past few months, the West has been united. The President is travelling to Europe to ensure we stay united, to cement our collective resolve, to send a powerful message that we

are prepared and committed to this for as long as it takes...Helping the Ukrainian people defend themselves, imposing and increasing costs on Russia, and reinforcing the Western alliance," Sullivan said.Sullivan said Biden will announce new sanctions, but on ensuring that there is joint effort to crack down on inva-

"We have applied an enormous amount of economic pressure. In order to sustain and escalate that pressure over time, part of that is about new designations, new targets, but a big part of it is about effective enforcement and applying the lessons that we've learned from other circumstances where we have, in fact, imposed sanctions on countries," he said.

### WHO: Covid cases rise for 2nd week, deaths fall

AP GENEVA

Geneva, Mar 23 (AP) The number of new coronavirus cases globally increased by 7per cent in the last week, driven by rising infections in the Western Pacific, even as reported deaths from COVID-19 fell, the World Health Organization said.

There were more than 12 million new weekly cases and just under 33,000 deaths, a 23per cent decline in mortality, according to the U.N. Health agency's report on the pandemic issued late Tuesday.

Confirmed cases of the virus had been falling steadily worldwide since January but rose again last week, due to the more infectious omicron variant and the suspension of COVID-19 protocols in numerous countries in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

Health officials have said repeatedly that omicron causes milder disease than previous versions of the coronavirus and that vaccination, including a booster, appears highly pro-

The Western Pacific remained the only region in the world where coronavirus cases are rising, reporting a 21per cent jump last week, continuing weeks of increase. According to figures from last week, the number of new infections in Europe remained stable and fell everywhere

WHO cautioned that with many countries dropping widespread testing programs, many infections are likely being missed and new case numbers should be interpreted cau-

In recent weeks, COVID-19 cases inched upward across Europe, prompted by the more infectious BA.2 subvariant of omicron and the relaxation of nearly all public health mea-

WHO Europe chief Dr. Hans Kluge said restrictions in numerous countries across the continent had been lifted "brutally - from too much to too few," noting that in recent days, cases were rising significantly in the U.K., France, Italy and Germany. Last week, British health minister Sajid Javid said U.K. Residents should brace for a jump in COVID-19 infections but that the country was still "in a very good position" due to its high

vaccination levels.

Meanwhile, China's health authorities this week reported the first coronavirus deaths in more than a year as the country battles its worst outbreak since the coronavirus was detected in Wuhan. The semiautonomous city of Hong Kong is also entrenched in a deadly wave of COVID-19, and the city of 7 million has recorded more deaths than mainland China during the pandemic.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam said this week that authorities would consider relaxing some of its strict pandemic measures as cases begin to fall after weeks of rising cases overloaded hospitals and cemeteries.

#### Need to resume credible Israel-Palestine talks: India

**PTI** UNITED NATIONS

India said an early return to the political course by launching credible direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine on all final status issues is an immediate requirement and stressed that the absence of direct talks between the sides is not conducive to securing long-term peace.

"We call upon parties to refrain from any unilateral action that unduly alters the status-quo on the ground and undercuts the viability of the two-State solution. We need to urgently build on the recent positive developments and not slide back," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador TS Tirumurti said.

Speaking at the UN Security Council monthly meeting on the Question of Palestine on Tuesday, he said the focus must be on addressing the urgent security and eco-nomic challenges, including the precarious financial situa-

**Low-dose Covid** 

shots work for kids

Moderna's Covid vaccine works in babies, toddlers

and preschoolers the company

announced Wednesday - and

if regulators agree it could

mean a chance to finally start

vaccinating the littlest kids by

summer. Moderna said in the

coming weeks it would ask reg-

ulators in the U.S. And Europe

to authorize two small-dose shots for youngsters under 6.

The company also is seeking to

have larger-dose shots cleared

for older children and teens in

children under 5 are the only

age group not yet eligible for

vaccination. Competitor Pfizer

currently offers kid-sized doses

for school-age children and

full-strength shots for those 12

and older. But parents have

anxiously awaited protection

for younger tots, disappointed

by setbacks and confusion over

which shots might work and

er doses for children under 5

but had to add a third shot to

its study when two didn't prove

strong enough. Those results

are expected by early April.

Pfizer is testing even small-

The nation's 18 million

the U.S.

under 6: Moderna

AP NEW YORK

tion of the Palestinian Authority, and charting a concrete path for discussing key political issues.

"An early return to the political course by launching credible direct negotiations on all final status issues is an immediate requirement. The absence of direct talks between the sides on these issues is not conducive to securing longterm peace," he said.

He noted that resolution 2334 was adopted by the Council to reaffirm the international community's firm commitment to preventing the erosion of the two-State solution. It calls upon parties to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, to refrain from provocative acts of incitement and inflammatory rhetoric and stresses that all settlement activities must cease.

India has been supporting Palestinian nation-building and capacity-building efforts under the India-Palestine develop-mental partnership for over three decades now.

The State of Bihar should

**1** use the links created by

several indentured labourers,

who came to South Africa

from 1860 as sugar-cane farm

labourers, to boost tourism, a

top diplomat of the African

Director-General for Asia in

Department of International

Cooperation and Relations,

who is of Bihari origin, said

that projects need to be start-

ed to get the 1.4 million

South Africans of Indian ori-

gin to rediscover their roots.

at a Bihar Diwas event in

Johannesburg hosted by Consul General Anju Ranjan,

who arranged a linkup with

the event which was hosted by

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar

over 152,000 Indians came to

South Africa under the inden-

tured scheme. Very often,

when we speak of our relations

with India, we forget that a

sizeable number of Indian

South Africans have their roots

"Between 1860 and 1911,

in Patna on Tuesday.

Sooklal made the remarks

South

Dr'Anil Sooklal, Deputy

African

country has said.

Indentured labourers' links

tourism in Bihar: SA diplomat

should be used to boost S African

### ASEAN special envoy sees minor progress in Myanmar mission

**Prak Sokhonn** 

encouraged by

said he was

the military

Government

allowing him

to meet with

to the conflic

various parties

**AP** PHNOM PENH

Cambodia's Foreign Minister on Wednesday claimed minor initial progress in his mission as a special regional envoy seeking to facilitate peacemaking in strife-torn Myanmar.

Prak Sokhonn, representing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, spoke after his return from visit to military-ruled Myanmar, which was plunged into an extended violent political crisis after the army seized power last

He said he was encouraged by the military government allowing him to meet with various parties to the conflict, but pessimistic about immediate chances for a ceasefire to end the violence.

Popular discontent with the military's ouster of the country's elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, has turned into what some UN experts have characterised as a civil war, leading as well to a humanitarian crisis with hun-

dreds of thousands of displaced people.

Prak Sokhonn held discussions Mondav and Tuesday with Myanmar's leader, Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, and members of his cabinet about ASEAN's five-point consensus on Myanmar, issued in April last year. He also met with diplomats from other ASEAN countries and the UN, as well as Ko Ko Gyi,

a Myanmar politician best known as an activist in the failed 1988 uprising against military

Myanmar, although a member of ASEAN, has done little to implement the plan, which calls for the immediate cessation of violence, a dialogue among all concerned parties, mediation by an ASEAN special envoy, provision of humanitarian aid through ASEAN channels, and a visit to Myanmar by the special envoy to meet all concerned parties.

popular shopping precincts

had attended training on the

electronic Tourist Refund

Scheme (eTRS) and was in

charge of eTRS matters at

the company. Senior tax

prosecutor from the Inland

Singapore (Iras) David Lim

said the Tourist Refund

Scheme (TRS) allows

tourists to claim a refund of

GST paid by them. Woo was

at his workplace between

March 2015 and May 2016

when he conspired.

Revenue Authority of

Woo, a Singaporean,

A major sticking point had been Myanmar's refusal to let a previous ASEAN special envoy meet with Suu Kyi, who has been in detention since the army seized power in February 2021.

meetings of the regional grouping.

ASEAN in response ostracised Myanmar by blocking its leaders from attending major

#### Singapore court fines jewellery firm director for conspiring with Indian tourists to cheat on GST

jewellery firm director Awas fined SGD104,400 on Wednesday for conspiring with five Indian tourists to unlawfully obtain goods and services tax (GST) refunds that they were not The cases involving Woo

Sin Chai from Arthesdam Jewellery and his colleagues were linked to large amounts of GST tourist refunds which were claimed from 2015 to 2016, The Straits Times reported.The five Indian nationals were Kothandaraman Gnanam, Karunanidhi Rajesh, Karunanithi Sarayanan

Ramaiyan Karthikeyan and Waithiyalingam Karunanidhi, who were then between 29 and 61 years old and were jailed in 2017 for their part in the offences. Woo, now 61, had plead-

ed guilty to multiple charges under the Goods and Services Tax (General) Regulations. The court heard that Arthesdam Jewellery has shops in Serangoon Road within the Little Indian precinct, one of the most

#### Pak polls body slaps ₹50,000 fine on PM Imran

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's top election body has imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on Prime Minister Imran Khan for violating election code of conduct by addressing a rally in Swat ahead of the local government election in Pakhtunkhwa. The Election Commission

of Pakistan (ECP) had on March 15 barred him from visiting Swat to address a public rally, but the premier ignored the directives and addressed a rally a day later, the Express Tribune réported. According to the new ECP

code of conduct, no public office holder can visit the districts where elections are being held. The second phase of KhyberPakhtunkhwa local government elections is scheduled for March 31.

The ECP had twice issued notices to Khan for violating the code of conduct. The last notice was sent on March 21 for addressing a political rally in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's Malakand area. The Prime Minister and Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar had filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court to the petition, "The notices have been issued despite new legislation regarding the election campaign."

However, the IHC had refused to restrain the ECP from proceeding against the Prime Minister, saying the commission had a mandate to devise a code of conduct for transparent elections. The ECP has banned PM Khan from attending meetings during the second phase of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa local government elections.

RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION, JAIPUR

**INDIAN RAILWAY** 

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines and premises situated in the

under noted section of the Jaipur Division & Bikaner Division of North Western Railway that the Over Head traction wires will be energized on 25 KV AC on or

after date 22.03.2022 On and from the same date, the overhead traction line

shall be treated as live at all times and no unauthorized person shall approach

.I.IN (Fxcl.) - LHU (Excl.) Section. Loc. 304/02 (Km. 304/085.00) JJN 23.03.2022

**INDIAN RAILWAY** 

WARNING TO ROAD USERS"

Section

(Excl.) to Loc. 358/08 (Km. 358/475.00) of Jaipur Division and Loc

358/08 (Km. 358/475.00) to Loc. LHU/1003A (Km. 360/077.00) LHU

or work in the proximity of the said overhead line.

#### Man held for killing Hindu girl resisting kidnap bid in Pak with a gun on the day of the

man has been arrested for Amurdering an 18-year-old Hindu girl when she resisted a bid to abduct her in Pakistan's southern Sindh province, according to a media report on Wednesday. Pooja Kumari Oad was said

to have been shot after she put up resistance to the attackers in Rohi, Sukkur in Sindh on The Sukkur police arrested the suspect, identified as Wahid

relevant sections of Pakistan Penal Code, The News reported on Wednesday. Lashari, along with his two accomplices, reportedly broke into the house of Sahib Oad

Bakhash Lashari, and registered

an FIR against him under the

murder. Lashari allegedly shot Oad's daughter, Pooja Kumari, dead when the family resisted as he tried to abduct her, the paper The alleged murderers caped after the killing.
The incident sparked an

uproar on social media with

activists strongly condemning the brutal murder and demanding protection of religious minorities, mainly Hindus and Christians. SSP Sukkur Sanghaar Malik

ordered the arrest of the suspected killer and his aides. Lashari was arrested from the limits of Rohri, with what is suspected to be the murder weapon. On Tuesday, a local court sent the suspect to 10-day police remand.

This is to inform to all concerned that my father Vasu Deo Singh Allias Basudev Singh S/o Late Shri R.C Singh Earleir Resident of 253/6-B, Railway Colony, P.K. Road, Connaught Palaice, New Debli had executed a Will deed on 02-05-2013 in respect of Plot No. 202 Block A, Sector 47 Noida (U.P). in favour of his son Pramod Kumar Singh Son Of Shri Vasu Deo Singh Earleir R/o 253/6-B, Railway Colony, P.K, Road, Connaught Palace, New Delhi and the same duly Regd. with S.R.I, Noida in Book No. 3. Volume No. 393 on pages 81 to 90 at No. 1453 dated 02-05-2013 and my father has died on 10-02-2022. So it is publicly notified that the said property is going to transfer in favour Pramod Kumar Singh in the residential plot Department Noida Authority as per will deed. If someone has any objection he/she deed. If someone has any objection he/she should move her/his/their objection with sufficient proof within 30 days from this notice in the Residential plot department of Noida Authority. PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGS

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Swaran Mohini Malhotra
"Seller/s' claims to be owner and in possession of Ground
Floor and First Floor, of Property No. 40, Block G, in Bali
Nagar, Najafgarh Road, New Delhi (hereinafter called
the said property) by virtue of Relinquishment Deel
executed by Sachini Malhotra through Sameer Nath and
Mamata Malhotra through Sameer Nath in favor of
Swaran Mohini Malhotra in respect of the entire Property,
Doc. No. 1319 (All Legal Heirs of Late Jugal Kishore
Malhotra and Late Saria Malhotra), Saria Malhotra was the
owner of the entire property by virtue of Sale Deed Dakard
L209.1973 and thereafter the death of Saria Malhotra,
entire property was mutated in favor of JK Malhotra and
said Swaran Mohini Malhotra has agreed to sell the said
property to Subhash Mittal and said Subhash Mittal has
agreed create mortgage of the said Property in favour of
our client, IDFC First Bank Limited, having its office at
110. All persons/s/Institution/s having any claim against
or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by
way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or
otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise
howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in
writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the
address mentioned below within 14 days from the date
hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of surperson or persons will be considered to have been waived
and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the
disbursement of loan against the said property and and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the annyo acanoneed and our clear is an proceed with ordinations of most against the said property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Vishah Diwan (Advocate)

For Diwan and Company, Advocates and Solicitors House No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex, N. Delhi-19 M. 9818399999

PUBLIC NOTICE

Reg.: Plot # 451-52 Sector-8 Phase-IV, IMT Manesar

Plot # 451-52 Sector-8 Phase-IV, IMT Manesar-122050,
Distt. Gurugram (Haryana) measuring 2,025 sq. mtrs.
was re-allotted by the Corporation vide its Re-Allotment
Letter dated 17.7.2000in favour of Mis. SGM Paper was re-allotted by the Corporation viole its Re-Auloiment Letter dated 177. 2020 in favour of Mis. SGM Paper Products, a partnership firm of Mrs. Shubita Sachdeva, Mr. Gagan Sachdeva and Mr. Manish Sachdeva with profit sharing ratio of 20: 40: 40 respectively as per Partnership Deed dated 1.4.2012 and having its present office at 183 Sector-4, IMT Manesar-122050 Distri. Gurugram (Haryana). The Corporation has been informed by the firm that one of its partner namely Mrs.Shubita Sachdeva Wio Shri Vishveshwar Kumar Sachdeva Rio House #3.4 Block #A, Mount Kailash, New Delih-110065 has expired on 19.4.2021. Subsequently after her death, the firm has reconstituted the Partnership Deed and the legal heirs of the deceased partner, Mr. Wisheshwar Kumar Sachdeva, Mr. Gagan Sa ch de va, Mr. Manish Sa ch de va and Ms.ShivaliSikkahas approached the Corporation to transfer her 20% shares in Ms. SGM Paper Products in favour of Mr. Gagan Sachdeva and Mr. Manish Sachdeva in the ratio of 10: 10 as per Agreement Modifying The Partnership Deed dated 19.4.2021 to becomes the legal heirs of her 20% shares in Mis. SGM Paper Products in the records of the Corporation.

The Corporation is in process of considering firm's

The Corporation is in process of considering firm' request and transferring the said 20% her shares in M/s. SGM Paper Products to and in favour of Mr. Gagan Sachdeva and Mr. Manish Sachdeva in the ratio of 10:10 Sachdeva and Mr. Manish Sachdeva in the ratio of 10:10 on the basis of Agreement Modifying the Partnership firm namely Mis. SGM Paper Products and NOC from other legal heirs. Through this public notice, it is hereby informed that in case, any of the legal heirs of late Mrs. Shubita Sachdevaor any other person having reservation / objection to the said transfer may file his / her / its objection in writing before the undersigned or Addl. General Manager (Estate), Mis. HSIIDC Ltd., C-13-14 Sector-6, Panchkula, Haryana along with an affidavit within a period of 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. In case, no response is received within the aforesaid period, it will be presumed that no one has any objection to Agreement Modifying the Partnership Deed dated 19.4.2021 and the Corporation shall go ahead with amendment in shareholding of Mis. SGM. Paper Products in the records of the Corporation.

#### SOCIETY LTD. Plot No.5A, Sector-11, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075. pursuance to rule 19(2) of DCS rules

2007, applications are invited from general public of Delhi who fulfill the conditions laid down in rule-19 & 20 of DCS Rules, 2007 for filling up one vacancy in Raman Vihar CGHS Ltd. (Regd. No. 872-GH) for proposed three bedroom flat (Tentative cost of flat 87,31,110/-) (having area approximate 1750 Sq. Feet), which has arisen due to resignation of member, Interested persons can collect the application form in persor from society office ie Plot No.5A,Sector-11 Dwarka, New Delhi-1 10075 between 10.00 am to 4.30 pm free of cost and the same have to deposited along with the amount of Rs. 87,31,110 which includes Share money, admission fee, land & Construction money and Equalization money through Pay order/ Demand Draft within 15 days of issue of this notice in favour of Raman Vihar Co-operative Group Secretary-Raman Vihar CGHS Ltd.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles. VEHICLE'S FOR SALE ) FORCETTFBP

MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 418187

TRAVELLER FULLY BUILT **PASSENGER** DL1VC2802- YOM-2015

3) PRO 2110 EICHR VECV

MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 1245394

UP14JT0863- YOM-2019

MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 777563 UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK

OR BEFORE 08.04.2022 (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 ANTII KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD CONTACT / 09711173320 EMAIL rajesh.antil@kotak.com

#### Pak responsible nuclear power but will respond with 'full force' if attacked: Prez when the All-India Muslim

 $P_{\text{nuclear power but it will not}}^{\text{akistan}} \text{ is a responsible}$ hesitate to retaliate with "full force" if attacked, President Arif Alvi said on Wednesday, as he reaffirmed the resolve to make his country economically stronger and prosperous.

"This is an important year as we are celebrating this year the 75 independence of Pakistan. We affirm that we will do everything to keep our freedom," Alvi said while addressing the Pakistan Day parade in Islamabad.

Pakistan Day commemorates the passing of the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940,

League demanded a separate nation for the Muslims of the British Indian Empire. "We are a responsible

atomic power and want peace with every country and we respect their sovereignty...But I want to make it clear for everyone that we will not compromise our independence. And will respond to every aggression with full force as we have been doing," Alvi said.

Noting that terrorism, population explosion and fake news are among the biggest challenges being faced by Pakistan, he urged Muslim scholars to help combat these

#### Onetime top aide testifies against Netanyahu in graft trial lars. In return, Bezeq's

**AP** JERUSALEM

visited India.

in Bihar," Sooklal said.

to boost tourism.

He added that the state of

'This conclave is a good

Bihar should use the links cre-

ated by indentured labourers,

who came to South Africa as

sugar-cane farm labourers,

first attempt to demonstrate

the strong historical bonds

that we have between South

Africa and especially the state

of Bihar. Cultural connectiv-

ity is a very important part of

the connectivity between

India and South Africa,"

Sooklal said as he highlight-

ed that prior to the COVID-

19 outbreak, there were over

100,000 visitors from India to

South Africa annually, while

over 80,000 South Africans

Aonetime top aide to Benjamin Netanyahu took the stand for the first time Wednesday against the former Israeli prime minister engulfed in corruption charges over a scheme to generate positive news coverage. Shlomo Filber, the direc-

tor of the Communications Ministry under Netanyahu and one of two former aides to testify for the prosecution, said Netanyahu wanted him to "mitigate" competition for Israel's Bezeq telecom company, a move worth

hundreds of millions of dol-

popular news site, Walla, allegedly provided favorable coverage of Netanyahu and his family. Netanyahu, now opposi-

tion leader in Israel's parliament, denies any wrongdoing

breach of trust and bribery amount to a witch hunt. But the case has cast a deep shadlegacy as Israel's longest-serving prime minister.

and says the charges of fraud, ow over his family and his Like the previous aideturned-state's witness, Nir

358/475.00) to Loc. LHU/1003A (Km. 360/077.00) LHU (Excl.) of Bikane **Division.** North Western Railway. Height gauges have been erected at all the level crossings with clear maximum height of 4.78 m above road level with a view to prevent loads of excessive height from coming into contact or dangerous proximity to live traction wire. (contact wire), which shall be at a height of minimum 5.5m above the rail level at level crossings. Public are hereby notified to observe the height specified above for the purpose of loading vehicles and to see that the loads carried in road

PR/80/2022 Adk

well as the Railway line. . Danger to the materials of equipment carried on the vehicles itself. 3. Danger of fire and risk of life due to contact with or dangerous proximit CHIEF PROJECT DIRECTOR Hefetz, Filber described the former Israeli premier as being

The dangers of a load of excessive height are as follows:

FOR & ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT OF INDIA

vehicles do not infringe the height gauges under any circumstances.

Dangers to the height gauge and consequent obstruction to the road as

#### CHIEF PROJECT DIRECTOR

FOR & ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT OF INDIA RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION, JAIPUR It is notified for information of the Public that the overhead traction wire will be energized on 25 kV on or after 22.03.2022 over the sections JJN (Excl.)-LHU (Excl.) Section, Loc. 304/02 (Km. 304/085.00) JJN (Excl.) to Loc. 358/08 (Km. 358/475.00) of Jaipur Division and Loc 358/08 (Km.

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2) CB\_FORCE TEMPO

MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 472306 HR38AB3917-YOM-2021

4) SM SAMRAT

IS UNDER SALE IN ITS
"AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION"
INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/ OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON

# India crosses \$ 400 bn milestone in exports

The country's exports for the first time crossed the USD 400 billion mark in a fiscal on healthy performance by sectors such as petroleum products, engineering, gems and jewellery, and chemicals, according to the commerce ministry's data released on Wednesday.

The merchandise exports rose by by 37 per cent to USD 400.8 billion in 2021-22 until March 21 against USD 292 billion in 2020-21. Previously, the outbound shipments had touched a record of USD 330.07 billion in 2018-19.

Imports during the period stood at USD 589 billion, leaving a trade deficit of about USD

Hailing the country's success in achieving its goods export target, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that this is a key milestone in India's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' jour-

The highest ever goods export target was achieved nine days ahead of the March 31 deadline.

"India set an ambitious target of USD 400 billion of goods exports and achieves this target for the first time ever. I congratulate our farmers, weavers, MSMEs, manufacturers, exporters for this success

our Aatmanirbhar Bharat journey. #LocalGoesGlobal," Modi

Briefing media, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said that despite all adversities including Covid-19 pandemic, and Russia-Ukraine war, India has achieved this milestone.

"First time in history, India has crossed USD 400 billion in merchandise exports...If this was a movie like The Kashmir Files, it would be called a Make in India blockbuster," Goyal told reporters here.

He added that closer interaction with states and districts; engagement with exporters; faster resolution of their issues; actively engaging with different export promotion councils, industry associations and other stakeholders have helped in reaching this milestone.

On average, goods worth about USD 33 billion were shipped every month and about USD 1 billion every day.

The key export sectors, which contributed to record healthy growth include petroleum products, engineering, gems and jewellery, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. The top five export destinations are the US, the UAE, China, Bangladesh, and the Netherlands.

Director General of

for 13-15 % capex in key industrial sectors over next 3-4 years: Report

PLI scheme to account

Kumar Sarangi said that going by the trend, "we would be

adding USD 10-12 billion in the

remaining nine days", taking

the exports by end of 2021-22 to over USD 410 billion.

Federation of Indian Export

Organisations (FIEO) Director

General Ajay Sahai said cross-

ing USD 400 billion is a

remarkable achievement as

exporters have added over USD

110 billion in one year to reach

here despite huge logistics chal-

lenges, including container

shortage, skyrocketing freight

to build on it, as we will have

benefits of new free trade agree-

ments and the PLI scheme

(production linked incentive)

FIEO Vice-President

Khalid Khan termed the

achievement as a "landmark"

and said that despite the

COVID-19 pandemic exports

Council (AEPC) Chairman

Narendra Goenka said that

India crossing USD 400 billion

merchandise exports marks the

beginning of an era of expo-

nential growth and dominance

rates are going to be exponen-

"From here, the growth

Apparel Export Promotion

"What is more important is

and liquidity constraints.

acking us," he said.

have "done so well".

in world trade.

tial," Goenka added

Commenting on the data,

 $P_{(PLI)}^{roduction\ Linked\ Incentive}$ for 13-15 per cent of the average annual investment spending in key industrial sectors over the next three-four years, according to a report by Crisil.

Since its introduction in March 2020, PLI has been announced for 15 sectors, involving government incentives to the tune of Rs 1.93 lakh crore. Of this, 50-60 per cent is to be spent on sectors with domestic manufacturing and export focus, and the rest on import localization.

"Implementation of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme will lead to a potential capital expenditure (capex) of Rs 2.5-3 lakh crore over the scheme period and will account for 13-15 per cent of average annual investment spending in key industrial sectors over the next 3-4 years," the rating agency said in a report released on Wednesday.

PLI is now poised for a rapid on-the-ground execution, with almost 60 per cent of the capex already approved and major spending set to occur over FY23-FY26. The capex has been approved for 10 sectors, it said

While the capex in mobile, pharma and telecom has already kicked off, that in capital-intensive sectors such as automobile and solar photovoltaics - which form 70 per cent of the committed investment - will kick off from April 2022, the agency said.

The scheme has received interest from over 900 players across sectors, of which around 350 have got approval

The Crisil Director Hetal Gandhi said PLI will spur green investments in India, with around 55 per cent of the scheme expected to be green, in sectors such as electric vehicles/fuel cell electric vehicles, and solar photovoltaics.

The report said that along with supply-chain integration, PLI will aid exports too.

Of the 15 sectors, nine have an export potential, ranging from 20-80 per cent of the incremental revenue generated, the agency said, adding that this, in turn, can create an annual export potential of Rs 2 lakh crore or 6 per cent of the total exports of calendar year 2021.

Sectors that could benefit from exports include mobiles, pharma, food processing, IT hardware, white goods and specialty steel, the agency said.

### I-T dept raids Hero Motorcorp chairman Pawan Munjal

**PTI** ■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department I on Wednesday conducted raids at multiple premises of Hero Motorcorp as part of a tax evasion investigation against the country's largest twowheeler automobiles manufacturer, officials said.

The company called it a routine inquiry, which is not uncommon before the end of the financial year"

Offices and residential premises of the company including that of chairman and CEO of the group Pawan Munjal located in Gurugram (Haryana), Delhi and few other locations were being covered, they said.

A team of officials of the department are looking at financial documents and other business transactions of the company and its promoters,

they said.
"Officials from the Income Tax Department visited two of our offices in Delhi and Gurugram and the residence of our Chairman & CEO Dr. Pawan Munjal on Wednesday. We have been informed that this is a routine inquiry, which is not uncommon before the end of the financial year," the

company said in a statement. It said Hero MotoCorp is an ethical and law-abiding cor-

porate, and maintains the highest standards of impeccable corporate governance.

"In keeping with this philosophy, we are extending our full cooperation to the authorities. Wê reassure all our stakeholders that it continues to be business as usual," the state-

Hero MotoCorp became the world's largest two-wheeler manufacturer in 2001, in terms of unit volume sales in a calendar year, and has maintained the title for the past 20 consecutive years.

Till date, it has sold over 100 million units across domestic and international

Led by Pawan Munjal, the company has presence across 40 countries spanning Asia, Africa, and South and Central

270 notices sent to e-tailers for breaching country-of-origin norm: Choubey

PTI NEW DELHI

The government has issued 270 notices since January 2021 to e-commerce players for violation of provisions related to country of origin, and over Rs 56 lakh have been collected as compounding fees from such online companies, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Food and Consumer Affairs Ashwini Kumar Choubey said the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009 provides, in the case of imported products, for mandatory declaration of country of origin on the digital and electronic networks used for e-commerce transac-

The Act also provides for penalty in case of violations and authorises the state governments to take action thereon."The Legal Metrology Office of the Department of Consumer Affairs has issued 270 notices since January 1, 2021 to e-commerce entities for violation of provisions pertaining to country of origin and an amount of approximately Rs 56,40,500 in the form of compounding fees has been realised from such ecommerce companies," Choubey said.

#### INBRIEF

#### MIZORAM HAS POTENTIAL OF GENERATING 4,000 MW HYDROELECTRICITY: MINISTER

Aizawl: Mizoram has the potential of generating 4,000 mw of hydroelectricity, state power minister R Lalzirliana said on Wednesday Lalzirliana called on Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati and they discussed initiatives to raise power generation in the state, said an

#### **CONTACT MANAGEMENT, NETWORKING APP TO AID**

New Delhi: With an aim to disrupt disrupting businesses and elevate the number game for individuals and organizations, CardByte has introduces contact management and card-based business networking app platform driven and regulated with proprietary Al-integrated management systems. I see people understanding the perks of organising their contact book digitally and regulating their connections to network better even in this low touch economy, said CardByte co-founder and director Navinn Kapur.

#### **VIRAT KOHLI INVESTS IN STARTUP RAGE COFFEE**

New Delhi: Packaged coffee products maker Rage Coffee on Wednesday said it has secured funding from former Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli, who has also been roped in as its brand ambassador. The city-based startup, however, did not disclose the amount of investment made by Kohli

#### SIGNATURE GLOBAL TO INVEST RS 310 CR ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT IN GURUGRAM

develop an affordable housing project in Gurugram. The company on Wednesday announced a new project Signature Global Imperial, spread nearly 9 acres of land parcel and comprising 1,141 units.

#### Sensex declines by 304 pts as HDFC twins, Infosys succumb to profit taking

stuck in a range for the last cou-

ple of days amid increasing

volatility. Despite opening in

the green, follow up buying was missing at higher levels. This

led to downward pressure in the second half of the day," said

Siddhartha Khemka, Head -Retail Research, Motilal Oswal

Reddy's Laboratories rose by

2.31 per cent, Tata Steel by 2.15

per cent, and ITC by 0.86 per

ket is getting cautious. Volatility

is back due to inflationary pres-

sures triggered by supply con-

straints. While consistently ris-

ing input cost & fall in demand

due to surge in Covid cases in

parts of the world, war & high

commodity prices are impacting

earnings growth which can lead

to downgrade in outlook," said

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at

BSE midcap index gained 0.39

per cent, while smallcap gauge

dipped marginally by 0.02 per cent.Among BSE sectoral indices, banking (down 0.81

per cent), finance (0.74 per

cent), auto (0.72 per cent) and

industrials (0.56 per cent) were

far shows consolidation after two

weeks of rebound and it's

healthy. However, the prevailing

uncertainty on the global front

combined with lack of any

domestic trigger is keeping the

participants on their toes,

according to Ajit Mishra, VP

Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

The move in the index so

the biggest laggards.

In the broader market, the

Geojit Financial Services.

Among major gainers, Dr

"After the recent rally, mar-

Financial Services Ltd.

**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex reversed its early gains to close lower by 304 points on Wednesday due to profit-taking in banking, financials and select IT stocks after a recent

surge. The 30-share BSE barometer opened higher and rose further to 58,416.56 in line with gains in Asian shares.

However, profit-taking by investors in recent winners and lackadaisical buying at higher levels dragged down the index which tanked over 420 points to hit the day's low of 57,568.59 points in the second

The Sensex finally closed lower by 304.48 points or 0.53 per cent to settle at 57,684.82. During the day, it tanked 420.71 points or 0.72 per cent to 57,568.59.

The broader NSE Nifty dipped 69.85 points or 0.4 per cent to finish at 17,245.65 with 29 of its stocks ending in red.

The key indices had gained over 1 per cent in the previous

Among Sensex stocks, HDFC fell the most by 2.36 per

Kotak Mahindra Bank lost 2.25 per cent, HDFC Bank fell by 1.26 per cent, Bharti Airtel by 1.97 per cent, Sun Pharma by 1.46 per cent, Maruti Suzuki India by 1.54 per cent, Mahindra & Mahindra by 1.33 per cent, Asian Paints by 1.16 per cent and Infosys by 0.86 per

cent.
"Domestic equity market is

Rupee falls 24 paise to 76.42 against USD amid surging crude Parmar further added that

The rupee pared initial gains ■ to settle 24 paise lower at 76.42 against the US dollar on

Wednesday, pressured by selloffs in domestic equities and surging global crude prices amid geopolitical uncertainties. Dollar demand from oil importers and prevailing risk aversion globally added to the

woes, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened strong at 76.08 against the American currency but could not hold the momentum and entered negative territory. During the session, it witnessed a low of 76.42 and a

high of 75.99. The domestic unit finally settled at 76.42 against the

the previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee had settled flat at 76.18 against the

American currency.
"Indian rupee depreciated for the third day in a row following dollar demands from importers ahead of the month and financial year-end and rebound in crude oil prices,"

global financial markets have been searching for clear direction on the back of ongoing geopolitical uncertainties. The US Fed's hawkish bet has been supporting gain in the dollar.

"Rupee traded in a narrow range but fell in the second half after global crude oil prices started to rally sharply. In the last few sessions rupee has been reacting to how crude and the dollar have been moving and volatility has been influenced by these factors," said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

According to Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities the rupee came off session highs to end dollar amid dollar demand from crude refiners.

While domestic equities declined on concerns about FPI selling domestic assets and this weighed on the local unit.

Anindya Banerjee, VP, Currency Derivatives & Interest Rate Derivatives at Kotak Securities Ltd said the said Dilip Parmar, Research USD/INR spot closed at 76.32,

due to demand for US dollars from oil marketing companies. Weakness in stocks and higher oil prices also were responsible for the Rupee's "Over the near-term, we

expect a range in USD/INR

between 75.80 and 76.50 on spot, due to higher oil supporting USD and year-end exporter selling, capping the advance in the pair," Banerjee The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength

cies, was trading 0.14 per cent higher at 98.63. Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures jumped 2.16 per cent to USD 117.97

against a basket of six curren-

On the domestic equity Sensex ended 304.48 points or 0.53 per cent lower at 57,684.82, while the broader NSE Nifty fell 69.85 points or 0.4 per cent to

Foreign institutional investors emerged as net buyers in the capital market on Tuesday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 384.48 crore, according to stock exchange data.

### Cash-strapped Pak says China agreed to rollover \$4.2 bn debt

PTI ISLAMABAD

Dakistan has said that China agreed to rollover USD 4.2 billion debt that was maturing this week, providing a major financial relief to the cashstrapped country.

The USD 2 billion loan by China's State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) has been rolled over, The Express Tribune quoted Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin as say-

The SAFE deposit loan matured on Wednesday.

Tarin said that the visiting

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also conveyed on Tuesday China's willingness to rollover another USD 2.2 billion Chinese commercial loan. The USD 2.2 billion (15 billion on Friday.

Pakistan had made repeated requests to Beijing to rollover the debt and the latest request was made last week to the top Chinese leadership, according to the ministry officials. Beijing had given a commitment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2019 to rollover its debt until the Fund programme expires. During the visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistan

had sought USD 4 billion rollover of SAFE deposits loans that were maturing in the next few months. Pakistan had requested a total USD 21 billion lifeline that

lion rollover of both commercial and safe deposits. These included rollover of SAFE deposits of USD 4 billion

included a total USD 10.7 bil-

and commercial loans of USD 6.7 billion upon maturity.
Pakistan has only USD 15.8 billion foreign exchange

reserves as of last week and its currency is fast depreciating. The rupee fell to the lowest ever level of Rs 181.75 to a USD on Pakistan had also request-

currency swap facility from USD 4.5 billion to USD 10 billion - an additional borrowing of USD 5.5 billion. The Currency Swap Agreement is a Chinese trade finance facility that Pakistan

has been using since 2011 to

repay foreign debt and keep its

gross foreign currency reserves

at comfortable levels instead for

ment is that the additional

The benefit of this arrange-

trade-related purposes

Chinese loan will not reflect on the books of the federal government and will not be treated as part of Pakistan's external public debt. Pakistan had paid Rs 26.1

billion interest on the outstanding balance at agreed

Last month, the IMF said that Pakistan owes USD 18.4 billion or one-fifth of its external public debt to China, which is not only USD 4 billion higher than the officially reported figures but is also the highest lending by any single country

or financial institution. The IMF has made the USD 4 billion loan given by China to stabilise the foreign external public debt as of June 2021. Out of this, USD 2 billion has matured but was extended further due to Pakistan's thin

financial position. The amount of USD 18.4 billion is equal to 20 per cent of the external public debt reported by the IMF. It is also the highest amount given by any country or an institution.

#### Over 10 lakh EVs registered, 1,742 public charging stations operational: Gadkari

A total of 10,60,707 electric vehicles were registered in India till last week, while 1,742 public charging stations (PCS) were operational in the country, Parliament was informed n Wednesday.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said electric charging stations are to be provided by the developer on national highways as part of the wayside amenities (WSAs).

The number of electric vehicles in the country, as per Vahan 4 data as on March 19, is 10,60,707, and a total of 1,742 Public Charging Stations (PCS), as per Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), are operational in the country as on March 21, 2022," Gadkari said.

He said the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has already awarded 39 such facilities for develop-

Replying to a separate question, Gadkari said 816 fee toll plazas are operational on national highways across the country as on March 21, 2022. On the policy regarding winding up of a toll plaza, he

explained that as per National

Highways Fee (Determination

of Rates and Collection) Rules,

2008, incase of Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects, after completion of the concession period, the user fee is to be collected by the central government at reduced rates of In case of public-funded

projects, the user fee rates are to be reduced to 40 per cent after recovery of capital cost of the project, the minister said. According to Gadkari, Rajasthan (122), Uttar Pradesh (90) and Madhya Pradesh (77)

Replying to another question, he said about Rs.

have maximum number of fee

20,268.45 crore and an amount of Rs. 1,189.94 crore has been released/spent on projects sanctioned under the Central Road & Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) and Economic Importance & Interstate Connectivity (EI&ISC) scheme respectively during the last

# energy prices amid protest

AP MADRID

overnments across Europe Chave been slashing fuel taxes and doling out tens of billions to help consumers, truckers, farmers and others cope with spiking energy prices made worse by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The move was, however, not enough for some whose livelihoods hinged on fuel.

Miguel Ángel Rodriguez, one of the 200 concrete truck drivers who held a slow-driving protest around Madrid this week, said filling up used to cost 1,600 euros (USD1,760) a month, but he had been forking out an extra 500 euros since the start of the year because of the rising price of

"We will continue striking because, at the end of the day, it's pretty much the same for us to go out to work or to stay at home," Rodríguez said.

costs were part of "a domino effect that is only going to drive us all to our ruin unless the government takes some definitive action"

financial pain. The war has exacerbated a

He warned that his rising

He's among those in industries like trucking or fishing who are staging protests to push politicians to ease their

month-long energy crunch in Europe, which is dependent on Russian oil and natural gas.

Europe limited in curbing high

Governments have limited options to provide lasting relief as households and businesses face crippling energy bills, high prices at the pump and other

Volatile energy markets control natural gas and oil rices that have soared and fuelled record inflation.

Countries like Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, Sweden and Cyprus are passing temporary efforts to provide immediate help: slashing fuel taxes, rolling out heating and power subsidies or rebates, and capping energy bills for households and small businesses.

Such measures "are sensible, and some of them, such as energy tax cuts, could be sustained indefinitely - even if prices continue to increase," said Elisabetta Cornago, a senior research fellow at the Centre for European Reform think tank who specialises in

EU energy policy.

But she called them partial solutions that "only make a small difference".

"The main problem is that these measures to keep energy prices low will also suppress incentives for energy efficiency, for investment in green energy generation, and for electrifying sectors that currently rely on fossil fuels - so they could make the long-term pain of adjustment harder," Cornago

Raising interest rates, the tool wielded by central banks to tame inflation, also would do little to rein in energy prices which European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde noted last month.

That's because "rising energy prices are due to fundamental shifts in energy mar-

kets", Cornago said. The energy crisis will be a hot topic at a European Council summit starting Thursday in Brussels, where leaders from Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece will call for an urgent, coordinated bloc-wide response

EU officials on Tuesday said they were moving towards the joint purchase of natural gas and ensuring the bloc's storage facilities were topped In the meantime, workers

are taking to the streets. Truckers around France,

dissatisfied with aid they consider "insufficient", held a day of action on Monday, with a group of independent drivers in Normandy and the English Channel region staging a blockade that prevented hundreds of trucks from moving.

#### Air India pushed into losses, disinvestment to protect public money: Scindia PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Under attack from the opposition over the sale of Air

India to Tata Group, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Wednesday hit back and accused the UPA regime for saddling the then profit-making national carrier with a huge debt burden.Responding to the debate on the Demands for Grants of the Civil Aviation Ministry in Lok Sabha, Scindia listed out the merger of Air India and Indian Airlines, purchase of 111 new aircraft and liberalisation of bilateral rights as the reasons for the downfall of the national carrier. Earlier, opposition members had slammed Scindia for not referring to the sale of Air India in his nearly hour-long reply to the eight-hour debate on the budgetary allocation to the civil aviation ministry.

"Before 2005, Air India was making a profit of Rs 15 crore per annum and Indian Airlines was making profit of Rs 50 crore. These airlines were made to purchase 111 aircraft at a cost of Rs 50-55,000 crore which pushed the national carrier into deep debts," Scindia said.

As opposition members stood up in protest, Scindia said he had not referred to Air India at all, but was forced to speak after Trinamool leader Sudeep Bandyopadhya and Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury raised the issue

# **World No 1 Ash Barty** retires from tennis

orld number one Ashleigh Barty stunned tennis on Wednesday by announcing her retirement from the sport aged just 25, saying she had fulfilled her

dreams and was "spent physically". Barty dropped the bombshell weeks after becoming the first home Australian Open champion in 44 years and so winning a Grand Slam crown on three different surfaces.

In a tearful social media video message with her close friend and former doubles partner Casey Dellacqua, Barty said she was "so ready" to call it quits after achieving her life-time ambition to win Wimbledon last year.

"Success for me is knowing that I've given absolutely everything, everything I can. I'm fulfilled, I'm happy and I know how much work it takes to bring the best out of your-self," said the three-time Grand Slam winner.

"It's just I don't have that in me anymore. I don't have the physical drive, the emotional want and kind of everything it takes to challenge yourself at the very top level any-

more.
"I think I just know that I'm absolutely, I am spent. I just know physically I had nothing more to give and that for me is success.'

One of the most respected and loved players on tour, Barty also became the best -- with her dizzying array of slices, pinpoint serving and

Congrats on an incredible career Ash. It was a privilege to share a court with you. Wishing you all the best in your next chapter, @ashbarty. You will be

-KAROLINA PLISKOVA

Happy for *@ashbarty* gutted for tennis what a player —ANDY MURRAY

Ash, what can I say, you know I have tears right? My friend, I will miss you on tour. You were different, and special, and we shared some amazing moments. What's next for you? Grand Slam champion in golf?! Be happy and enjoy your life to the max xo Simo @ashbarty

—SIMONA HÁLEP

What a legend @ashbarty.. tennis will miss you .. unbelievable role model on and off the court .. good luck mate for this next phase #inspiration.

-SANIA MIRZA

Few athletes can boast such a varied sporting resume as the down-to-earth Australian.

She began playing tennis as a child in the Queensland state capital Brisbane and went on to win the junior Wimbledon title as a 15-yearold in 2011.

But the expectations that came with success took their toll and she made a shock decision three years later to ditch tennis for cricket, signing for Brisbane Heat in the inaugural Women's Big Bash League.

#### **DREAM COME TRUE**

But the lure of tennis was never far away and she returned after a season out, breaking through for her maiden Grand Slam triumph at the French Open in 2019 and becoming Australia's first women's world number one since Evonne Goolagong-Cawley 50 years ago.

Barty finally won a cherished Wimbledon crown last year before her Australian Open triumph at Melbourne Park in January, storming back from 5-1 down in the second set against American Danielle Collins to triumph 6-3, 7-6 (7/2).

"It's something I've been thinking about for a long time," she said

"To be able to win Wimbledon, which was my dream, the one true dream that I wanted in tennis, that really changed my perspective. And I just had that gut feeling after Wimbledon and had spoken to my



brilliant career

Reigning Wimbledon and Australian Open against fearless American champion Ashleigh Barty storming back to win on a tiebreak and sweep past the 27th seed in straight sets. announced her shock retirement from tennis on **LEAVING TENNIS, ACT I** Wednesday aged 25. Here are a few highlights from her short but illustrious



The world number one

was 5-1 down in the second set

Danielle Collins but came

Barty decides out of the blue aged 18 to take a break from tennis — she had won the junior Wimbledon title in 2011 and reached three Grand Slam doubles finals.

After putting down her tennis racquet, Barty tries her hand at cricket and turned out for the Brisbane Heat in the inaugural Women's Big Bash After one season, Barty

decides to return to her first sporting love, tennis.

### Srikanth makes winning start at Swiss Open

player 21-16, 21-17 in a match

and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy

got past Indonesia's Muhammad Shohibul Fikri

and Bagas Mauland after losing

the first game. The final score-

line read 17-21, 21-11, 21-18.

Other Indians in fray, P V

Third seeds Chirag Shetty

lasting 32 minutes.



**PTI** ■ BASEL

Seventh seed Kidambi Srikanth defeated Mads Christophersen in straight games in the men's singles opening round of Swiss Open badminton here

The Indian beat the Danish

reach semifinals **PTI** ■ CHENNAI

Saumya, Janani

Top-seed Saumya Vig of Gujarat sailed into the semifinals of the CTC-AITA women's tennis tournament 2022 being organised here by Chennai Tennis Centre with an easy 6-0, 6-1 win over Sirsi Manjunath Patil (Karnataka).

She was joined in the last four by the second, third and fourth seeds respectively after they had to work harder for

While second-seeded Janani Ramesh (TN) had to ing state-mate Joell Nichole 7-7-6(5), the third-seed Vidula Reddy of Karnataka defeated Tamil Nadu's M Harivarshine 6-2, 7-5.

Sindhu, Saina Nehwal and Parupalli Kashyap play their opening matches later on

### Sharath Kamal sails into semis at WTT Contender Doha

 $V^{ ext{eteran Sharath Kamal final-}}$ ly made the men's singles medal round in a major championship when he entered the semifinals of the WTT Contender Doha here on Wednesday.

drawing from

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e a s o n

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Indian

Wells and

He was the lone Indian, ranked No. 41, in the fray after beating Tomislav Pucar of Croatia 11-8, 11-7, 11-4, following the exit of G Sathiyan, in the first round. However, Sathiyan and

Manika Batra combined well to reach the final of the mixed doubles. The pair, ranked No. 7 in the world, accounted for Hong Kong's Wong Chun Ting and Doo Hoi Ken 3-2. The Croat, just a place ahead

failed to contend with the Indian onslaught in the quarterfinals and was error-prone on the day.

The closest he came to Sharath was in the first game in which he managed eight points, and one less in the second. However, in the third, Sharath ran into a sizable lead and maintained it throughout to win it in style. In the semifinals, Sharath



will take on Chinese Yuan Licen, who is ranked 264. But it was the same Chinese who accounted for Sathiyan on Monday when he decimated the Indian 11-5, 11-6, 14-12.

could not make it to the main draw of the men's singles included Manav Thakkar, Harmeet Desai, SFR Snehit and Mudit Dani. The win in the semifinals by the mixed duo against the world No. 4 pair was indeed creditable, particularly after the way the Indians kept their hopes alive when the Hong Kong pair levelled the score 2-2, taking the

issue to the decider.

In the crucial fifth game, they stopped their opponents well short to win the match 13-11, 9-11, 11-9, 8-11, 11-8. In the final on Thursday, they will meet the top seeded pair from Taipei — Cheng I-Ching and Lin



The Australian wins

Wimbledon on the 50th

anniversary of fellow indigenous Australian Evonne

Goolagong Cawley's triumph there. Barty's victory in 2021 fulfils a dream that leaves her

wondering how long she wants

described her Wimbledon crown as her "one true dream"

In her retirement message Barty — who won the French Open in 2019 -

to carry on.

**AUSTRALIAN** 



Open over Covid-19 fears, Barty picks up her golf clubs in September 2020 and claims the Brookwater Golf Club

### Crunch time for Portugal and Italy in World Cup playoffs

 $T^{
m he}$  World Cup hopes of the last two European champi-Portugal and Italy on a collision course in decisive qualifying play-offs over the next week.

A potential clash in Porto between the Euro 2016 winners, captained by Cristiano Ronaldo, and an Italy team who succeeded them as continental champions last year is a mouthwatering prospect. However, both must first

come through semi-finals on Thursday that are far from foregone conclusions, with Portugal hosting Turkey and Italy facing North Macedonia. Failure to reach this year's

European football, including World Cup would be a catastrophe for the Azzurri, who had the potential for an expanded tournament, and we are pasgone to every finals since 1958 sionate about maximising the until missing out in 2018 when sustainability and legacy benefits for communities across the they lost a play-off to Sweden. It would be all the more There had been reported

remarkable given that they bounced back from that under Roberto Mancini to win Euro 2020 while on a world record 37-game unbeaten run. Yet four draws in their last five World Cup qualifiers last

autumn saw them finish second in their group to Switzerland, and now they must come through these two one-off ties to secure a place in the April 1 draw in Doha.

"Our goal is to win the World Cup, and to win the World Cup we have to win



these two matches. There's nothing else to say," Mancini said on Monday.

#### **NORTH MACEDONIA PLOT SHOCK**

Italy host North Macedonia in Palermo, and they will know not to take the Balkan nation of

two million people lightly.

After all, they beat Germany away in qualifying last year before appearing at their first major tournament at Euro 2020, and they also held Italy to a damaging draw in Turin in qualifying for the last

World Cup. "We are not going to Italy as tourists, but to outplay (them) and to win," said coach Bobi Milevski, who is aiming to take North Macedonia — born in 1991 out of the break-up of Yugoslavia — to their first World Cup. Portugal skipper Ronaldo will be 41 come 2026,

last chance to win the World Cup. Missing out altogether is unthinkable for the all-time top scorer in international football with 115 goals.

"We know the road will not be easy and we have full respect for our opponents, who share the same objective as us. But together we will fight to take Portugal where we belong," Ronaldo posted on Instagram this week.

Portugal, who are ranked eighth in the world, two places behind Italy, must beat Turkey in Porto to reach the play-off final, in which they would have

home advantage. However, their two firstchoice centre-backs have been ruled out - Manchester City's Ruben Dias succumbed to injury before 39-year-old veter-

an Pepe tested positive for

# Man Utd hold talks with Ajax coach Erik ten Hag over manager's job

Manchester United have held "pos-itive" talks with Ajax coach Erik ten Hag about the vacant manager's job at Old Trafford, it was reported on Wednesday

Ralf Rangnick has been in charge of the misfiring Premier League giants on an interim basis since Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was sacked in November after

nearly three years in charge. Sky Sports said the talks with Ten Hag had been "positive", reporting that club chiefs were believed to be impressed by his vision. But it is understood to be too early to talk about

ERIK TEN HAG, WHO TOOK OVER AT AJAX IN 2017, WON THE DUTCH LEAGUE TITLE IN 2019 AND 2021 AND HIS TEAM ARE CURRENTLY TWO POINTS CLEAR OF **PSV EINDHOVEN AT** THE TOP OF THE TABLE



Other names in the frame include

Paris Saint-Germain boss Mauricio Pochettino, Sevilla manager Julen Lopetegui and Spain coach Luis

Chelsea boss Thomas Tuchel was mentioned as a possible candidate due to the turmoil at the London club following sanctions imposed on Russian owner Roman Abramovich but he has reaffirmed his commitment to the

Ten Hag, who took over at Ajax in 2017, won the Dutch league title in 2019 and 2021 and his team are currently two points clear of PSV

The 52-year-old's contract at Ajax runs until 2023 but United have good links with the Dutch club, where for-

mer goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar is chief executive. Whoever takes over at Old Trafford will have a major rebuilding job, with a clutch of senior players

including Paul Pogba, Jesse Lingard and Edinson Cavani all out of contract at the end of the season. The future of 37-year-old Cristiano

Ronaldo, who rejoined United in August, has also been the subject of widespread speculation after the club's disappointing season.

### United and Everton. "It's a huge honour for me to

Manchester United great Wayne Rooney and former Arsenal captain Patrick Vieira were on Wednesday inducted into the Premier League Hall of Fame. The pair are the ninth and

10th players named in the select group, joining David Beckham, Steven Gerrard, Dennis Bergkamp, Frank Lampard, Roy Keane, Eric Cantona, Thierry Henry and Alan Shearer. Rooney, currently manager of Championship side Derby, is second on the list of all-time Premier League goalscorers, with 208 goals for Manchester

be named in the Premier League Hall of Fame, alongside an incredible group of players who have already been inducted," said the 36-year-old former

Rooney & Vieira join

PL Hall of Fame

"Growing up, I watched the Premier League as far back as I can remember. My dream was always to become a professional footballer, score goals, and win trophies and I was lucky enough to win the Premier League five times. "I have so many brilliant memories from my years playing for Everton and Manchester United and I'm really proud of what we achieved."

Vieira, now manager of Crystal Palace, played 307 times in the Premier League, winning the competition three times including as captain of the Arsenal "Invincibles" team, who remain the only club to have won the title without losing a game. "Being inducted into the Premier League Hall of Fame is a fantastic achievement," said the French World Cup winner, who finished his playing career at Manchester City.

### UK and Ireland submit Euro 2028 bid The football associations of

L England, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Wales on Wednesday formally submitted their joint bid to host Euro 2028 to European governing body UEFA.

The "Expression of

Interest" comes on deadline day, with The Times in London reporting earlier this week that the UK and Ireland bid was set to be unopposed. A joint statement from the

five associations read: "We believe Euro 2028 would be one of the greatest sporting events ever held in the UK and

"This unprecedented partnership of five associations offers something special to the country's invasion of Ukraine -- and Turkey but so far no other national association has confirmed an intention The UK and Ireland aban-

interest from Russia -- before

UK and Ireland."

doned plans to bid for the 2030 World Cup last month in favour of going for Euro 2028. UEFA, which could

expand the tournament to 32 teams, is expected to make a formal decision on April 7.

# No 'added advantage' of playing in Mumbai for MI, says Rohit

umbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma on -Wednesday said they will have no "added advantage" of playing their IPL matches in the city's three grounds as many in the "relatively new team" have not played a single game here in last two years.

The IPL-15 begins at the Wankhede Stadium with a clash between Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders on Saturday.

"I hope you saw the auction, relatively new team, lot of new guys have come into the team, so I don't believe in added advantage because these guys, like lot of the guys 70 (or) 80 percent of the squad has not played in Bombay before," Rohit said at a virtual press conference.

"So there is no such thing as added advantage," the five-time IPL winning captain added.

The league phase of the IPL will be held in Mumbai and Pune. Mumbai have been playing their home games at the Wankhede Stadium since the start of the tournament in

"Only myself, Surya (Suryakumar Yadav), (Kieron) Pollard, Ishan (Kishan), (Jasprit) Bumrah have played in Bombay a lot. Others have not played, so there is no such thing as added advantage," he reiter-

ated.
"We all are playing in years, we Bombay after two years, we have not played a single game in Mumbai, in fact the other franchises have played in Bombay last year, we didn't get to play, so no advantage," Rohit

#### SKY TO JOIN AFTER GETTING CLEARANCE

Rohit also said that batter Suryakumar is still undergoing rehab at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru and would join the team after getting clearance from there.

"Surva is at NCA at the moment, he is recovering well, he will be here soon and I can't give you his availability now, whether he will be available for first game or not, but we are trying to get him as soon as possible, once we have the



#### 25% crowd allowed inside stadiums

PTI NEW DELHI

The 15th edition of the Indian Premier League, which is set to begin in Mumbai on Saturday, will witness 25 per cent crowd attendance in stadiums, the organisers said on Wednesdav.

The lucrative league gets underway at the Wankhede Stadium on Saturday with champions defending Chennai Super Kings taking on Kolkata Knight Riders.

"This match will be a momentous occasion as the 15th edition of the IPL will welcome fans back to the stadiums after a brief hiatus owing to the pandemic," an IPL release stated.

The matches will be played across stadiums in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai & Pune with an audience occupancy rate of 25% as per COVID-19 protocols," the release added.

clearance from the NCA," said Rohit. Rohit also made it clear that he and Ishan Kishan would open the batting for the fivetime champions.

"I will open the batting. (I have) been doing that in the past, so I am looking forward to open (the batting) with Ishan (Kishan)," he said.

### RR aim is to reclaim IPL title after 13 years: Buttler

been offered to be retained. I've

always enjoyed playing for this franchise and have had some

chise had placed their trust in

me, along with Sanju and Yash

(Yashasvi Jaiswal). There were

a lot of conversations that hap-

pened before the auction, and

we were just focused on trying

to create a strong team, cover-

"Obviously I knew the fran-

really enjoyable memories.

Rajasthan Royals wicket-keeper batter Jos Buttler on Wednesday asserted they have the requisite wherewithal and firepower to end a 13-year-long title drought in the Indian Premier League, beginning here

on Saturday.

Buttler, who has been retained by inaugural IPL champions alongside skipper Sanju Samson and Yashasvi Jaiswal, said he is fresh, re-energised after the injury-forced break and is desperate to contribute to the team's goal this year. "It's a really exciting time for the team you know, to start a new cycle and build a new team. The aim here is to win the IPL, and I can't wait to contribute to that," Buttler said.

"We are delighted to have so many great players in the Óbviously, (Ravichandran) Ashwin and (Yuzvendra) Chahal are two of the best spinners in the world, and with a great pace attack, I think it's really exciting.

"Then we've got ourselves a strong batting line-up, along with great all-round options, so I think it's going to be a really exciting IPL for us," added the 31-year-old.

Buttler said he was "quite flattered" after he was retained by RR. "There were only a certain number of players that ing all bases that you need to could stay with the franchise so win the tournament," he said. it was quite flattering to have

With a lot of new faces in the RR squad this year, Buttler is expecting to connect with some special cricketers in the upcoming season.

"I'm also looking forward to connecting with a lot of people, especially Chahal. I've played against him a few times, and he seems to be that fun character in the team. So, I'm looking forward to having him on my

### Jadeja back to No 1 in **ICC** Test all-rounders

place to Holder last week. But the two players have once again interchanged places with Jadeja back on top with 385 Jadeja's compatriot Ravichandran Ashwin held on to his third place among all-rounders and continued to be second in the bowlers' Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who had jumped six spots last week,

remained static on fourth in the bowling list. India skipper Rohit, the country's top-ranked batter, fell a spot down to seventh in the latest Test rankings for

While former India skipper Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant remained static on the ninth and 10th place respec-

tively.
Pakistan skipper Babar
Azam, who was at his glorious the second Test of the series in Karachi, gained three spots to move up to No 5 in the rank-

Other star performers with the bat from the same match - Mohammad Rizwan and Usman Khawaja - have also taken a massivé leap.

Rizwan has moved up six spots, to be joint No 11 alongside David Warner after his unbeaten knock of 104 in the second innings. Khawaja, who scored 160 and 44 in Karachi, moved up eleven spots to No

In the ODI chart, Kohli retained his second spot even as Rohit moved down a rung to be fourth among batters.

#### Mandhana, Bhatia rise in rankings, Mithali slips

**▼**ndia's Smriti Mandhana and **■**Yastika Bhatia moved up to the 10th and 39th spots respectively in the recently-released ICC Women's ODI Player Rankings, but skipper Mithali Raj's descent in the batters' chart continued as she dropped to eighth position.

Star opener Mandhana, who played modest knocks of 35, 10 and 30 in India's previous three matches in the ongoing ICC Women's World Cup, climbed up one place to enter the top 10 with a rating of 663. Bhatia's impres-

sive run was also reflected in the

rankings issued on Tuesday as she moved up eight places to the 39th spot. The left-hander had scored back-to-back half centuries against Australia and Bangladesh in India's previous

Mithali, who has slipped five places in the past two weeks, has dropped one more spot to be joint eighth alongside New Zealand's

Satterthwaite. In the bowlers chart, India pacer Pooja Vastrakar has risen 13 spots and is currently placed 56th while veteran Jhulan Goswami dropped a rung to

# Shreyas Iyer is a born leader: David Hussey

rolkata Knight Riders mentor David Hussey feels new skipper Shreyas Iyer has a good cricketing brain and has proved his skills as a leader during his stint as Delhi

Iyer, who led Delhi Capitals to the final in 2020, was bought by KKR for ₹12.25 crore at the mega auction last month.

He was named captain by KKR team management ahead of pacer Pat Cummins who leads the Australian Test side.

"Shreyas is a born leader, just the way he walks around, he commands respect. Knowing Pat (Cummins) really well, he would be a good deputy and would also lead from the front," Hussey said during a virtual press conference on Wednesday.

"But the way Shreyas has captained in the past for Delhi, he has a very good cricket brain and a nice vision of how to play the game and I think he will express himself really well. I think it's a smart move from Brendon (McCullum) and KKR manage-



ment." Iyer has been in sensational form recently for India.

Asked Hussey how he would go about coaching the 27-year-old, he replied: "The best coaching is to just leave the good players alone, let them go where they work. "He is in rare form at the moment. I

don't know him, I'm getting to know him but he comes across as true leader and a person who knows his game really really well. KKR were dealt a blow after T20 specialist Alex Hales withdrew from the tournament citing bubble fatigue.

Adding to KKR's misery is that the Australian duo of Cummins and Aaron Finch, who was roped in as Hales' replacement, are expected to miss the team's first few games as they are touring Pakistan.

"It is a concern to not have your best players available but saying that international cricket is paramount. They miss the first five games but they'll hit the ground running, match fit. Both are quality players. Hopefully they can perform as per the game plan," Hussey said.

# CSK to miss Moeen for IPL opener due to visa issues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Defending champions Chennai Super Kings will miss the services of Moeen Ali for their IPL-opener as the star England all-rounder is yet to receive his India visa for competing in the lucrative T20 tournament, beginning in Mumbai on Saturday.

CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan confirmed the development

"It is almost certain that Moeen Ali wil miss the first game. He has still not got the visa. We are on it as well as BCCI. Hope it is sorted in a day or two," Viswanathan said.

"It is disappointing that he has not been able to join us. They follow set procedures for players with Pakistan descent. That looks like the reason (for delay)."His grandfather migrated to



England from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir but Moeen is born in England and is a frequent visitor to India.

CSK, four-time IPL champions, will take on last edition's runner-up side Kolkata Knight Riders in the opening match of the this year's IPL at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Saturday. Viswanathan said even if he manages to reach India by Thursday, Ali will be unavailable for the opener because of the quarantine protocol laid down by the IPL organisers.

"There is three-day mandatory quarantine which Moeen has to undergo before joining the IPL bio-bubble. So he will be out of the first game even if he gets his visa today or tomorrow."

Because of his fine all-round show which helped the team lift its fourth IPL title, Moeen was retained by CSK alongside inspirational captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja and Ruturaj Gaikwad.

Moeen scored 357 runs from 15 innings for CSK in the IPL last year, while also taking six wickets from 15 games with his off-spin bowling.

#### DEEPAK TO MISS A GOOD NO OF

Besides Moeen, CSK will also miss their star pacer Deepak Chahar, who has been ruled out of the first half of the IPL due to a right quadriceps injury which he sustained during the third and final T20 match against the West Indies in Kolkata last month. Asked about Chahar's progress, Viswanathan said: "He will remain in the NCA until he gets fitness clearance from the BCCI."

#### Andrew Tye joins Lucknow Super Giants

 $I^{
m ndia's}$  Ravindra Jadeja reclaimed the top spot from

West Indies' Jason Holder in

the latest ICC Test rankings

for all-rounders released on

Wednesday.

Jadeja had risen to No 1

after his 175 not out and nine

wickets in the first Test against

Sri Lanka in Mohali earlier

**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

PTI DUBAI

this month.

ucknow Super Giants have signed Landrew Tye as a replacement for the injured England pacer Mark Wood for the upcoming Indian Premier League, it was announced on Wednesday

The announcement was made via an IPL media advisory.

Wood suffered an elbow injury during England's first Test against

West Indies earlier this month. Tye has represented Australia in 32 T20Is and picked 47 wickets. The right-arm pacer, who has so far played 27 IPL matches and has picked 40 wickets, will join LSG for the price of ₹1 crore.

LSG - who will be making their IPL debut this season - will begin their IPL 2022 campaign on March 28 when they take on Gujarat Titans at the Wankhede Stadium here.

The IPL-15 begins with a match between Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders on March 26.

Tye, who was with Rajasthan Royals earlier, had left the IPL midway last season due to personal reasons.

# Cummins, Starc give advantage to Aus B'desh win ODI series in SA



**AP** ■ LAHORE

Pakistan was 268 all out against the persistent pace of Australia captain Pat Cummins and impeccable reverse swing of Mitchell Starc to concede a massive 123-run lead on Wednesday in the third and final Test.

In a sensational collapse after tea on Day 3, Pakistan lost seven wickets for 41 runs - the last four wickets without adding a run - as Cummins finished with 5-56 and Starc took 4-36.

Australia had stretched its lead to 134 runs by reaching 11-0 by stumps with Usman Khawaja not out on 7 and David Warner unbeaten on 4.

In-form opening batter Abdullah Shafique (81) and veteran Azhar Ali (78) had carried Pakistan to 170-1 and denied Australia a breakthrough in the first session after resuming on 90-1 before the visitors took control of the series deciding test.

Nathan Lyon (1-95), who dried up the runs with his marathon spell of 30

overs on Day 3, provided the opening when he found the outside edge of Shafique's bat after lunch to end a patient 150-run stand.

Shafique's prolific run in the series has seen the opening batter score his maiden Test hundred in the drawn first Test in Rawalpindi before his patient 96 in Karachi led Pakistan to force a

Shafique defied Australia with yet another patient knock off 228 balls which featured 11 fours before Lyon struck in the fifth over after lunch and successfully overturned umpire Aleem Dar's not out decision through a television referral.

With the second new ball only seven overs old, Cummins took a spectacular return catch to dismiss Azhar in his homecoming test match as Pakistan was restricted at 227-3 at tea.

Azhar, playing in his 94th Test match but for the first time in his hometown of Lahore, became the fifth Pakistani batter to complete 7,000 test runs when he reached 74 by sweeping hard at Lyon to deep square leg for a

Former test captains Younis Khan (10,099), Javed Miandad (8,832), Inzamam-ul-Haq (8,829) and Mohammad Yousuf (7,530) are the other Pakistan batters to score more than 7,000 Test runs.

**AP** ■ CENTURION

askin Ahmed and Tamim Taskin Allined and Inc.

Iqbal starred as Bangladesh sealed an historic series triumph with a nine-wicket win in the third one-day international against South Africa at SuperSport Park in Centurion on Wednesday.

Fast bowler Taskin took five for 35 as South Africa were bowled out for 154, their lowest total against Bangladesh.

Visiting captain Tamim then scored 87 not out off 82 balls to take Bangladesh to victory with 23.3 overs to spare, sharing a century opening partnership with Liton Das (48).

Bangladesh won the World Cup Super League series by two matches to one, consolidating their place at the top of the

South Africa were left languishing in ninth place and in danger of missing one of the eight automatic qualifying places for the 2023 Cricket World Cup.

seven overs. Bangladesh had lost all 19 matches across all formats against South Africa on their home soil before winning the



series opener by 38 runs at the same venue on Friday.

South Africa won the second match by seven wickets in Johannesburg but Bangladesh dominated Wednesday's series decider.

South Africa made a fast start, with Janneman Malan and Quinton de Kock putting on 46 for the first wicket inside

But Taskin bowled superbly after off-spinner Mehidy Hasan made the first breakthrough by dismissing

Taskin, 26, produced his best performance since taking five for 28 on debut against India on debut in Mirpur in 2014. He bowled at a lively pace in three spells and troubled all the batsmen With South Africa defend-

ing a low total, Keshav Maharaj dropped Litton Das at backward point off Kagiso Rabada in the first over of the Bangladesh innings before Das had scored. Das and Tamim took full

advantage of the let-off, putting on 127 for the first wicket.