

WORLD 5

PAK INTERIOR MINISTER ADVISES IMRAN
TO CALL ELECTIONS AFTER BUDGET

MONEY 6

'INDIA CAN GROW AT 8%
FOR NEXT 20 YEARS'

SPORT 7

KKR BEAT CSK BY SIX
WICKETS IN IPL OPENERPublished From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL
BHUBANESWAR RANCHI
RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD
VIJAYWADA

NEW DELHI, SUNDAY MARCH 27, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹4



sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



Post poll win Govt extends free foodgrain scheme

PMGKAY to go on for another 6 months until Sept; cost Govt ₹80k cr: Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday extended the free foodgrain programme 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)', for six months till September this year to provide relief to the poor. A decision in this regard was taken in a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

According to experts, the free foodgrain scheme meant for the poor was a trump card for the Modi Government in the recently-concluded Assembly polls in five States, especially in Uttar Pradesh.

Announcing the decision, Union Food Minister Piyush Goyal tweeted that the Government has extended the scheme till September 2022. The extension of the scheme despite the end of the Covid-19 pandemic shows the Modi Government's sensitivity towards the poor, he tweeted.



Under the PMGKAY programme, which has been running since March 2020, the Government will distribute 1,003 lakh tonnes of foodgrain at a cost of ₹3.4 lakh crore to the exchequer.

Applauding the Centre for launching the PMGKAY, a Parliamentary Standing Committee report on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, tabled in the Lok Sabha last week, asked the Food Ministry to make an

"objective assessment" and find out to what extent the scheme has helped beneficiaries and for how long it needs to be continued. The committee said the Ministry had "not carried out or proposed a study or an objective assessment" of the foodgrains scheme launched in 2020 as the Government's economic response to the Covid pandemic.

In March 2020, the Centre had launched PMGKAY, to provide free foodgrain to over

80 crore beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) as part of its efforts to reduce the hardships of people during the coronavirus pandemic. The Centre provides 5 kg of foodgrain per month for free under this scheme.

The additional free grain is over and above the normal quota provided under the NFSA at a highly subsidised rate of ₹2-3 per kg.

Continued on Page 2

Cong to make a din over mehngai

Asks people to beat drums against hike in fuel price after State polls; 3-phase stir from Mar 31

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress has come up with an innovative way to highlight the issue of price rise by involving the common man in a countrywide protest.

The Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said on Saturday that party workers and the common people would protest outside their homes and at public places on March 31 with the beating of drums and bells and the garlanding of gas cylinders.

"On March 31 at 11 AM the people will protest outside their homes and public places by garlanding gas cylinders and beating drums, bells and other instruments to draw the attention of the 'deaf' BJP Government towards the insurmountable increase in prices of gas, petrol, and diesel," Surjewala said.

Attacking the Narendra Modi Government over the fuel price hike soon after the Assembly elections got over, the Congress on Saturday announced a three-phased campaign against price escalation in the country. The party named the countrywide campaign as 'Mehngai Mukh Bharat Abhiyan' from March 31 to April 7.

The decision was taken at the meeting of State Congress chiefs, General Secretaries, in-



Indian Youth Congress (IYC) members stage a protest over the rising inflation and hike in prices of petrol, diesel and LPG cylinders, in New Delhi on Saturday

PTI

charges of States including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra which was chaired by Organisation General Secretary KC Venugopal.

The meeting, convened in the backdrop of the failures of the party in the Assembly polls, also discussed the membership drive of the party besides the current political situation in the country. It was decided to reach out to leaders like those from the 'Group of 23' who have

been critical of the party's leadership during the last couple of years. The party will organise a 'Mehngai Mukh Bharat' dharna and march at the district level from April 2-4. On April 7, protest marches will be held at State headquarters.

Pointing out that the fuel prices were hiked again on Saturday - the fourth increase in five days - Surjewala said the last one week has been a nightmare for the budget of every

household.

"The daily increases in prices have proved the dictum for the Narendra Modi Government - 'fleece the people, fill coffers'," he said.

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 80 paise a litre on Saturday as oil firms recoup losses from holding rates during the period prior to the recently-concluded Assembly elections.

Continued on Page 2

AAP Govt's ₹75,800 cr Budget aims to create 20 L jobs in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the focus to create 20 lakh jobs in five years by setting up an electronic city and promoting the night economy and retail and wholesale markets in the national Capital, Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia presented a 'Rozgar Budget' in the Assembly on Saturday with an outlay of ₹75,800 crore for the financial year 2022-23.

Presenting the budget for the eighth-consecutive year, Sisodia, who also holds the finance portfolio, said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government will spend ₹4,500 crore in the next five years to generate 20 lakh jobs and ₹800 crore will be set aside in the 2022-23 budget for the purpose.

Under its 'Rozgar Budget', the Arvind Kejriwal Government will organise shopping festivals to promote retail and wholesale markets in the city, seeking to make these places attractive for tourists and



Delhi Dy CM and Finance Minister Manish Sisodia with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal before presenting the annual budget 2022-23 in Delhi Assembly, in New Delhi on Saturday

PTI

create jobs to boost the economy. An amount of ₹250 crore has been allocated for this in the 2022-23 budget.

"The Rozgar Budget will take the economy of Delhi on the path of progress and generate lakhs of employment opportunities," he asserted.

The budget size for the next financial year is 9.86 per cent higher than that of the previous year — ₹69,000 crore — Sisodia said, adding that Delhi's economy is recovering gradually from the impact of Covid-19.

Continued on Page 2

Nepalese PM to visit Varanasi on India trip in April

To meet Modi and discuss ways to boost ties with New Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Nepal will review and find ways to further enhance their historical ties during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba here on April 2. It will be his first foreign visit after assuming charge.

Besides his official engagements in New Delhi, Deuba is also scheduled to visit Varanasi during his three-day tour commencing April 1, sources said here on Saturday.

During the talks, the two



leaders will take stock of their centuries old bilateral relations, economic partnership, trade, power, connectivity, development, connectivity and people to people links.

Incidentally, this is Deuba's fifth term as Prime Minister and he last visited India in 2017. Recently, he had thanked Modi and the Indian Government for safely evacuating Nepalese citizens from war-torn Ukraine.

This visit is in the tradition of periodic high-level exchanges between the two countries.

Continued on Page 2

India to resume regular int'l flights from today

3 vacant-seats rule, PPE kits for air crew of foreign flights dropped

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Civil Aviation on Saturday announced to remove the restriction of keeping three seats vacant on international flights and the requirement of a complete PPE kit for crew members as Indian skies open for regular international flights from Sunday.

While Indian carriers are prepared for normal international services, various foreign airlines, including Emirates, Virgin Atlantic and LOT Polish, have also announced plans about their services to and from India. As many countries are relaxing their Covid-19 restrictions by the day, trav-

ellers are still advised to check the advisories before travel.

As part of the relaxation, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) said airlines need not keep three seats vacant on international flights for medical emergencies and security personnel at airports can resume pat-down search of passengers. However, wearing of protective face masks and maintenance of hand hygiene/sanitiser is still mandatory at airports and on flights, the MoCA said.

"Airlines may carry a few additional PPE protective gears, sanitiser and N-95 masks, to handle any respiratory infections related to cases on air, for passengers as well as the crew," the Ministry further noted. However, use of face mask and maintenance of hand hygiene/sanitiser continues to be mandatory," it added in the order.

The MoCA on March 8 announced that international scheduled commercial flights to

and from India will resume on March 27, after a 25-month ban. The Government on March 8 notification has allowed all scheduled International commercial flights to operate at 100 per cent capacity beginning March 27.

The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in the national Capital, which is also the country's largest airport, expects international flight departures to witness a significant jump in the first week of April after the resumption of regular international operations. An assessment carried out by the airport operator, Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), showed that there could be 1,029 international departures this summer, a slight increase from the average of 994 international departures in the winter of 2019. The number of international departures in the winter of 2021 was 607.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

'PARIKSHA PE CHARCHA TALKS OF EXAMS, LIFE'

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the Parikshape Charcha (PPC) interaction gives one an opportunity to talk about exams and life.

'BJP DOING POLITICS OVER PANDITS' EXODUS'

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday attacked the BJP for 'doing politics' over Kashmiri Pandits' exodus.

CEC LAMENTS WOMEN'S POOR PRESENCE IN PARL

New Delhi: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sushil Chandra on Saturday lamented the lack of representation of women in Parliament.

BIRBHUM KILLINGS: CBI STARTS PROBE

Rampurhat: A team of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) reached Bogtui village in West Bengal's Birbhum district on Saturday and started its investigation into the violence.

Clip of girl offering namaz in classroom goes viral

MP varsity orders inquiry after Right wing activists submit video

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

After a video of a Muslim girl offering namaz in a hijab inside a classroom went viral, the Dr Harisingh Gour University in Madhya Pradesh has ordered an inquiry into the incident. A complaint along with the video was submitted to the Central university in MP's Sagar district by a Right-wing organisation, the Hindu Jagran Manch, demanding action against the students by the university.

University Registrar Santosh Sahgaura said a complaint has been received along with a video clip. "A five-

member committee has been constituted to look into this matter. The committee will submit a report within three days and further action will be taken based on this report," he said.

The University's Media Officer Vivek Jaiswal said that there is no formal dress code for students on the campus of the educational institution but students must attend classes in basic ethical dressing.

The Hindu Jagran Manch's Sagar unit president Umesh Saraf alleged that the girl in the video has been attending lectures wearing hijab for a long time.

He further said that such religious activities should not be allowed in educational institutions. She was coming in hijab for long but she was spotted offering Namaz inside the class on Friday afternoon,

he said, alleging that this is objectionable as educational institutions are a place for every religion.

"A complaint in this regard has been submitted to the vice-chancellor and the registrar," he said while referring to the Karnataka High Court verdict of March 15, where it dismissed the petitions seeking permission to wear hijab or headscarf inside classrooms, observing that it is not a part of the essential religious practice in Islam.

Reacting to the incident, university's vice chancellor Neelima Gupta confirmed that a probe has been ordered into it. "We have notified a committee to probe the matter and directed all students that since this is a Central university, all religious acts are to be done in personal premises/ religious places," she said.

Centre to put man-animal conflict in 'disaster' category

Move will help victims get relief faster

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a cue from the Uttar Pradesh Government, the Center is set to bring man-animal conflict under the ambit of "disaster" category as is being done for the cases of fire and floods. The idea is to ensure early resolutions of such incidents in a coordinated manner at the district level across the country.

The Yogi Adityanath Government in Uttar Pradesh in 2018 had made man-animal conflict a "State Declared Disaster" bringing such incidents under the cover of the State Disaster Response Fund



(SDRF) to ensure better coordination and relief during such mishaps in the State.

As per the State Government order, faster monetary relief is enabled to the victims of attack of wild animals. As per the provisions of the order, in cases of human death due to man-animal conflict, relief of ₹5 lakh is doled out to

the family of deceased while the disbursement of compensation for injury is provided in accordance to SDRF guidelines. It also ensured that the amount of ₹1 lakh per death would be arranged by the State forest department from its own budget to the revenue department.

Continued on Page 2

Biden calls Putin a butcher while visiting refugees in Warsaw

Warsaw: In a move that is sure to further sour already tenuous relations between America and Russia, US President Joe Biden on Saturday called Russian President Vladimir Putin a "butcher" after visiting with refugees in Warsaw, Poland.

This shockingly intense criticism of the Russian leader's actions in Ukraine, that have seen millions of refugees flee to neighbouring countries, came on a day when authorities in Ukraine's western Lviv region on Saturday reported three powerful explosions near the regional capital Lviv.

During the visit to Warsaw, Biden was asked by reporters what seeing the Ukrainian refugees at Stadion Narodowy made him think of as he deals with Putin every day. Biden responded: "He's a butcher."

Continued on Page 2

Chaos, confusion mar Silver Line Rail works in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The agitation against the 530-km Silver Line semi High Speed Rail Project of the Kerala Government took a new turn on Saturday morning. People whose lands and houses would be taken away to lay the rail tracks pulled out the survey stones installed in their plot of lands and threw them into nearby ponds and rivers much to the shock of the K-Rail authorities.

The agitation against the project reached its peak in the districts of Kozhikode, Malappuram, Thrissur, Ernakulam, Kottayam and Alappuzha as the Silver Line Rail passes through the farmlands in these regions. The laying of survey stones came to a halt on Saturday as more than 7,000 private buses in the State remained off the roads which brought Kera to a grinding halt. Many Government offices in the

districts had to function with skeleton staff as most employees could not make it to their places of work because of agitation by bus owners.

The last week saw police highhandedness against women and children who demonstrated and opposed the laying of survey stones as part of the proposed rail project. For the first time in the State, thousands of women, mainly home makers and farm labourers came out in the open questioning the propriety of laying survey stones without the permission or concurrence of the land owners.

In an embarrassment to the Government, the Revenue Department as well as the K-Rail (the holding company of Silver Line Rail) declared on Saturday that they have not authorised anybody to lay the survey stones. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan toned down

his stance since his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday and announced that the survey stones were being laid as part of the social impact analysis.

But E Sreedharan, former chairman, Delhi Metro, told reporters at Ponnani that there was no need to lay survey stones to conduct social impact analysis. "This is a ploy to acquire the land under the pretext of SIA, I have headed many projects in the past and from my experience I can tell that there is no need of laying survey stones for the SIA," said E Sreedharan.

Sreedharan pointed out scientific studies which concluded that the soil structure of Kerala was not compatible or suitable for semi speed rail lines. "If they still want to go forward with the project, the Silver Line would lead to major mishaps in future," he said.

The claim by Pinarayi Vijayan that the project would cost Rs 64,000 crore was corrected by the CPI(M) Kerala Secretary Kodyeri Balakrishnan. "It is based on earlier estimation. Now it would cost Rs 86,000 crore," said Balakrishnan while speaking to reporters.

The CPI(M) has launched a massive awareness programme all over Kerala to convince the people about the necessity of the Silver Line Rail. Trained youths belonging to the DYFI, the party's youth wing are on a house to house campaign mission to convince the people about the benefits the project would bring to the State.

They call on all houses along the proposed Silver Line Route, distribute literature about the advantages of the project and also provide food packets for the needy.

Yogi extends free ration distribution for 3 months

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In the first decision of his 2.0 Government, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced to continue the scheme of providing free ration to 15 crore poor people of the state for the next three months.

Free ration was claimed to be the game changer for the Bharatiya Janata Party in the UP assembly polls as the beneficiaries whom the party called 'labharthi' helped it win the 2022 elections with a resounding victory.

A formal decision in this regard was taken in the first meeting of the Yogi cabinet 2.0 held at Lok Bhavan on Saturday.

"The first decision of the newly-formed government in Uttar Pradesh is dedicated to 15 crore poor people," Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said while making this announcement.

The scheme was slated to end this month and has been extended for next three months. This is the third extension of this scheme.

As per the scheme, the Antyodaya card holders will get 35 kilograms of free food grains along with 1 kg dal, 1 litre refined oil, 1 kg iodised salt and 1 kg sugar per month. The other ration card holders will get 5 kgs free food grains per unit along with 1 kg dal, 1 litre refined oil and 1 kg iodised salt.

The state government will spend around Rs 3,270 crore on this scheme.

Yogi said that during the novel coronavirus pandemic period, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had started the Anna Yojana with the aim of providing support to every citizen.

From April 2020 till March 2022, about 80 crore people of the country were getting direct benefit of the scheme. At the

same time, the state government had implemented the free ration distribution scheme in addition to the scheme of the Central government.

Yogi said the free ration scheme had been very useful in addressing the problem of starvation arising out of the pandemic even as the novel coronavirus was controlled with the efforts of free tests, treatment and vaccines.

Under the scheme, Antyodaya and eligible household card holders comprising 15 crore people of the state were getting a double dose of free ration under the double-engine government of the BJP.

"Considering that the period of this scheme was ending in March 2022, in the first cabinet meeting of the new government, it has been decided to extend it for the next three months till June 22," the chief minister said.

Emphasising on transparent ration distribution system, the chief minister said that e-POS machines had been installed at 80,000 fair price shops in the state due to which distribution of ration to the right beneficiary was possible.

It may be recalled that from April 2020, apart from the Central government, the state government was providing free ration to 15 crore poor people from its own resources. Under the scheme, 35 kg of food grains was being given to Antyodaya card holders by the state government, while the eligible households were getting five kg of food grains per unit. Apart from this, from December 2021 onwards, the state government also provided food grains as well as one litre refined oil, one kg pulse and one kg salt while one kg sugar was also being provided to Antyodaya category families.

Shivpal: Not invited to SP MLAs' meeting

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) president Shivpal Singh Yadav on Saturday created a stir by saying "he has not been invited to the meeting of the Samajwadi party MLAs".

Shivpal Yadav had contested the recent assembly election on the symbol of SP.

The Samajwadi Party, however, clarified that the meeting of the MLAs and leaders of the allies of the SP would be held here on March 28 and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav would preside over the meeting.

The SP had convened the meeting of its 111 newly-elected MLAs to elect the leader of its legislative party and review its performance in the recently concluded Uttar Pradesh assembly polls and plan for the upcoming legislative council polls.

The polling for the UP Legislative Council from the local bodies constituencies will be held on April 9.

"I was not invited to the SP meeting. I waited for two days and cancelled all my programmes for this meeting but

I was not invited. I am an MLA of Samajwadi Party but still I was not invited (to the meeting). I am going to Etawah today," Shivpal Yadav said.

Responding to Shivpal Yadav, SP state president Naresh Uttam Patel said, "Shivpal Yadav is the leader of an ally party. Alliance leaders have been called for a meeting on March 28."

In the recently-held polls, the Bharatiya Janata Party retained power in the state by winning 255 of the 403 assembly seats, while the SP won 111 seats.

After the results, Shivpal had blamed the BJP for their defeat. "Our (SP alliance) seats and vote percentage have increased in the election. The people of the state did not defeat the SP. It was because of BJP's dishonesty and cunningness that we lost," he had alleged.

Earlier, the meeting of the SP legislators was scheduled to be held on March 21, but it was rescheduled to March 26 because of the nominations for the legislative council elections, SP chief spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary had said.

The presence of all MLAs and MLCs was mandatory.

Akhilesh appointed leader of Opp in UP Assembly

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav was elected leader of the SP Legislature Party during a meeting of newly-elected party MLAs in Lucknow on Saturday.

With this, Akhilesh Yadav was appointed leader of the Opposition in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly.

Principal Secretary (UP assembly) Pradeep Kumar Dubey issued an official notification stating that Akhilesh Yadav has been appointed leader of opposition in UP assembly with effect from March 26.

The order has been issued as per the Section 2 (h) of UP Legislature (Members Emoluments and Pensions) Act, 1980.

The 111 legislators of the SP unanimously elected Akhilesh Yadav as the leader of Samajwadi Party Legislature Party. On Tuesday, Akhilesh had decided to retain the Karhal assembly seat and give up his Lok Sabha membership from the Azamgarh constituency.

SP state president Naresh Uttam said at a press conference after the meeting that

Akhilesh Yadav had been elected leader of the SP Legislature Party. He said the proposal to elect him SPLP leader was made by senior MLA of the party, Awadhesh Prasad, and it was supported by all elected MLAs.

He said Akhilesh Yadav would soon meet leaders of SP allies to discuss the issues that the opposition parties would raise in the assembly.

"The MLAs have given their blessings to Akhileshji to raise the issues faced by the people in the assembly. He will oppose the wrong policies of the government as per democratic principles. In the past, the Bharatiya Janata Party has cheated the people of the state and hence, the tally of seats of the BJP has been reduced as compared to the 2017 assembly elections. The people have shown confidence in the leadership of Akhilesh Yadav," Patel said.

A first-time MLA, Yadav resigned as Azamgarh MP earlier this week after he was elected legislator from family stronghold Karhal in UP's Mainpuri district. Sources said the former chief minister intended to take on the BJP on the floor of the Vidhan Sabha

with an eye on the 2027 polls in the politically significant state.

SP was the main challenger to the BJP in this year's assembly election. While Akhilesh's party finished a distant second, winning 111 seats in the 403-member assembly, it managed to record a massive jump in its vote share and clocked its best show in state polls ever.

Sources say Akhilesh Yadav's strategists believe it is a necessity not a choice to keep the party's vote share intact and also to avoid the perception that the SP chief, the party's biggest vote-getter, is "running away" after his party's defeat.

The party's top leaders fear that if their chief is not proactive in state politics, the Muslim and Yadav voters, who apparently backed the party in the polls, may drift to other parties.

Akhilesh Yadav has termed his resignation as MP a necessary sacrifice. "Crores of people of UP have given us a moral victory in the assembly polls. To honour this, I will represent Karhal and always remain committed to the progress of Azamgarh," he said in a tweet after submitting his resignation to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

Prepare action plans for next 100 days: Yogi to depts

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In pursuit of establishing an administration of the people, by the people, for the people, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, just a day after taking oath for his second consecutive term, directed officials to be accountable towards the people of the State.

In a meeting with Government officials in Lucknow on Saturday, the Chief Minister asked all departments to prepare action plans for the next 100 days, six months and a year.

The officials will present the action plans to the council of ministers, according to the department-wise timetable, which will be announced soon.

At the high-level meeting organised at Yojana Bhawan, Yogi said: "It is really important that all officers memorise every word of the Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra announced by the Bharatiya Janata Party for the UP Assembly election and start working towards achieving the goals."

The chief minister even commended officials saying that they made sincere efforts

to convert all the promises of BJP's 2017 Lok Sankalp Patra into reality. "As a result, people experienced a positive change in Uttar Pradesh after decades," he said.

Yogi further added, "It is my target to make Uttar Pradesh the No 1 state in the country and the state's economy the No 1 economy. The roadmap for the future should be prepared with teamwork and inter-departmental coordination. For this, 'Team UP' will have to be engaged with full commitment."

The chief minister also pointed out that to make the state a \$1-trillion-economy, ten primary sectors had to be identified. Yogi said to ensure proper functioning and implementation of all sectors and schemes, the chief secretary would hold weekly reviews while he himself would hold fortnightly reviews.

Emphasising on efficiency, transparency and punctuality in the functioning of the government, the chief minister expressed the need to enhance inter-departmental coordination along with technology for the better implementation of

schemes. While instructing officials to be sensitive towards the citizens, he said, "Our government is determined for 'Antyodaya'. You must ensure that villages, poor, farmers, women, and youth are at the centre of every policy of the government."

"In the first term, our main challenge was deep-rooted malpractices. But we succeeded in establishing good governance in the last five years. In the next five years, our competition will be with the works of our first term.

Now, our competition with ourselves will start to further strengthen good governance. In such a situation, the establishment of good governance will have to be carried forward with more strength," Yogi said.

The chief minister added that his government has had a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption since its inception and it should be effectively continued.

"In order to make the reach of the government schemes more widespread, technology should also be included on a large-scale," he said.

UP CM's directive to fill up vacant posts

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government will soon launch a drive to fill vacant posts in various State Government departments, boards and corporations. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has issued directions in this regard to all senior officials in his first meeting post swearing-in.

On Saturday, the Chief Minister said that the process of filling up vacant posts in Government departments

should be completed as soon as possible.

"Take this as a drive and prepare an action plan in this regard," he said.

Yogi stressed that the entire selection process should be done in a fair and transparent manner as was done in the last five years. He was all praise for the officials for setting up high norms of transparency and fairness in the recruitment process.

"My government is committed to fulfilling the promise

of employment as envisaged in the Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra of the Bharatiya Janata Party," he stressed.

In its first term, the Yogi government fulfilled its resolve by giving five lakh government jobs in Uttar Pradesh in the last five years. Yogi's 'Mission Employment' did not slow down even during the COVID-19 pandemic. The process of recruitments was completed in a fair and transparent manner, merit being the sole criterion for recruitment

Biden calls Putin....

From page 1

After trying to downplay a personal rivalry between himself and Putin, Biden has ramped up his rhetoric against the Russian leader over the last ten days. Last week, Biden for the first time called Putin a "war criminal" and then later referred to him as a "murderous dictator, a pure thug who is waging an immoral war against the people of Ukraine." He's also called the Russian invasion of Ukraine "inhuman."

Soon after authorities in Ukraine's western Lviv region on Saturday reported three powerful explosions near the regional capital Lviv and urged residents to take shelter. "There were three powerful explosions near Lviv from the direction of Kryvychtys, now there is an air raid warning, so keep calm and take shelter," said regional Governor Maksym Kozyskyy in an online post, referring to an area in the eastern outskirts of the city.

Cong to make....

From page 1

With three increases beginning from March 22, petrol and diesel prices have gone up by Rs 2.40 a litre. The party accused the Government of earning Rs 26 lakh crore in eight years by increasing the excise duty on petrol and diesel alone. "The people of India have been betrayed, duped and deceived by the Modi Government," Surjewala said. Among others who attended the meeting were Chandy, Mukul Wasnik, Tariq Anwar, Ajay Maken and AICC treasurer Pawan Kumar Bansal.

Centre extends....

From page 1

The scheme has been extended several times with the recent one being until March 2022. Initially in 2020-21, the PMGKAY scheme was announced only for a period of three months of April, May and June 2020 (Phase-I).

Later, the Government extended the scheme from July to November 2020 (Phase-II). With the Covid crisis continuing in 2021-22, the Centre in April 2021 had re-introduced

the scheme for a period of two months of May and June 2021 (Phase-II) and extended it for another five months from July to November 2021 (Phase-IV). The scheme was again extended from December 2021 to March 2022 (Phase-V).

Under the Phases I to V, the Food Ministry had allocated a total of about 759 lakh tonnes of foodgrain to States/UTs, which is equivalent to about Rs 2.6 lakh crore in food subsidy.

AAP Govt's ₹75,800 cr....

From page 1

Chief Minister Kejriwal lauded his deputy for presenting a budget that has "taken care of" every section of the society.

"Many congratulations to Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Manish Sisodia for presenting the 'Rozgar Budget' for Delhi. This budget will create employment on a large scale for youngsters. Every section of Delhi has been taken care of in this budget," he said in a tweet in Hindi "Other States have learnt a lot from the Kejriwal model of governance when it comes to improving Government schools and creating jobs. I am sure that with this 'Rozgar Budget', Delhiites will be benefitted. In the next one or two years, State Governments will also learn from this (Rozgar

Budget) on how, both, the Government and private sectors can provide opportunities for people," Sisodia said during his budget speech.

He said an Artificial Intelligence-based website and a mobile application — "Rozgar Bazaar 2.0" — will be launched with an aim to provide at least one lakh jobs every year to the youngsters of Delhi, especially women.

An electronic city will be set up at Baprola to create 80,000 jobs by attracting big IT companies, Sisodia said, adding that a "food truck policy" will also be introduced under which local delicacies will be promoted. These food trucks will be allowed on the streets from 8 pm to 2 am, a move that is aimed at promoting the night economy in the national Capital.

Nepalese...

From Page 1

It would give an opportunity to both sides to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations, sources said.

An aide of the Nepalese Prime Minister had earlier said Deuba was invited by the Indian Prime Minister. Earlier in January, he was scheduled to travel to India to take part in a business summit in Gujarat. The trip, however, was cancelled after the summit was rescheduled due to growing cases of Covid-19.

Deuba and Modi had met in Glasgow, Scotland, in November last year on the sidelines of the UN climate conference and had "fruitful talks" on many aspects of India-Nepal friendship.

Deuba had thanked his Indian counterpart for providing support to Nepal in essential medical supplies and vaccines in its fight against Covid-

19 pandemic during their first meeting in Glasgow. During the meeting, overall matters of the bilateral relations were discussed. Deuba's visit will take place immediately after Chinese Foreign Minister and State councillor Wang Yi's three-day tour to Nepal from March 25 to March 27. Nepal has recently appointed senior economist Shankar Prasad Sharma as its Ambassador to India.

Wang travelled to Kathmandu after a two-day visit to India where he held talks with his counterpart S Jaishankar on the present situation on the border in Ladakh. It was the first visit by a Chinese Minister to India since trouble erupted on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh nearly two years ago.

Last week, Sri Lankan Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa visited New Delhi and met Modi as well as Jaishankar. He had thanked Modi for the support extended by India for the Sri Lankan economy.

Centre to declare man-animal....

From page 1

Now, the Union Environment Ministry too is planning to toe almost similar the lines, in view of rising man-animal conflicts across the country. A senior official from the Ministry said that steps are underway to declare such incidents as disasters "so that early resolution to such conflicts could be made in a coordinated manner at district level". "Efforts are also being made to evolve a mechanism for formulating a uniform compensation policy for the country and that the inclusion of NDMA into the scheme under the Ministry, during the last three years at least 48 cases of death of wild animals due to electrocutions have been reported for which 99 people have been arrested. This is just one type of several man-animal conflicts reported in the country, the official added.

activities like grazing of cattle, collection of firewood, etc, in forests, which often leads to attack on humans and cattle by the wild animals. "Therefore, work is being carried out for demarcation of forest area and its boundaries and also electric fencing of the boundaries," he pointed out. In fact, a Parliamentary committee led by Rajya Sabha member Jairam Ramesh in its report which was recently submitted in Parliament, also called for creation of grasslands for grazing of cattle outside the forest area to minimise man-animal conflict. As per the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) under the Ministry, during the last three years at least 48 cases of death of wild animals due to electrocutions have been reported for which 99 people have been arrested. This is just one type of several man-animal conflicts reported in the country, the official added.

India to resume....

From page 1

In February, around 76.96 lakh domestic passengers travelled by air, approximately 20 percent more than in January. In a statement on Saturday, IndiGo Chief Commercial Officer Willy Boulter said the airline is keen on resuming international operations back to pre-Covid levels but that will also depend on factors like arrival guidelines of various countries.

"We certainly have plans to open new destinations in the near future, as well as pump up capacity on our existing routes as travel further, opens up. Reaching economies of scale in such a dynamic environment where ATF and other fixed costs are constantly going up, becomes challenging," he said. IndiGo is the country's largest airline.

Gulf carrier Emirates said it would re-introduce pre-pandemic service frequency across

its destinations in the country from April 1. Prior to late March 2020, when the scheduled international services were stopped by India, Emirates was operating 170 weekly flights to nine destinations, including Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata. All these flights are being restored now, starting from April 1, as per the airline.

SriLankan Airlines said it would start operating up to 88-weekly flights to India to match the pre-Covid flight schedule. The airline flies to nine cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kochi, Chennai, and Bangalore.

British carrier Virgin Atlantic would start a second daily service between Delhi and London starting from June 1. Coupled with its service from Mumbai, Virgin Atlantic will offer three daily flights from India, it said on Friday.

DELHI BUDGET

Transport, bridges, roads get ₹9,539 cr

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Finance Minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday proposed ₹9,539 crore for the transport, roads and bridges sector which is ₹145 crore more than the previous year's allocation.

The Government has made provision for five road bridges, two underpasses, DND Flyway extension and a pedestrian subway in the budget for 2022-23. Presenting the Budget in the Assembly, Sisodia on Saturday said the allocation is 13 per cent of the total Budget of ₹75,800 crore. In 2021-22, the Government had allocated ₹9,394 crore for the sector.

"The work on five bridges, two underpasses, a pedestrian subway and extension of DND Flyway to Ashram will be completed in 2022-23. This will help in decongestion of Tri Nagar, Inderlok, Karampura, Nangloi, Basai Darapur, Kondli and Ashram Chowk," Sisodia

said in his speech.

Out of ₹43,600 crore set aside for funding programmes and schemes, the transport sector has got 20 per cent of it for 2022-23. The Government has also increased the budget allocation for construction of bus shelters by about 150 per cent. In financial year 2021-22, ₹30 crore was earmarked for bus queue shelters while it has been increased to ₹75 crore in 2022-23, budget documents showed. However, the budgetary allocation for marshals in buses has been reduced to ₹280 crore from the previous year's ₹467 crore.

According to data provided by the Government in budget documents, around 11,000 free WiFi hotspots have been set up in various constituencies and on an average 4.1 lakh people are using these services every day.

As part of the celebration of 75th year of Independence, as many as 175 high-mast

national flags have been erected across Delhi. The government has plans to set up a total of 500 such national flags at different locations in Delhi.

"The remaining flags will be set up by August 2022," Sisodia said.

Sisodia said that the Transport Department has made its 47 services faceless.

He said that with the help of facial recognition software, people can get learners' driving licence from home. More than 11 lakh applicants have benefited from this programme till March 7 this year.

Sisodia also earmarked ₹250 crore for the financial year 2022-23 to continue the facility of providing free travel to women in Delhi Transport Corporation and cluster buses.

Sisodia said that Delhi's bus fleet has reached its highest-ever level. "In Delhi, the number of buses has reached 7,003 which is the largest in the history of Delhi," Sisodia said.

Sisodia praised for Rozgaar Budget

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal praised his Deputy Manish Sisodia for presenting 'Rozgaar Budget 2023-23 which pushed for an employment boost and measures to fight inflation in the national Capital. Kejriwal said that their Government had presented a holistic plan to generate 20 lakhs employment opportunities in five years.

Kejriwal also said that the Delhi Government has managed to increase its budget by 2.5x since coming to power because of its commitment to honesty.

Sisodia, who is also Delhi's Finance Minister, presented the budget in the Assembly on Saturday with an outlay of ₹75,800 crore for the financial year 2022-23, focusing on creating 20 lakh jobs in five years by setting up an electronic city and promoting night economy, retail and wholesale markets in the national Capital. "Government's free education, healthcare, water, power and bus travel for women are a huge relief during backbreaking inflation. Health is one such sector which can push people into poverty and people are forced to sell their assets if someone falls ill," said Kejriwal.

"This budget will go on to bring relief from inflation and provide employment in Delhi. Homeless chil-

dren and beggars are not voters so no government till date tried helping them but our Government will build a residential school at a cost of 10 crores to rehabilitate them," said Kejriwal in his speech during the budget session.

"It takes immense courage to take a resolve to generate 20 lakhs jobs and this is no election promise. 1.68 crore people of Delhi are job qualified today but only one third of those have jobs. We must increase the number of our workforce from 33 to 45 per cent and employ 76 lakhs people in the mainstream," said Kejriwal.

"Delhi has emerged as the start-up capital and through our startup policy, the youth will develop new business and increase employment opportunities. Food truck policy will be brought in to promote Delhi as a one of a kind food hub. There are huge plans to establish film policy, cloud kitchen clusters, and electronic city to support employment generation," said Kejriwal.

Addressing the press after the budget presentation, Kejriwal said that the leap in the budget over the seven years is a result of the arduous and honest hard work – where AAP put an end to corruption, unnecessary Government expenditures, fixed leakages in revenue sources and spending. "Five traditional markets in Delhi

have been identified which will be entirely revamped and renovated, following which we expect the businesses to flourish like never before in these areas. A Delhi Shopping Festival will be organised to draw attention and crowd to Delhi, with a spike in tourism contributing to Delhi's economy," said Kejriwal.

"Delhi's wholesale markets will be revived in the State and in addition, a Delhi Wholesale Festival will also be organised. An announcement was made regarding the Dilli Bazaar Portal, which will serve as a one stop destination for buyers and sellers for all markets and shops throughout Delhi. This will avail the facility of buying and selling 24x7, with the added bonus of shopping from the comfort of one's home," said Kejriwal.

"In the health department, Delhi is the only state where regardless of economic background, free treatment is available for all patients. If one unfortunately falls prey to a more serious disease which costs some 20-40 lakhs, they can head to GTB Hospital or LNJP or GB Pant, or any of the major 38 Delhi's government hospitals, the entire treatment will be provided for free," said Kejriwal adding that the Delhi Government will bear all costs, without asking whether you are rich or poor, no BPL card is needed to be shown.

Cong: Budget anti-poor, anti-Dalit, anti-youth

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar termed the Budget presented by the Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia as anti-poor, anti-Dalit and anti-youth.

Kumar alleged that like in the past, Sisodia had indulged in a gimmick by calling it the "Rojgar Budget" to mock the unemployed youth, as Delhi has the highest unemployment rate in the country at 45.5 per cent.

He said that in 2018, Sisodia had presented a "Green Budget", but four years down the line, by 2022, Delhi had become the most polluted Capital in the world, and the fourth most polluted city in the world!

Reacting on the budget to the media, Kumar said that 15,34,832 youth have registered with the Delhi Government's employment portal, and Sisodia was only rubbing salt into their wounds by naming the budget "Rojgar Budget". He asked whether the ₹800 crore allotted was for the welfare of the AAP workers or for the unemployed.

The Congress president said the Delhi Chief Minister had boasted about the "Delhi Model of Education" everywhere, but the allocation for education has been reduced, which will only further dent the aspirations of students from poor families. He said that ₹13,881 crore had been allocated for education in the last budget, which was slashed to ₹13,691 crore this time, proving the Arvind Government's lop-sided priority for education.

Budget a bundle of lies, says State BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Terming the Delhi Government's Budget 2022-23 as "bundle of lies", Delhi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Adesh Gupta alleged that the Arvind Kejriwal led Delhi Government had earlier talked of giving eight lakhs jobs in 2015 then promised 10 lakhs jobs and now it is 20 lakhs but the fact is so far it could give only 440 jobs which was revealed through an RTI.

Gupta further said that in this Budget proposals, there is provision of Rs 3062 crore for social pension while the fact is for the past two years it has not been given and now pension amount is nearly double of what has been provided. Now,

"In the Budget of Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has claimed increasing the limit of free power distribution and raising water output by 20 per cent. But the fact is the Government is praising itself by giving people a boring water supply rather than yamuna drinking water," Gupta said.

Commenting on the budget, former

Delhi BJP unit president, Vijendra Gupta said the budget presented by Delhi's Finance Minister Sisodia is 'visionless' and devoid of substance.

MLA from Rohini, Vijendra Gupta also said that the finance minister did not present any substantive planning or commitment, as to how job creation is being ensured in Delhi.

"In fact, they are only repeating their previous commitments for the past seven years. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had been pushing to create job creators over job seekers since he came into power at the Centre while the AAP government has only realised the virtue of entrepreneurship recently," said former BJP president. He also said that the AAP Government talked big on entrepreneurship but it did not mention what would be its contribution in fulfilling the aspiration of Delhi's youth. He added that the Budget does not speak of the manufacturing sector and has come as a disappointment to the traders in the national capital as well as those part of wholesale trade.

Edu gets highest allocation, schools for homeless kids

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Education sector got a major chunk in the Budget allocation, a part of which will go to building boarding schools for homeless children and a Science Museum in a city school, announced by the Delhi Education Minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday. Sisodia announced ₹16,278 crore for the education sector, a part of which will go to building boarding schools for homeless children and a Science Museum in a city school. Speaking in the Assembly, Sisodia said, "Children from homeless families who live on roadsides, footpaths, under flyovers and stairs or on open places of worship, pavilions, railway platforms etc. are deprived of basic facilities like shelter, food and education."

"The Government has taken several measures to provide basic education to these children. However, these measures have been only partially successful. It is not possible to get quality education unless basic facilities like food and shelter are in place. The Government has decided to set up a boarding school with modern facilities.

This schools will also facilitate the children to live along with education and try to bring them into the mainstream of the society," Sisodia said

"Delhi Government schools have so far achieved the best results in Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) board examinations despite the COVID-19 pandemic and achieved the 99.84 per cent passing percentage considered almost impossible," Sisodia said. "Now the children of all the rich or poor are setting new records every year in examinations like National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and Indian Institutes of Technology-Joint Entrance Examination (IIT-JEE) by taking good education in the government schools of Delhi," Sisodia said. "The classrooms of all government schools in the national capital will be converted into digital classrooms in the next four years," Sisodia said.

"Delhi Teachers University has also started its work and is going to provide B.Ed courses from the next session after obtaining necessary approval from the Government of India," Sisodia further added.

AAP Govt to hold int'l film festival every year: Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

While presenting the Budget for financial year 2022-23 in the Delhi Assembly, Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia said that in order to promote the national Capital as a global shooting destination, the Government will hold an international film festival every year under its film policy.

On Saturday, Sisodia had presented a ₹75,800 crore Budget in the Assembly for the financial year 2022-23.

Sisodia, who also hold the Tourism portfolio, said the Delhi International Film Festival will promote the city's rich culture and diversity. In his Budget speech Sisodia also said that with the introduction of the 'Delhi Film Policy', the AAP Government aims to promote the city as a national and international brand.

"The Government will organise the Delhi International Film Festival every year from this year onwards. Through this film festival, the rich culture and diversity of Delhi will be showcased. Film fraternity from across the country will be invited to the festival," said the Deputy CM

Sisodia further said that the film policy will create an environment for the promotion of tourism by attracting filmmakers from across the globe to Delhi.

He said that through the Delhi Film Policy and the film festival, the Government will establish new employment and business opportunities related to tourism and art & culture.

One of the important aspects of the film policy will be a completely online single window clearance mechanism (e-film clearance) which will fast-track all the approval processes involving 25 stakeholder agencies, he added.

"The most important thing about this film policy is that it will bring forth opportunities for the new local talent and skilled youth in Delhi," Sisodia said.

He further said that the policy will create a highly skilled workforce required for the film sector in Delhi.

"This workforce, which will be professionally trained by our Government, will provide scholarships to the talented youth of Delhi and will also provide internship opportunities," Sisodia said.

'Will create 1 lakh green jobs in 5 years through Smart Urban Farming, rooftop solar plants, 25K e-autos'

New Delhi: The Delhi Government Saturday said it will create one lakh "green" jobs in the next five years by starting "Smart Urban Farming" campaign, adding 25,000 e-autos and installing rooftop solar plants of a cumulative 2,500-megawatt capacity. Green jobs are jobs that have a direct, positive impact on the environment traditionally involving renewable energy, electric transport, energy efficiency or nature conservation.

"Providing clean air and water for future generations is an integral part of the Delhi Government's vision of 2047. Keeping this in mind, in the next five years, the Delhi government is going to launch several initiatives, which will create more than one lakh green jobs," Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said while presenting Delhi's budget for the financial year 2022-23.

He said that within 18 months

of the launch of Delhi EV Policy-2020, the capital has emerged as the "EV Capital".

The share of EVs in the sale of new vehicles has increased from 1.2 per cent in 2019-20 to 10 per cent in February 2022, Sisodia said, adding Delhi has become the first state in India to cross the 10 per cent mark in EV sales, which is more than the share of electric vehicles in many developed countries like the UK, France and Singapore.

"With the increasing share of EVs, 20,000 new jobs will be created in the next five years in EV sales, repair and maintenance, operation and maintenance of EV charging stations," said Sisodia, who also holds the finance portfolio.

Besides, the Delhi Government will launch more than 4200 e-autos with 33 per cent reservation for women drivers in the coming year.

Two held in liquor traders' murder case

Gurugram: A crime unit of Sector-10 of the Gurugram police have arrested two more criminals, including the prime accused, in connection with the murder case of two brothers, who were liquor merchant, the incident took place on February 25 at Khor village in Pataudi.

The arrested accused have been identified as Ajay alias Jaildar of Jhajjar district a suspected henchman of Laurence Bishnoi, Kala Jetedi and Goldy Brar gang and Karambeer alias Karmu of Badli in Jhajjar district.

The police have made three arrests in the incident earlier the police had nabbed Akshay Kumar on February 27, a resident of Khor village in Pataudi, who had to provide the information of the deceased brothers to the criminals.

Assistant Commissioner of police (crime), Preet Pal Sangwan said, "Ajay hatched the plan to eliminate the duo brothers on March 25. While Karambeer had helped them to avoid police arrest and had also provided Mahindra Scorpio which was used by the criminals during the incident".

Female beggar raped, thrashed by 2 people; no arrest made yet

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old woman was allegedly gangraped by an auto-rickshaw driver and his associate in east Delhi's Ghazipur area. The incident took place on Wednesday and the woman was found near the Ghazipur market. On Saturday, the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) also issued a notice to police seeking details of First Information Report (FIR) and steps taken to arrest the accused in connection with the case. According to a senior police official, a woman beggar was found in the area of Ghazipur on Wednesday after a police control room (PCR) call stating about an unclaimed person was received following which a police team was dispatched for the spot.

"The woman was taken to Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital in east Delhi for preliminary treatment. The woman was later shifted to Safdarjung Hospital for better medical management. The incident reportedly happened on Wednesday evening and based on

the victim's statement, a case has been registered at Ghazipur police station under appropriate sections," said the senior police official. Police said that five teams have been formed and the investigation has begun in the case. "No arrest has been made so far. The condition of the woman is stable," said police.

Police said that prime facie, it was revealed that two persons were involved in the incident and further investigation is in progress. The DCW has taken cognizance of media reports of abduction and rape of the woman. As per reports, the beggar was found in a serious condition on a road near Ghazipur poultry market, the notice said. The survivor has informed that she was abducted and gangraped by two men, one of whom was an auto driver, it said. She has also alleged that the accused beat her up brutally. Presently, the woman is admitted in hospital in ICU in a serious condition and has been operated upon for severe injuries on her private parts, the notice stated. An FIR has been registered.



AAP will challenge MCD merger Bill in court: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP will study the Bill introduced in Parliament to unify the three municipal corporations and challenge the decision in court if needed, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Saturday. "The MCD Bill has been brought only to delay the elections. What is the logic of reducing the number of wards? We will study the Bill and will challenge it in the court if need be," Kejriwal said.

He was speaking at a press conference after his deputy Manish Sisodia presented the Delhi Budget. The bill to merge the three municipal corporations in the national Capital into a single entity was introduced in Lok Sabha on Friday by the central government amid Opposition claims that the move was beyond the legislative competence of Parliament. It also proposes to reduce the number of wards to 250.

Currently, the three corporations in Delhi - North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) and East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) - have 272 wards.

While the North and South corporations have 104 wards each, the East corporation has 64.

Kejriwal: BJP doing politics over exodus of Kashmiri Pandits

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With Delhi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) unit demanding the film, 'The Kashmir Files' be tax free in the national Capital, the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday alleged that the BJP is doing politics over Kashmiri Pandits exodus.

During the post budget press conference, Kejriwal also again suggested that the film, 'The Kashmir Files', should be uploaded on YouTube and proceeds so far earned from it should be spent on the welfare of Kashmiri Pandits.

"Was a single Kashmiri Pandit family relocated to the valley by BJP in the last 8 yrs?" Kejriwal asked the BJP. "BJP is doing politics over the issue. We demand 'The Kashmir Files' film to be uploaded on YouTube. The money earned from it should be spent on welfare of Kashmiri Pandits," he said.

The suggestion was first made by him on Thursday, when during an assembly session he criticised the move of making the film tax-free, and suggested the filmmaker to just upload it on YouTube for all to see free of cost.

Kejriwal's anti-Hindu mentality has come to fore, alleges BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leaders and a large number of S workers led by state BJP president Adesh Gupta on Saturday staged a protest near the state assembly against Delhi Chief Minister for allegedly making fun of Kashmiri Pandits in the Assembly.

The BJP leaders also observed a silence while remembering carnage against Kashmiri Pandits. Addressing the gathering, Adesh Gupta said that Kejriwal who made fun of Hindus and Kashmiri Pandits in the Assembly will meet the same fate as happened with Congress, Lalu, Mulayam.

Gupta said, "This is not the first time when Kejriwal's anti Hindus mentality has come to fore. He opposed the CAA, raising questions on Ram temple, sheltering Delhi riots kingpins Tahir Husain and Amantullah, supporting tukde tukde gang, demolishing old Hanuman temple in Chandni chowk, or giving salaries to maulvis. All this shows he has worked for a particular community."

BJP national secretary and Delhi co incharge Dr Alka Gurjar said Kejriwal has



always attacked Sanatan dharma which is shameful. He said someone hurting the Sanatan dharma which believes in sarva dharma sadbhavana can never be pardoned.

Talking about Kejriwal remarks on uploading 'The Kashmir Files' on YouTube, Gandhi smriti vice chairman Vijay Goel said that Kejriwal has made 21 movies tax free in past seven years but he is making fun of such a serious issue.

Former Union Health Minister and MP Dr Harshwardhan said the kind of language being used by Kejriwal for Hindus shows his mental bankruptcy. "The development that took place in Jammu and Kashmir in the past seven years has not happened in 60 years since independence," he said.

ACB arrests house tax dept officer for graft

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Government's Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) has arrested an officer of the house tax department for allegedly taking a bribe of ₹50,000. According to a senior official, on Friday, one Raj Kumar Gupta complained to the ACB against Vijay Kant Upadhyaya, an Assistant Zonal Inspector at the house tax department of North Delhi corporation, for demanding ₹4 lakh to correct the property tax of his shop in Chandni Chowk.

"Gupta alleged that he bargained with the officer and brought him down to ₹2 lakh, which he agreed to accept in installments. He informed the police that he was supposed to give the first installment of ₹50,000 on Friday," said the official.

"A raiding party was constituted and reached the office of the property tax department in Kashmiri Gate along with the complainant. In line with their play, Gupta went inside Upadhyaya's office and gave him ₹50,000. As he did that, the raiding party entered his office and caught Upadhyaya in the act," said the official.

A case has been registered at the ACB Police Station against him, and he has been arrested. An investigation is in progress, the official added.



Jaishankar to visit Sri Lanka next week

India likely to offer more help to the country to avert its ongoing economic crisis

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will visit Colombo for three days next week to hold talks with his counterpart GL Peiris and other leaders. India has already extended credit to Sri Lanka and is likely to offer more help to help it to overcome the present crisis. Giving details of his visit here, the Ministry of External Affairs said Jaishankar will visit Sri Lanka from March 28 to March 30. Prior to this tour, he will tour Maldives and inaugurate some key projects there. Both the countries are key maritime neighbours of India. As regards the Lanka visit, the ministry said "the bilateral

meetings and interactions which the external affairs minister will have in Sri Lanka highlight the priority that Sri Lanka occupies for India." Incidentally, his visit to the island country comes a week after India announced a USD 1 billion line of credit to Sri Lanka to help it deal with the ongoing economic crisis. Moreover, the visit follows the visits to India by Sri Lankan Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa in December 2021 and earlier this month and that of Foreign Minister GL Peiris in February. The ministry said Jaishankar will also participate in the BIMSTEC Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) ministerial meeting on March 29 in Colombo. "Both Maldives and Sri Lanka are India's key maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean Region and occupy special place in the prime minister's vision of 'SAGAR and Neighbourhood First,' the external affairs ministry said.



"The external affairs minister's visit is testimony to the importance that India attaches to its close and friendly relations with the Maldives and Sri Lanka," it said. SAGAR or "Security and Growth for all in the Region" is aimed at cooperative measures for sustainable use of the oceans in the region. On his first stop in Maldives, the ministry said Jaishankar will inaugurate a number of India-supported

projects and firm up several agreements to further bolster bilateral cooperation. During his visit to the Maldivian city of Addu from March 26 to March 27, Jaishankar will call on President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and hold discussions with Foreign Affairs Minister Abdulla Shahid. "The external affairs minister's visit will see the signing of several agreements related to the bilateral development coop-

eration, inauguration and launch of a number of key India-supported projects that will contribute to the socio-economic development of the Maldives and enhance its security," the MEA said in a statement. The Maldives is one of India's key maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean region and the bilateral defence and security ties have been on an upward trajectory in the last few years.

Portal to bring 'inspiring' stories of Modi launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A portal "www.modistory.in" was launched on Saturday to bring together "inspiring" stories related to Prime Minister Narendra Modi from those who have interacted with him during his life journey over several decades. A number of associates, not necessarily well-known, have shared episodes they were witness to in Prime Minister's past political and personal life. The portal—Modi Story — was inaugurated by Sumitra Gandhi Kulkarni, granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi. The portal is a volunteer driven initiative to bring together inspiring moments from Narendra Modi's life, as narrated by his co-travellers. "This young man used to visit us in Delhi and stayed with us every now and then and we became good friends and this continued till today," Sumitra Gandhi Kulkarni said. Dancer Sonal Mansingh too has also shared her expe-



rience with the Prime Minister. Some have shared their early experiences of Modi's work for the country as he travelled far and wide for the party work. The portal shares stories, experiences and anecdotes from the likes of BJP leader Manoranjan Kalita from Punjab, a state Modi handled in the early days of his political journey as a party office-bearer, Rasbihari Maniyan, his school principal at Vadnagar in Gujarat, and Sharda Prajapati,

in whose house the future prime minister often stayed in. It also details her journey in a disguise as a 'Sardar' during the emergency. Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra and ace shuttler Pullela Gopichand are also among those who have shared their experiences and time with the prime minister. In a video, Narendra Modi's school teacher Rasbihari Maniyan said Modi in his childhood wanted to join a Sainik school. Commenting on the portal Union Minister Smriti Irani tweeted "Stories of grit & grace ... memories of the magic of personal meetings, talks that reflect an amiable persona, a decisive political personality...stories till now untold, unheard." The portal has invited more people to contribute to 'Modi Story' and enrich the reminiscences on the Prime Minister. Anyone can contribute to 'Modi Story' portal.

CEC laments lack of representation of women in Parl, lauds their surge in voting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sushil Chandra on Saturday lamented the lack of representation of women in Parliament but at the same time, pointed to the surge in the number of women coming out to vote in recent years. Addressing an event where 'Sansad Ratna Awards 2022' were presented to Parliamentarians, Chandra said the first Lok Sabha had 15 women MPs and the 17th Lok Sabha has 78. The Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Award for Lifetime Achievement was presented to Dr M. Veerappa Moily (Congress) and Dr H.V. Hande (BJP). The Excellence Awards - Lok Sabha Committee were given for Agriculture (Chairman: P.C. Gaddi Goudar, BJP, Karnataka); for Finance (Chairman: Dr Jayant Sinha, BJP, Jharkhand); for Labour (Chairman: Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, BJD, Odisha) while

the same for Excellence Award - Rajya Sabha Committee were given for Education (Chairman: Dr Vinay P. Sahasrabudhe, BJP, Maharashtra). Chandra also expressed concern over the time lost due to disruptions in Parliament, saying this does not augur well for democracy. "But the progress is still slow... True, Parliament has to be very very inclusive," he said. The CEC pointed out that in local bodies, the Constitution guarantees a one-third reservation for women and noted that many grassroots-level women leaders have demonstrated their leadership qualities and brought about visible changes in their communities. Stressing the need to maintain a connect between the lawmakers and people, he recalled voters telling him that after the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a ban on physical campaigning, some leaders came to their doorstep after a long gap.

On the issue of disruptions in parliamentary proceedings, Chandra said while heated arguments, debates and speeches are a barometer of a robust Parliament, frequent disruptions, walkouts and hunger strikes are not. He further said that the history and destiny of a nation is determined by 3 Ps -- principles, people and Parliament. "The principles and core values were set out very clearly in the Constitution of India. Being a representative democracy, it is the will of her people, which is sovereign and most powerful. The Parliament is the repository of the Trust of people and an expression of this sovereign will," he said. As per the Sansad Ratna Award, the Lok Sabha - Excellence Award General - Overall tally was presented to Bidyut Baran Mahato (BJP, Jharkhand); the Lok Sabha - Excellence Award - First time MP - was presented to Kuldeep Rai Sharma (INC, Andaman

Nicobar Islands); Lok Sabha - Excellence Award - Women MP - overall tally was presented to Heena Vijayakumar Gavit (BJP, Maharashtra); the Lok Sabha - Topper in Initiated Debates was presented to Saugata Roy (AITMC, West Bengal); the award for Lok Sabha - Topper in Questions was Sudhir Gupta (BJP, Madhya Pradesh); Rajya Sabha - Excellence Award - Sitting MPs - General - was presented to Amar Patnaik (BJD, Odisha), the Rajya Sabha - Excellence Award - Sitting MPs - Women MP - Total tally was presented to Fauzia Tahseen Ahmed Khan (NCP, Maharashtra) and the Rajya Sabha - Excellence Award - Retired MPs was presented to K.K. Ragesh (CPI-M, Kerala). The awards for Super performers - sustained performance (Sansad Vishisht Ratna) N.K. Premachandran (RSP, Kerala) and Shrirang Appa Barne (Shiv Sena, Maharashtra).

BRO opens up Manali-Sarchu Road

To ensure seamless logistical supply to troops at LAC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to ensure seamless and unhindered logistical back-up to the troops guarding the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, the Border Road Organisation (BRO) opened up the 210 Km long Manali-Sarchu Road in Himachal Pradesh on Saturday. This is the alternate route to Ladakh besides through Kashmir. This achievement comes a day after the BRO opened the Zojila Pass for civilian traffic on the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh Road. Opening the Manali—Sarchu Road establishes the vital connect to Lahaul District in Himachal Pradesh which further leads to Leh in Ladakh. The pass and the road, in



the past, generally opened in the last week of April, but with the successful movement of a road convoy on March 26 the BRO has opened the pass almost a month in advance which is a record in itself. During the winters the road normally remains closed for over 160-180 days in a year, but this time Project Deepak of BRO has opened the road in 117 days, as the last convoy had moved on November 29, 2021.

The early opening is more creditable due to the fact that this year the region witnessed an exponential increase in snowfall as compared to last year. Opening the Manali-Sarchu Road was premised on successful conduct of snow clearance operations over one of the highest passes of the Zaskar Range, the formidable Baralacha La Pass (16,043 feet). The BRO adopted a two prong approach, with simultaneous

deployment of snow clearance teams from two sides, one from Patsio to Baralacha La and the second from Sarchu to Baralacha La. Since Sarchu is cut off from rest of the country during winters, as part of proactive actions and planning by the Project winter stocking of snow clearance plant equipment and spares was done well in advance during November last year in Sarchu Camp. To achieve success and early opening of the pass, and the road, aerial induction of the snow clearance team was undertaken on March five from Sarchu. Team comprising of six skilled operators and technicians was dropped at Baralacha La to commence snow clearance operations. As a precautionary measure in the initial days the road will be opened only for movement of Army logistics convoys, for delivery of essential supplies for troops deployed in forward areas. Movement of all traffic will commence in the near future, on approval from the local administration.

Army carries out two-day airborne insertion exercise



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Sustaining its tempo of operational readiness in all kinds of weather and terrain, the Indian Army has carried out a two-day airborne insertion and rapid response exercise near the Siliguri Corridor along the northern border with China. It was the second such exercise in the last three weeks in the strategically important region near Sikkim. The latest exercise involving around 600 soldiers was conducted from March 24 to March 25. It involved advanced aerial insertion techniques or airdropping of soldiers, surveillance and target practice. The Siliguri Corridor is a stretch of land bordering Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. It connects the northeastern region with the rest of India and is considered very impor-

tant from the military perspective. "Around 600 paratroopers of the Indian Army's airborne rapid response teams carried out large-scale airdrops near the Siliguri Corridor after being airlifted from various airbases," an official said. "The exercise involved advanced free-fall techniques, insertion, surveillance and target practice and seizing of key objectives by going behind enemy lines," the official added. Incidentally, the Indian army has conducted regular exercises involving commandos and Special Forces in the last six to eight months beginning with the first such drill close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh followed by another exercise near the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir. A similar exercise was conducted in Port Blair a few weeks back.

Covid with flu poses greater risk in adults

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Adults in hospitals who have Covid-19 and the flu at the same time are at much greater risk of severe disease and death compared with patients who have Covid-19 alone or are infected with other viruses, according to a new study published in the Lancet. However, Indians can have a sigh of relief. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has claimed in a separate study that in India such cases are rare and mostly low risk. The study — by experts from ICMR, New Delhi, and the Pune-based National Institute of Virology — found only five cases of

influenza-SARS-CoV-2 co-infections among 13,467 people with flu symptoms and respiratory infections it analyzed from July 2021, to January 2022; a prevalence of 0.04%. In contrast, the Lancet study has found that patients with co-infection of SARS-CoV-2, which causes Covid-19, and influenza viruses were over four times more likely to require ventilation support and 2.4 times more likely to die than if they only had Covid-19, experts found. Researchers say the findings show the need for greater flu testing of COVID-19 patients in hospitals and highlight the importance of full vac-

cination against both Covid-19 and the flu. The team from the University of Edinburgh, University of Liverpool, Leiden University, and Imperial College London, made the findings in a study of more than 305,000 hospitalized patients with COVID-19. The research—delivered as part of the International Severe Acute Respiratory and emerging Infection Consortium's (ISARIC) Coronavirus Clinical Characterisation Consortium—is the largest ever study of people with Covid-19 and other endemic respiratory viruses. The team looked at the data of adults who had been

hospitalized with Covid-19 in the UK between 6 February 2020 and 8 December 2021. Test results for respiratory viral co-infections were recorded for 6965 patients with COVID-19. Some 227 of these also had the influenza virus, and they experienced significantly more severe outcomes. Dr. Maaik Swets, Ph.D. student at the University of Edinburgh and Leiden University, said: "In the last two years we have frequently witnessed patients with COVID-19 become severely ill, at times leading to ICU admission and the employment of an artificial ventilator to help with breathing. That an influenza infection

could give rise to a similar situation was already known, but less was understood about the outcomes of a double infection of SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory viruses." Professor Kenneth Baillie, Professor of Experimental Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, said: "We found that the combination of COVID-19 and flu viruses is particularly dangerous. This will be important as many countries decrease the use of social distancing and containment measures. We expect that COVID-19 will circulate with flu, increasing the chance of co-infections. That is why we should change our testing strategy for COVID-19 patients in

hospitals and test for flu much more widely." Professor Calum Semple, Professor of Outbreak Medicine and Child Health at the University of Liverpool, said: "We are seeing a rise in the usual seasonal respiratory viruses as people return to normal mixing. So, we can expect the flu to be circulating alongside COVID-19 this winter. We were surprised that the risk of death more than doubled when people were infected by both flu and COVID-19 viruses. It is now very important that people get fully vaccinated and boosted against both viruses, and not leave it until it is too late."

Khadi boosts self-employment in Rajasthan

PNS ■ JAIPUR

In a major boost to the self-employment spree in Rajasthan, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) on Saturday distributed 200 electric potter wheels to potters, 240 waste wood toolkits to carpenters, and 10 dona paper plate making machines to 450 local artisans in Jodhpur. KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena distributed the machines to these khadi artisans from Jaisalmer, Barmer and Nagaur districts. The distribution of machines will create direct employment for nearly 1100 people. These beneficiaries also include 170 BPL families. The electric potter wheels have been distributed to 200 potter families from Jaisalmer that is known for its exquisite clay pottery. These potters have been empowered under KVIC's flagship scheme "Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana" which aims at reviving the dying art of pottery and empowering the marginalized potter community. Similarly, artisans have



been trained in making paper dona plate and wood craft by KVIC so as to make them self-

reliant by providing self-employment. Saxena said these initiatives

have been launched under KVIC's "Gramodyog Vikas Yojana" which aims at empow-

ering the rural masses through self-employment and also strengthening the rural econ-

omy of the country. "These initiatives of KVIC is a major step towards fulfilling Hon'ble Prime Minister's dream of "Aatmanirbhar Bharat". Through these schemes, KVIC has created lakhs of employment not only in Rajasthan but in other parts of the country, too," Saxena said. He said that KVIC is for the first time providing online marketing platform for the potters of Rajasthan so that they can sell their clay products across the country. Rajasthan is a focus area of KVIC which has an immense potential of employment creation through Khadi activities. Also, a number of traditional art forms in Rajasthan including clay pottery are being revived by KVIC. So far KVIC has distributed over 5000 electric potter wheels in the state which has created nearly 14000 employment. The distribution of waste wood toolkits will create employment for 240 carpenter families while 10 paper plate making machines will employ 50 persons.

Shelled city in north Ukraine to become ‘next Mariupol’

Lviv: Like many residents of Ukraine's besieged city of Chernihiv, linguistics scholar Ihar Kazmerchak spends his nights in a bomb shelter and starts his day lining up for the little potable water authorities have left to hand out.

Surrounded by Russian forces and under constant bombardment, the northern city known for its eclectic monasteries has no electricity, heating or running water. The lists at pharmacies of the medicines no longer available grow longer by the day.

“In basements at night, everyone is talking about one thing: Chernihiv becoming next Mariupol,” Kazmerchak, 38, said, referring to the southern port city 845 kilometers (525 miles) away that has suffered some of the worst horrors since Russia invaded Ukraine.

The fear is not misplaced. Russian bombs destroyed Chernihiv's main bridge over the Desna River on the road leading to Kyiv on Wednesday; on Friday, artillery shells rendered the remaining pedestrian bridge impassable, cutting off the last possible route for people to get out or for food and medical supplies to get in.

Just over a month into the invasion, Russia's attack has slowed into a grinding war of attrition as its military tries to pound cities like Chernihiv into submission. Bombings of hospitals and other non-military



An Ukrainian soldier exits a Psychiatric hospital damaged by a Russian bombing earlier this week, in Mykolaiv, Ukraine on Friday

itary sites, such as the Mariupol theater where Ukrainian officials said a Russian airstrike is believed to have killed some 300 people last week, have given rise to war crime allegations.

Questions about the direction of Russia's offensive surfaced Friday when a high-ranking military official said the main objective of the first stage of the operation — reducing Ukraine's fighting capacity — had “generally been accomplished.” Col.-Gen Sergei Rudskoi, deputy chief of the Russian general staff, said Russian forces could now focus on “the main goal, the libera-

tion of Donbas.”

Donbas is the largely Russian-speaking eastern region where Russian-backed separatists have been fighting Ukrainian forces since 2014 and where many residents desire close ties to Moscow. Mariupol is located there, although outside of the two territories controlled by the separatists.

U.S. Officials said Russian troops appeared to have halted for now their ground offensive aimed at capturing the capital, Kyiv, and were concentrating more on gaining control of the Donbas region in the country's southeast. **AP**

UK to send vital food supplies for besieged Ukrainian cities

London: The UK will provide GBP 2 million in vital food supplies for areas of Ukraine encircled by Russian forces, UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said on Saturday.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said the decision follows a direct request from the government of Ukraine, with the supplies covering a rapid donation of dried food, tinned goods and water. Warehouses in Poland and Slovakia are being readied to supply these goods to the government of Ukraine from early next week.

“This vital donation of food and supplies will help support the Ukrainian people in the face of Russia's barbaric invasion,” said Truss.

“Our teams are working day and night with our Polish and Slovakian friends and the government of Ukraine to ensure those at most at risk get the essential supplies they so badly need,” she said.

Around 25 truckloads will be transported by road and rail to the local Ukrainian commu-

nities in greatest need. It is estimated over 12 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance across Ukraine, with the actual figure likely to be much higher.

Therefore, the FCDO said rapid donation is essential, with the window to reach towns and cities already encircled, as well as those at high risk, closing.

“The need on the ground in Ukraine is clear, with so many people in encircled areas trapped in basements without access to food or water. Nearly 6 million children remain in Ukraine, many sheltering inside buildings which are coming under attack,” said Alice Hooper, FCDO humanitarian adviser.

“We are working with partners at the borders to ensure these vital UK supplies reach the places they are needed most as quickly as possible,” she said. Access to food, water and cooking facilities for those trapped by Russian advances is becoming increasingly difficult, with people taking refuge in basements from shelling. **AP**

Putin can't win his unprovoked, illogical war: NATO Dy GS

Bucharest: NATO Deputy-General Secretary Mircea Geoana says that Russian President Vladimir Putin's month-old “barbaric war” against Ukraine is a war he cannot win.

In an interview with *The Associated Press*, the former Romanian Foreign Minister and ambassador to the United States added that NATO would be “forced to take appropriate measures” in the event of a chemical or nuclear attack, which follows a string of ominous comments from Moscow officials who refuse to rule out their use. He declined to say what those measures would be.

“NATO is a defensive alliance, but also it's a nuclear alliance,” he said. “If they will be using chemical weapons or other kinds of higher-end systems against Ukraine, this will be changing fundamentally the nature of the war that Mr. Putin has waged against Ukraine.”

“I can guarantee that NATO is ready to respond proportionately,” he added.

Geoana said Russia's attack

on a theater in the besieged port city of Mariupol, which Ukrainian authorities said Friday killed about 300 civilians, is “another proof that Putin's war is a war that is unprovoked, illogical, and also barbarian.”

“We hope that Mr. Putin will not go even further down the road of war crimes, and even more devastation against a sovereign nation,” he said.

But the brutal war that Russia has waged since Feb. 24, is having the opposite effect to what Putin hoped for, the NATO official said, and has only united the West and worked to bolster the 30-nation defensive alliance.

At a NATO summit on Thursday, alliance leaders agreed to launch four new Eastern Flank battlegroups — which usually number around 1,000-1,500 troops — to Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

“These groups are already constituting themselves,” Geoana, a former foreign minister in his native Romania, said. **AP**

Biden ends Europe trip with unity message echoing the past

Warsaw: Twenty-five years ago, Joe Biden visited Warsaw, Poland, with a warning: Even though the Soviet Union had collapsed, some of NATO's original members weren't doing enough to ensure the alliance's collective defense.

“Now it is time for the people of Western Europe to invest in the security of their continent for the next century,” said Biden, then a U.S. Senator.

Biden, now president, spoke again here Saturday as European security faced its most precarious test since World War II. The bloody war in Ukraine has entered its second month, and Western leaders have spent the week consulting over contingency plans in case the conflict mutates or spreads.

The invasion has shaken NATO out of any complacency it might have felt and cast a dark shadow over the continent.

U.S. National security adviser Jake Sullivan said the speech will outline the “urgency of the challenge that lies ahead.” **AP**

China, Russia soft on US further curbs on North Korea

United Nations: North Korea's test of a big new intercontinental ballistic missile prompted the United States to press Friday for stiffer UN sanctions, but China and Russia showed little appetite for tightening restrictions that they have been trying to ease.

A day after North Korea's first long-range test since 2017, U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield urged the council to condemn the launch and encourage North Korea to return to negotiations.

“It was an egregious and unprovoked escalation” that threatens the world, said Thomas-Greenfield, whose country joined Albania, France, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom in calling for the meeting.

Thomas-Greenfield added that the US would propose a measure “to update and strengthen” sanctions. She declined after the meeting to give specifics.

The Security Council originally imposed sanctions after

the North's first nuclear test explosion in 2006 and has tightened them over the years, in response to further nuclear tests and increasingly sophisticated nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Britain agreed Friday more sanctions should be considered, and several other members urged action of some kind.

But veto-wielding China and Russia proposed last fall to lift sanctions that bar their neighbour from exporting seafood and textiles, limit its imports of refined petroleum products and prohibit its citizens from working overseas and sending home their earnings.

Russian Deputy Ambassador Anna Evstigneieva said Friday that further sanctions would “threaten North Korean citizens with unacceptable socioeconomic and humanitarian problems,” while Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jun urged the council “to consider how to accommodate the DPRK's justified security concerns.” **AP**

Saudi airstrikes hit Yemen's Houthis after Jeddah attack

Sanaa: A Saudi-led coalition fighting Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen unleashed a barrage of airstrikes on the capital and a strategic Red Sea city, officials said Saturday. At least seven people were killed.

The overnight airstrikes on Sanaa and Hodeida — both held by the Houthis — came a day after the rebels attacked an oil depot in the Saudi city of Jeddah, their highest-profile assault yet on the kingdom.

Brig. Gen. Turki al-Malki, a spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition, said the strikes targeted “sources of threat” to Saudi Arabia, according to the state-run Saudi Press Agency.

He said the coalition intercepted and destroyed two explosives-laden drones early Saturday. He said the drones were launched from Houthi-held civilian oil facilities in Hodeida, urging civilians to stay away from oil facilities in the city.

Footage circulated online showed flames and plumes of smoke over Sanaa and Hodeida. Associated Press journalists in the Yemeni capital heard loud explosions that rattled residential buildings there.

The Houthis said the coal-

ition airstrikes hit a power plant, a fuel supply station and the state-run social insurance office in the capital.

A Houthi media office claimed an airstrike hit houses for guards of the social insurance office, killing at least seven people and wounding three others, including women and children.

The office shared images it said showed the aftermath of the airstrike. It showed wreckage in the courtyard of a social insurance office with the shattered windows of a nearby multiple-story building.

In Hodeida, the Houthi media office said the coalition hit oil facilities in violation of a 2018 cease-fire deal that ended months of fighting in Hodeida, which handles about 70% of Yemen's commercial and humanitarian imports. The strikes also hit the nearby Port Salif, also on the Red Sea.

Al-Malki, the coalition spokesperson, was not immediately available for comment on the Houthi claims.

The escalation is likely to complicate efforts by the U.N. Special envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, to reach a humanitarian truce during the holy month of Ramadan” in early



Firefighters extinguish the fire following Saudi-led airstrikes targeting two houses in Sanaa, Yemen. A Houthi media office claimed an airstrike hit houses for guards of the social insurance office, killing at least seven people and wounding three others, including women and children

April.

It comes as the Gulf Cooperation Council plans to host the warring sides for talks late this month. The Houthis however have rejected Riyadh — the Saudi capital where the GCC is headquartered — as a venue for talks, which are expected to include an array of Yemeni factions.

Yemen's brutal war erupted in 2014 after the Houthis seized Sanaa. Months later, Saudi Arabia and its allies launched a devastating air cam-

paign to dislodge the Houthis and restore the internationally recognized government.

The conflict has in recent years become a regional proxy war that has killed more than 150,000 people, including over 14,500 civilians. It also created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

The Houthi's Friday attack came ahead of a Formula One race in the kingdom on Sunday, raising concerns about Saudi Arabia's ability to defend itself against the Iranian-backed

Pak Interior Minister advises PM Khan to call elections after budget

Islamabad: Pakistan's Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid on Saturday said that he has advised Prime Minister Imran Khan to call elections after presenting the budget, claiming that the cricketer-turned politician's popularity had increased following the Opposition's submission of a no-trust motion against him.

Rashid, however, said that the idea for early elections after presenting the federal budget for fiscal year 2022-23 was his own “opinion” and should not be taken as the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s stance, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Rashid said that he has advised Prime

Minister Khan to call elections after presenting the federal budget, which is presented each year weeks before the end of fiscal year on June 30.

This is the second time in a week that Rashid has advocated for snap polls to end the ongoing political crisis.

On Thursday, Rashid had said that early elections can be held in the country to end the current political uncertainty due to the no-trust motion against Prime Minister Khan. The next general election is due by late 2023.

No Pakistani prime minister has ever completed a full

five-year term in office.

Talking to reporters here on Saturday, Rashid said that voting on the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Khan can be held on April 3 or 4. He said that he was giving the likely dates for vote on the presumption that the motion of no-trust would be presented in the National Assembly on March 28. “The voting is held between three to seven days after the motion is tabled,” he said.

Rashid termed the Opposition “foolish” for submit-

ting the no-trust motion against Prime Minister Khan and said that the move has taken the prime minister to a level of popularity where “it is the right time to go for early elections.”

“I'm asking for early elections after presenting a good budget because this incompetent Opposition has allowed us to win again. When the Pakistani nation sees their (Opposition leaders) faces, they switch channels,” he said.

“This is the same Shehbaz (Sharif) who says (former

prime minister) Nawaz (Sharif) greatly respects (Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed) Bajwa and the Army. Where did ‘vote ko izzat do’ go? The vote has been sold at shops, they have insulted democracy,” Rashid said, referring to Sharif's earlier rhetoric of attacking the Army chief for allegedly ousting him from power.

He said that if needed, the interior ministry could also summon the army under Article 245 of the Constitution after approval from the prime

minister and his cabinet. The remarks by the interior minister come as both the government and the opposition were making claims about their success in the vote of confidence.

Pakistan has been on the edge since Opposition parties on March 8 submitted the no-confidence motion before the National Assembly Secretariat, alleging that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government led by Prime Minister Khan was responsible for the economic crisis. **PTI**

Public Notice
This is to inform public at large that two original chain documents have been misplaced / lost somewhere w.r.t Entire odeon cinema building consisting of odeon cinema, flats and a shop constructed on a plot measuring 13000 sq. ft. Approx. situated in D Block Connaught place, New Delhi 110001. Detail of lost documents:-
1. Original lease deed dated 06.06.1942 executed between Governor General Council of the one part and L Balmokand and L Kanhaya Lal, L Pura Chand and L Devi Chand.
2. Original supplementary lease deed dated 13.10.1966 executed between President of India of the one part and M/s Isherdas Sahni & Bros.
All people are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said missing document. And if someone found please return to mentioned below address.
Sender detail and address:-
Isserdas Sahni & Bros., Odeon Cinema Complex, Connaught Place New Delhi-110001, Contact: 9811078779

Public Notice
NOTICE is hereby given that Mr. Amit Jain (hereinafter referred to as the said Mortgagee/Borrowers) is purchasing Property Bearing No. 90, area measuring 247.25 Sq. Mtrs., Block-AK, situated at Shalimar Bagh, Delhi from Mr. Shaishav Gupta who became owner of the said floor vide Relinquishment Deed dated 09.12.2021 and Gift Deed dated 09.12.2021. Above said owner has misplaced the Original Perpetual Lease Deed dated 27.02.1987 and Conveyance Deed dated 13.05.1995 related to the above said property. Anyone who find the above said documents shall handover the same to the Manager of IDFC FIRST Bank Limited having its Office ITO, Indian Express Building, Delhi-110002. Now, Mr. Amit Jain has agreed to create mortgages in respect of the said property in favour of our client IDFC FIRST Bank Limited. Further, if any person, body, individual, institution having any claim, title, interest and/or objection in respect of or against or relating to or touching upon said property or part of the property by way of sale, exchange, lease, lien, mortgage, charge, encumbrance, gift, trust, easement, maintenance, inheritance, testamentary disposition or otherwise or having in their custody any title, documents pertaining to the said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at below mentioned address within 10 days from the publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claim, of such person shall be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned. Any objections raised after the completion of the 10 days shall not be binding upon the said property or my Client & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 10 days of this publication to Mr. Munesh Dhanwan / Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-TTL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9068707172/981228636 (M).

PUBLIC NOTICE
General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Meenu Chhabra Wife/o Mr. Ashok Chhabra Plot No. 224, area 86 Sq. Yds., The current owner of the southern part of which is part of Kharsa No- 21/5m, is situated in the population of "Jai Colony-I" known as "Uttam Nagar", area of Block-T, Village Matiali, New Delhi, which is owned and held by the Notary GPA dated 07.12.1990 and intends to sell the same to Mr. Sandeep Sharma, which will be financed by Clix Housing Finance Limited. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 15 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.
Raghav Tiwari (Advocate)
Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi - 110001
Mob.: +91-8076188528

PUBLIC NOTICE
Dhunsari Ventures Limited
Dhunsari House 4A, Woodburn Park
Kolkata - 700020
Notice is hereby given that the share certificate No 18748 with Distinctive no(s) 4355801 to 4355900 in respect of Folio No S02659 Registered in the name of Pramod Sharma is reported to be lost and the company has received application for issue of duplicate share certificate(s). If no objection from any interested person is received by the company's registrars Maheshwari Datamatics Pvt. Ltd., 23, R.N. Mukherjee Road, Kolkata 700001, within 15 days from the publication hereof the company will proceed to issue duplicate share Certificate(s) to the applicant(s).
Dated: -23-03-2022

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that "INDEED FINCAP PRIVATE LIMITED" (which is a RBI registered NBFC Company, incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956 and having its registered office at 13th Floor, Dr. Gopal Das Bhawan, 28 Barakhamba Road, Connaught Place, New Delhi -110001) has received the approval from the Department of Non-Banking Supervision, Reserve Bank of India, New Delhi for the change in the management of the company, in respect of appointment of Mr. Ravi Aggarwal as the director of the company vide Letter No SB86/CMS-V05.09.110/2021-22 dated 23rd March 2022. Any person(s) who have any objection in this regard may submit their objections/comments to the Company at its Registered office or to the Department of Non-Banking Supervision, Reserve Bank of India, New Delhi within 30 (Thirty) days of this publication.
For Indeed Fincap Private Limited
Sd/-
DHANANJAY SHUKLA
DIRECTOR
DIN: 01264947
Add: Flat No 337, BLOCK-B, TYPE-A, POCKET-3, DDA FLAT, BINDA PUR, UTTAM NAGAR DELHI 110059
Date: 27.03.2022 Place: Delhi

ADIHM ENTERPRISES PRIVATE LIMITED
(CIN: U70102DL2008PTC177009)
Registered Office: B-1/504, Satyam Apartments, The New Progressive CGHS Ltd., 20-B, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-110096, Tel. No: 9560280404; E-mail:ndgsa504@gmail.com
Form No. CAA. 9 [Pursuant to Section 233(1) and rule 25(1)]
In the matter of: The Companies Act, 2013
And
In the matter of: Scheme of Merger under section 233 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Companies (Compromises, Arrangements and Amalgamations) Rules, 2016
Notice is hereby given by Adihm Enterprises Private Limited (Transferee Company) that a scheme of merger or amalgamation is proposed to be entered with Abhishasha Estates Private Limited (Transferor Company-1), Bolster Construction Company-8), Krish Nutrient Private Limited (Transferor Company-9), Kria Consultants Private Limited (Transferor Company-10), Linear Pharma Private Limited (Transferor Company-11), RST Buildtech Private Limited (Transferor Company-12), Tanwar Electronics Private Ltd. (Transferor Company-13) with Adihm Enterprises Private Limited (Transferee Company), and in pursuance of sub-section (1)(a) of Section 233 of the Companies Act, 2013, objections or suggestions are invited in respect of the scheme.
Copy of the scheme of merger or amalgamation can be inspected at the registered office of the transferee company situated at L B-1/504, Satyam Apartments, The New Progressive CGHS Ltd., 20-B, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-110096.
Objections or suggestions are invited from -
(i) Registrar of Companies, NCT of Delhi & Haryana, 4th Floor, IFCI Tower, 61, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019;
(ii) Official Liquidator, 8th Floor, Lok Nayak Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi-110003; and
(iii) Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed scheme.
Any person mentioned in (i), (ii) or (iii) above, desirous of providing objections or suggestions in respect of the scheme should send their objections or suggestions within thirty days from the date of this notice to the Regional Director at B-2 Wing, 2nd Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi - 110003, and Kushal Singh (DIN: 02539447) at E-9 Beta-1 Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar-201306 being authorised representative of the Transferee Company.
By order of the Board of Directors
For Adihm Enterprises Private Limited
Sd/-
Kushal Singh (DIRECTOR)
DIN:02539447
Dated this 24.03.2022
Place: Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of Fullerton India Home Finance Company. That Mrs. Sadna is claiming ownership of property bearing No. D-43, area measuring 55 Sq.Yds., out of Kharsa No. 424, Situated in the area of Village Ghonda Gujran Khadar, in the abode of D Block, Gali No.1, Bhajan Pura, Ilaga Shahdara, Delhi, by virtue of GPA, Agreement & will all dated 17.06.2010, executed by Mr. Gajender Kumar. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned claim owner/attorney holder want to sell the said property to Mr. Ravinder Kumar who is taking Loan from Fullerton for purchase of the said property, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner/attorney holder over the said property, its sale /mortgage/litigation, and any kind of objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.
Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, 1Ind Floor, 25, Sheela Hans, Kirti Nagar, N. Delhi-15 Ph: 011-41112527-28 kumarassociatesadvocates@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform to all concerned that Sh. Faiyaz S/o Late Karamat Ali R/o Vill-Asgarpur Jagir Noida Dist: Gautam Budh Nagar, who is the original allottee of Plot No. S-35, Sector-128, Subangpur, Noida G.B. Nagar (U.P.) which is registered Sub Registrar office 3rd Noida dated 19.11.2012, Bahi No.3, Jild No.468, at page No. from 111 to 122, & Serial No. 5066. So it is informed to all concerned that the said Plot is going to be transferred in favour of Shri Satish Singh Chauhan S/o Late Kishori Lal R/o Vill-Asgarpur Jagir, Noida Distt: Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) on the basis of registered Will.
If any one has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice.
Sh. Satish Singh Chauhan

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is Notified for the Information that I/Rajkumar Saini C/o M/s Supreme Trading Co. Address 1043, Gali No.9, Shop No.8, GF Akashdeep Complex, Gurgaon, Haryana, India. Delhi have actually Lost ORIGINAL C-FORMS (TOTAL 2 C-FORM) ISSUED BY M/S S.A.N IMPEX TO M/S SUPREME TRADING CO. (TIN No: 07160231826) DETAILS AS FOLLOWS:1st QTR 2014-2015 OF Rs.283502 / 2nd QTR 2014-2015 OF Rs.163674- WERE LOST ON THE WAY AT THE TIME GOING TO SHOP/GOVINDPURI KALKAJI FROM HOME ON 21-03-2022 LR No 238574/ 2022, DATED 22-03-2022 If Found Pls Contact : 9811165920

Public Notice
This is to inform general public that Mr. Harshuk Bhogayata is owner of Entire Second floor without roof rights, (Hereinafter referred to as "said floor") Part of freehold built up property bearing municipal no. 156, part of old plot no. 31, area measuring 50 Sq. yds. i.e. 41.8 Sq. mtrs., Gali no. 17, out of kharsa no. 200, Kheawat no. 1, situated in the area of village Chokhri Muradabad, Delhi State Delhi, Abadi known as Onkar Nagar- B, Tri nagar, Delhi- 110035 vide Sale Deed dated 26.05.2015, executed by Mrs. Pushpa and Now, Mr. Harshuk Bhogayata is intending to sell the above said property/Floor to Mr. Rajesh Verma. Further Mr. Rajesh Verma is mortgaging the above said property/floor with Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Munesh Dhanwan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-TTL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/981228636 (M).

BEFORE THE HONB'LE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH BENCH, CHANDIGARH
KAILASH AGGARWAL Versus GENEX INFRA TECH LTD. & ORS.
CP No. 151/Chd/Pb/2019
Next Date: 12.05.2022
Publication issued to :
1. R-3 Sourabh Gupta S/o Sh. Raghubir Chand Gupta, R/o H.No. 17-B, Near Telephone Exchange, GTB Market, Khanna, Punjab – 141401
2. R-5 Reenu Gupta W/o Sh. Rohit Gupta, R/o H.No. 17-B, Near Telephone Exchange, GTB Market, Khanna, Punjab – 141401
3. R-6 Ashish Jhakodia S/o Sh. Gopal Jhakodia, R/o H.No. 603, Omaxe Grand, Sector 93B, Noida, Uttar Pradesh - 201305
In the above titled case, the above mentioned Respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that Respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 12.05.2022.
For details login to: nclt.gov.in
Dated, this day of 26-11-2021
Sd/- Sd/-
Member Member
(Technical) (Judicial)

BEFORE THE HONB'LE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH BENCH, CHANDIGARH
KAILASH AGGARWAL Versus GENEX POLYFAB LTD. & ORS.
CP No. 134/Chd/Pb/2020
Next Date: 12.05.2022
Publication issued to :
1. R-3 Sourabh Gupta S/o Sh. Raghubir Chand Gupta, R/o H.No. 17-B, Near Telephone Exchange, GTB Market, Khanna, Punjab – 141401
2. R-4 Abhishek Kansal S/o Sh. Anish Kansal, R/o H.No. 661, Phase 1, Ranjit Avenue, Malerkotla Road, Ludhiana, Punjab – 147301
3. R-5 Ms. Ripple Gupta D/o Sh. Gopal Krishan, C/o Shiva Steel, Harchand Road, Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab – 147301
In the above titled case, the above mentioned Respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that Respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 12.05.2022.
For details login to: nclt.gov.in
Dated, this day of 29-11-2021
Sd/- Sd/-
Member Member
(Technical) (Judicial)

India can grow consistently at 8% for 20 yrs on current investment strategy: Vaishnaw

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian economy can grow consistently at 8 per cent for the next 20 years leading to the generation of up to 1.5 crore new jobs and bringing out 3.5 crore people out of the poverty every year on the basis of the capital investment strategy of the government, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Saturday.

While addressing the annual general meeting of Assocham, he said that the government has set a target of increasing the capital investment level in the budget from 27 per cent of the GDP to 35 per cent of the GDP over the next few years.

"We follow the strategy of capital investment for 5-6 years more, we can grow at 8 per cent consistently for the next 20 years. 8 per cent growth in the next 20 years means, every year close to 1-1.5 crore new employment, 30-35 million people coming out of poverty.

That's the change we can bring in our society by that



thought process," Vaishnaw said.

The minister said that India has been a consumption-led economy in the past and the Prime Minister has taken a "path of faith" to increase capital investment despite reluctance from several economists.

"Many of the European countries followed the prescription of

the noble laureates and they are in a very bad situation. We decided to choose the path which had three elements- public investment, very focussed consumption and reforms and incentives for private industries," Vaishnaw said.

He said Germany, the US, Japan, China and South Korea have followed the same path of

capital investments for several years.

The minister said the country's nominal GDP at the end of the financial year 2021 was Rs 198 trillion and the target was to reach Rs 225 trillion.

In this Rs 198 trillion economy, close to Rs 116 trillion came from consumption which is about 59 per cent of the GDP and Rs 53 trillion came from investment which is only about 27 per cent of the GDP, the minister said. The government after analysing that its liability is around 60 per cent of the GDP, decided to go for increasing capital investments.

Vaishnaw said that the Centre gets roughly Rs 20 trillion as gross

tax revenue and net tax revenue, after taking out state government share, is about Rs 15 trillion and non-tax is about Rs 3 trillion.

"About Rs 18 trillion is the total receipt that the government of India gets on the revenue side," he said.

The minister said that the government in the last year's budget-

made a capital investment of Rs 5.5 trillion.

He said that the GDP target surpassed the Rs 225 trillion target and reached Rs 232 trillion.

The minister said that the result of Rs 5.5 trillion is now visible and based on the result the government has decided to increase the capital investment to Rs 7.5 trillion.

"This will add Rs 22.5 trillion to the Indian economy," Vaishnaw said.

He said that the way our economy is structured Rs 13 trillion will go to the MSME sector and close to Rs 10 trillion will go as wages and salaries which lead to people spending in several sectors.

The minister said that people who are in the brick and mortar industry may have seen that the factory capacity utilisation was around 60-70 per cent a year ago which has now reached about 80-85 (per cent) and in some sectors it has reached 90-95 per cent where people are now planning setting up new facilities.

Akasa Air to launch operations from June

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-backed airline Akasa Air is all set to roll out its commercial operation from June, its CEO Vinay Dube has said here.

Speaking at an interactive session on the sidelines of Wings India 2022, Dube on Friday said the airline hopes to have a fleet of 72 aircraft in the next five years.

"We hope to launch our first commercial flight in the month of June. We are working very closely with Ministry of Civil Aviation, DGCA (Director General of Civil Aviation) to get our licensing done," he said replying to query.

He further said the airline plans to have 18 aircraft on ground as part of its fleet within 12 subsequent months of launching and then add 12 to 14 every year making it 72 in five years.

Sebi plans reducing timelines for open, buyback offers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

To reduce the overall time taken for the completion of open and buyback offers, markets regulator Sebi has suggested changes in the timelines for procedural activities, including a lesser time period for tendering shares.

The proposed changes would bring down the overall time taken for completion of open offers to 42 working days from the current 62 working days, while in the case of buyback offers, the time period will reduce to 36 working days from 43 working days at present.

According to Sebi, the changes would be "investor-friendly and make the process more efficient". In this regard, the watchdog has issued a consultation paper, and public comments have been sought on it till April 15.

"Considering the technological advancements in

digital and fin-tech and changes made in the manner of tendering and settlement of shares, a need was felt to review the overall timelines for procedural activities, including the duration of the tendering period, involved in the open offers and buy-back tender offers," it said.

Further, Sebi noted that the changes would also help conclude the offers in a more efficient and time-bound manner and to synchronise the timelines of similar activities across all the tender offers to the extent possible.

Among other changes, the regulator has proposed the period for tendering shares in an open offer to 10 working days from the date of receiving comments from Sebi and would remain open for 5 working days." Considering that the same is being proposed in case of open offers, we may implement the same in buyback offers also.

Lankan newspapers run out of newsprint due to forex crisis; suspend publication

Colombo: Sri Lanka's two major newspapers on Saturday suspended their publication over newsprint shortage and price escalation caused by the country's all-time worst foreign exchange crisis.

The Island, an English daily along with its sister Sinhala paper Divayina, ceased to print as the newsprint scarcities and price escalations hit the media organisation.

"We regret to inform our readers that we have been compelled to suspend the publication of The Island print edition on Saturday until further notice in view of the newsprint shortage," Upali Newspapers Limited said in a statement.

Sri Lanka is facing its all-time

worst foreign exchange crisis after the pandemic hit the nation's earnings from tourism and remittances.

The import costs of newsprint also rose remarkably since the government's decision early this month to float the Sri Lankan rupee against the US dollar. The Island newspaper, which has been in print since October 1981, will now function as an e-paper.

Sri Lanka is facing an acute economic and energy crisis triggered due to shortage of foreign exchange. A sudden rise in prices of key commodities and fuel shortage forced tens of thousands of people to queue for hours outside petrol filling stations. People are also facing long hours of power cuts daily.

PTI

Gold devaluation pulls India's foreign exchange reserve lower by \$2.5bn

Mumbai: Devaluation of gold and other asset classes pulled India's foreign exchange reserves lower by \$2.597 billion during the week that ended on March 18. Reserve Bank of India data showed that India's forex reserves fell to \$619.678 billion from \$622.275 billion reported for the previous week.

The country's forex reserves consist of foreign currency assets (FCAs), gold reserves, SDRs, and the country's reserve position with the IMF.

On a weekly basis, FCAs, the largest component of the forex reserves, edged lower by \$703 million to \$553.656 billion. Similarly, the value of the coun-

try's gold reserves decreased by \$1.831 billion to \$42.011 billion, while the SDR value fell by \$62 million to \$18.865 billion.

On the other hand, the country's reserve position with the IMF remained flat at \$5.146 billion.

"India's FX reserves decreased by \$2.60 billion to \$619.68 billion in the week ending 18th March largely due to valuation effects in gold by \$1.8 billion and \$0.7 billion in foreign currency," said Sajal Gupta, Head Fx & Rates, Edelweiss.

"The week prior to that, the FX reserves had decreased by \$9.65 billion to \$622.27 billion."

IASNS

Artificial Intelligence could be used for early resolution of matters: NCLT

New Delhi: New-age technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) could be used for early resolution of matters, including insolvency cases, National Company Law Tribunal President Justice Ramalingam Sudhakar said.

While addressing a national-level colloquium of NCLT, Justice Sudhakar suggested that AI can be used in case of resolution, especially in the admission of cases, a statement issued by NCLT said. "One aspect for early resolution is the development of Artificial

Intelligence technology," he said. "We are focusing on leveraging artificial intelligence and standardisation of processes. This will help in reducing delays. We are also focussed on evolving a code of best practices

so that there is certainty in decision making," said Justice Sudhakar.

According to Justice Sudhakar, India was envisioning a multi-trillion-dollar economy.

"The bedrock in a nation's economy is industry and commerce, which is governed by Company Law besides other laws," he said.

NCLT President stated that the government has come out with a code to resolve corporate issues to enable corporates of India to compete with the world. "NCLT is the guardian of the corporate law and each of the Members has a role to play in the economic growth of the country. Today's Colloquium will address effective and judicial process and resolution," he said.

The national-level Colloquium

on the topic, "NCLT- The Road Ahead" was also addressed by Ministry of Corporate Affairs Secretary Rajesh

Verma and Indian Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) Chairman Ravi Mital. While IBBI Chairman stated that there are two cornerstones of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC) viz timelines in process and the control is given to creditors as against Debtors.

He stated that with more standardisation, the speed of resolution of cases can be increased.

MCA Secretary Verma said NCLT has performed commendably, particularly during Covid-19. It has disposed of about 62,000 cases out of about 83,000 cases filed before it, he added.

PTI

Vodafone Idea shareholders approve ₹14,500 cr fundraising proposal



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shareholders of Vodafone Idea have approved a proposal to raise Rs 14,500 crore, the debt-ridden telecom operator said in a filing on Saturday.

Shareholders approved the proposal at the extraordinary general meeting held on Saturday, the filing said.

Vodafone Idea (VIL) had placed special resolution of issue of equity shares worth Rs 4,500 crore to the group firms of promoters Vodafone and Aditya Birla Group for transaction at the EGM.

As part of its fundraising, VIL had also sought shareholders' approval to raise Rs

10,000 crore through sale of equity or through a mix of ADR, GDR and FCCBs.

Promoter firm Vodafone plans to infuse up to Rs 3,375 crore into debt-ridden Vodafone Idea Ltd. Besides, Aditya Birla Group plans to pump in up to Rs 1,125 crore.

Vodafone's group firm Euro Pacific Securities and Prime Metals will subscribe to 253.75 crore equity shares. This will be 75 per cent of the total equity shares to be issued by the company on preferential basis, indicating a contribution of around Rs 3,374.9 crore from the British telecom major.

Aditya Birla Group firm Oriana Investments Pte will subscribe to 84.58 crore equity shares which is about 25 per cent of the preferential shares of VIL as part of the fund raise, implying a contribution of Rs 1,125 crore.

Currently, Birlas own more than 27 per cent stake in VIL while Vodafone Plc holds over 44 per cent shareholding in VIL.

VIL sought shareholders' nod to increase the authorised share capital to Rs 75,000 crore, divided into 7,000 crore equity shares of Rs 10 each and 500 crore preference share of Rs 10 each.

CIAL bags Covid champion award

PTI ■ KOCHI

The Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) has bagged the 'Covid champion' award at Wings India 2022. Which is Asia's largest event on civil aviation jointly organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and FICCI at the Begumpet airport in Hyderabad.

CIAL Managing Director S Suhas IAS received the 'Covid champions' trophy from Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia.

The airport operator was selected for the successful implementation of a meticulous project named 'Mission Safeguarding' during the pandemic time to ensure safe travel at Kochi Airport, CIAL said in a release. "CIAL followed the 5R rule: Recognise, Respond, Repeat, Record and Refer for this project which maintained hassle-free passenger movement at the terminals. The project comprehended extensive covid testing facilities, medical surveillance and follow up planning programmes ensuring seamless traffic," it said.

Petrol, diesel prices hiked again

IASNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned oil marketing companies (OMC) on Saturday raised petrol and diesel prices for the fourth time this week.

These prices were revised for the very first time on Tuesday, March 22, after a gap of more than four months.

Accordingly, the increase in selling price which includes state levies, central excise and cess amongst others, came days after crude oil prices saw astronomical rise due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

In New Delhi, the price of petrol and diesel were increased again by 80 paise per litre.

As per pump prices, petrol now costs Rs 98.61 per litre and diesel Rs 89.87 per litre in the national capital. On Friday, petrol prices were increased to Rs 97.81 per litre and diesel Rs 89.07 per litre in Delhi.

In the financial capital Mumbai, prices were hiked to Rs 113.35 per litre for petrol and diesel to Rs 97.55 per

litre. Besides, the prices of both the transport fuels were raised in Kolkata.

The petrol prices rose to Rs 108.01 and diesel to Rs 93.01 per litre. In Chennai too, they were increased. Petrol there now costs Rs 104.43 and diesel Rs 94.47 per litre.

Till Tuesday, fuel prices were steady since November 2021 when the Centre reduced excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 5 and Rs 10 per litre, respectively.

The OMCs revised the transportation fuel cost based on various factors such as rupee to US dollar exchange rate, cost of crude oil and demand of fuel amongst others.

Resultantly, the final price includes excise duty, value added tax and dealer's commission. It was widely expected that the OMCs will revise the current prices due to high crude oil cost.

Lately, crude oil prices have been volatile surging by nearly 35-40 per cent on fear of tight supplies.

PTI

Coal India arm NEC resumes mining operations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Coal India-arm North Eastern Coalfields on Saturday resumed its mining operations at Tikak colliery in Assam, a statement said on Saturday.

Mining operations at NEC were halted owing to non-availability of land for overburden dump and certain clearances.

"Coal mining operations at North Eastern Coalfields (NEC), a unit of world's largest coal company Coal India Ltd (CIL), resumed on Saturday with the Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi inaugurating resumption of mining operations at Tikak colliery of NEC," according to an official statement.

Chief Minister of Assam Himanta Biswa Sarma was also present on the occasion.

"Today we have resumed mining operations at Tikak colliery and it is a very impor-

tant step towards development of the region. The coal quality of NEC is superior and it is in high demand by several of India's domestic industries," Joshi said.

NEC presently operates in Tikak colliery in Margherita, Assam with two open cast projects (OCPs) namely Tikak OCP and Tikak Extension OCP with a combined coal production capacity of four lakh tonne per annum. NEC will also start producing coal from its Tirap OCP from upcoming fiscal 2022-23. NEC has planned to produce 10 lakh tonne of coal from 2023-24.

"Increased production in the mines will generate more revenues for the State Government, more employment for the people and also support small business activities, while catering to the energy demand," Joshi added.

Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of country's coal production.

PTI

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, **UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM** DURGAPAL GARDEN NEAR SINTHYA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, PILIKOTHI ROAD, BARI MUKHANI HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (PIN 263139) Letter no. 443/Nivida-Anubandh/Ranikhet/18 Dated: 26-03-2022

E-Tender Notice

1. Name of the work:- CONSTRUCTION OF GOVERNMENT INTER COLLEGE MAIN BUILDING AT MACHOD, DISTT-ALMORA
2. Estimated Cost:- Rs. 198.98 Lakh
3. Period of Completion:- 8 Month
4. Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:- 26-03-2022 (17.00 hrs)
5. Online Bid submission: End date :- 16-04-2022 (17.00 hrs)
6. Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :- 19-04-2022 (11.00 hrs)
7. Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:- General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Laxmi Niwas, Durgapal Garden, Pilikothi, Haldwani.
8. Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:- 30-03-2022 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.
9. For further details, details of subsequent Amendment/correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in

GENERAL MANAGER

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, **UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM** DURGAPAL GARDEN NEAR SINTHYA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, PILIKOTHI ROAD, BARI MUKHANI HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (PIN 263139) Letter no. 444/Nivida-Anubandh/Ranikhet/19 Dated: 26-03-2022

E-Tender Notice

1. Name of the work:- CONSTRUCTION OF GOVERNMENT INTER COLLEGE MAIN BUILDING AT Painsiya, DISTT-ALMORA
2. Estimated Cost:- Rs. 198.98 Lakh
3. Period of Completion:- 8 Month
4. Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:- 26-03-2022 (17.00 hrs)
5. Online Bid submission: End date :- 16-04-2022 (17.00 hrs)
6. Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :- 19-04-2022 (11.00 hrs)
7. Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:- General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Laxmi Niwas, Durgapal Garden, Pilikothi, Haldwani.
8. Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:- 30-03-2022 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.
9. For further details, details of subsequent Amendment/correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in

GENERAL MANAGER

PUBLIC NOTICE

VASTU HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED

A Public Ltd. Company Incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956

Date of Incorporation: 04.02.2005

CIN: U65922MH2005PLC272501

Registered & Corporate Office: Unit Nos. 203 & 204, 2nd Floor, A wing, Navbharat Estates, Zakaria Bunder Road, Sewri (West), Mumbai - 400015

Tel No: 022-24190911

Email: cs@vastuhfc.com

Website: <https://www.vastuhfc.com>

SHIFTING OF BRANCH OFFICE

The Branch office of Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Limited ("Company") at Delhi shall be shifted to the new premises as mentioned below from 27th April, 2022 (effective date):

Old Address
E-38, 2 nd floor, Naraina Vihar, Hari Swar Building, New Delhi 110028

New Address
F NO - 301/10165
Mezzanine Gurudwara Road West
Extn Area, Karol Bagh Delhi -110005

The Old Premises will remain operational till 27th April, 2022. From 27th April, 2022 onwards, all transactions / customer service requests of the Company should be sent to the new address only.

In case of any queries, you may contact us at: customercare@vastuhfc.com

Address: Unit Nos. 203 & 204, 2nd Floor, A wing, Navbharat Estates, Zakaria Bunder Road, Sewri (West), Mumbai 400015

Date : 27th March, 2022

Place : Delhi

Signature

Domestic coal supply to be made proportional: Power Min

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The power ministry on Saturday said it will not be possible to supply coal other than on proportionate basis to make up any shortfall.

The Ministry of Power in a statement said it is monitoring the coal supply situation in the country and has taken steps to ensure adequate coal supply and coal stocks based on the domestic coal received from Coal India Ltd (CIL), Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL) and captive coal mines.

As per the decision taken in the ministry in consultation with state gencos, IPPs (independent power producers) and central gencos, domestic coal supply will be made proportional to the coal received from CIL/SCCL for all the gencos and it will not be possible to give more coal other than on proportionate basis to make up any shortfall, it added.

It has issued a circular directing certain actions to be taken on priority to enhance the supply of domestic coal. Firstly, production in captive coal mines allotted to power plants may be maximised to the limit permitted by the ministry.

Secondly, it has been decided that a lesser number of rakes would be made



available to such power plants where there is slackness in prompt unloading of coal from rakes.

This step has been taken to maximise the utilisation of available railway rakes. Therefore, this aspect may be monitored at the state government level and unloading of coal may be ensured within the given norm.

It has been reported that several power plants are taking much longer time than the norm in unloading coal from railway rakes, which is affecting the turn-around time, the statement said.

The central electricity authority (CEA) has been asked to monitor the unloading time at power plants.

Thirdly, many generating companies have overdue (for coal companies) running in several hundred crores of rupees. Such a huge overdue amount affects the ability of coal companies to continue the supply.

Therefore, the bills of coal companies must be paid in due time so that coal supplies to such generating companies is not affected on this account.

It has also been observed that the non-operation of certain imported coal-based (ICB) plants in states had put more pressure on domestic coal demand, leading to low coal stocks for domestic coal-based (DCB) plants.

The procurer and sellers are legally bound by the PPA (power purchase agreement) signed by both parties.

While the procurers are bound to pay the bills timely, the gencos (sellers) are bound to maintain adequate fuel stocks and offer availability as per PPA.

Not maintaining adequate fuel stocks or not giving availability on any pretext (such as the high price of imported coal etc) is inexcusable, the ministry said.

Such conduct on the part of a seller should be immediately responded to by the procurer sternly by using all possible contractual and other available legal interventions at the level of State

government, the statement noted.

If any gaming is noticed on the part of the seller such as not supplying electricity under PPA and selling in the market should be brought to notice of the Regulatory Commission without any delay under intimation to the Ministry of Power for immediate intervention, the ministry added.

However, it is understood that some of the imported coal-based power plants are facing issues in the PPA due to changes in Indonesian Regulations and an increase in international coal prices, the statement noted.

These issues also need to be resolved based on mutual negotiations in a just and transparent manner, it added.

Hence, states may ensure implementation of PPA with ICB plants with necessary contractual interventions or in extraordinary circumstances use statutory provisions of the Electricity Act 82003 to ensure generation and may approach the ministry for any intervention required in case of an inter-state plant.

The ministry also said that necessary action may be taken to import coal in a transparent and competitive manner for blending purposes based on the demand assessment and to deal with any shortfall of coal availability.



sunday pioneer

INDIAN
PREMIER LEAGUE 2022

7

YOU CAN STILL BE A LEADER WITHIN THE TEAM, DRIVE IT FORWARD TOWARDS SUCCESS & WINNING TROPHIES & TITLES, BUT I TAKE A LOT OF PRIDE IN CONTRIBUTING FOR THE TEAM — VIRAT KOHLI

KKR beat CSK by six wickets in IPL opener

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A clinically all-round Kolkata Knight Riders beat defending champions Chennai Super Kings by six wickets as Mahendra Singh Dhoni's first tournament fifty in three years went in vain in the IPL lung opener here on Saturday.

Unburdened by captaincy, Dhoni, who relinquished the leadership role just two days back, smashed an unbeaten 50 off 38 balls to take CSK to 131 for 5 after being put in to bat.

But, KKR, who lost to CSK in the last season summit clash, chased down the target with nine balls to spare, with out of favour India batter Ajinkya Rahane top-scoring with a 34-ball 44.

Rahane, who was bought for Rs 1 crore by KKR after playing very few matches for Delhi Capitals last season, was in good touch as he hit six fours and one six during his knock. He shared 43 runs for the opening wicket with Venkatesh Iyer (16) and that was the highest partnership for KKR in the end. Nitish Rana (21), new captain Shreyas Iyer (20 not out)



and Sam Billings (25) made useful contributions to give KKR a winning start to the tournament.

Iyer thus started his KKR captaincy with a win while his counterpart Ravindra Jadeja, who took the place of the iconic Dhoni as CSK skipper, began his stint with a loss.

Iyer hit the winning runs, a boundary, as KKR reached 133 for 4 in 18.3 overs.

Dwayne Bravo (3/20) was the pick of the bowlers for CSK.

Earlier, KKR dished out a clinical bowling show to restrict CSK to 131/5.

CSK crossed the 130-run mark thanks to Dhoni's unbeaten 50 off 38 balls (7x4; 1x6) and skipper Jadeja's 26 not out off 28 balls (1x6). Dhoni's last IPL fifty was 84 not out versus Royal Challengers Bangalore on Apr

21, 2019.

CSK opener Ruturaj Gaikwad (0) perished cheaply. After being caught by Nitish Rana in the slip cordon off pacer Umesh Yadav (2/20).

The typical Wankede track, which had a good amount of bounce, did aid the KKR bowlers and they took maximum advantage.

Devon Conway (3) and Robin Uthappa (28 off 21 balls)

then tried to revive the CSK another boundary and a maxi-

BCCI honours Olympians ahead of IPL opener



PTI ■ MUMBAI

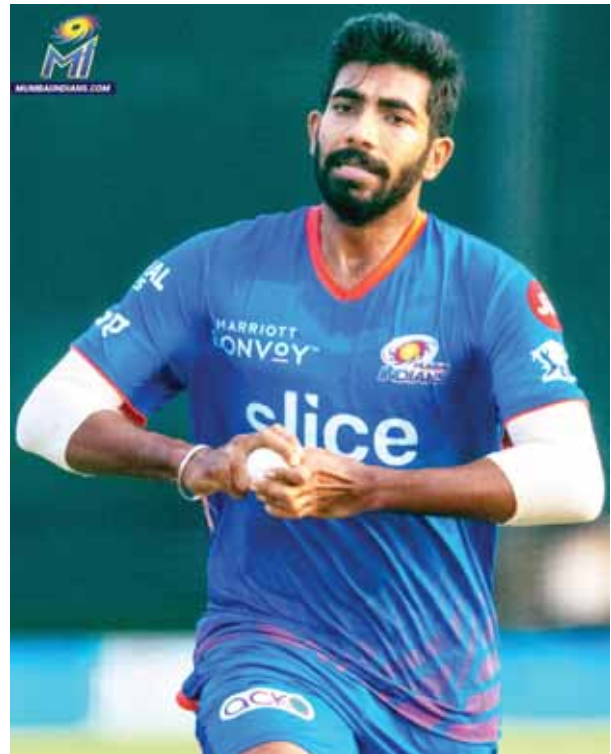
The BCCI on Saturday felicitated Tokyo Olympians, including gold medalist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, with cash awards ahead of the IPL opener between Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata

Knight Riders here.

The Board handed Chopra a cheque of ₹1 crore while Tokyo Games bronze medal winning boxer Lovlina Borgohain was given ₹25 lakh for her achievement.

The men's hockey team, which had also won a historic bronze medal at the quadrennial multi-sport event in Tokyo, was also handed a combined cheque of ₹1 crore.

Captain Manpreet Singh picked up the cheque from BCCI chief Sourav Ganguly in the presence of Board Secretary Jay Shah.



MI for Delhi

PTI ■ MUMBAI

DC vs Mumbai
Live from 3:30 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 & 2

Mumbai Indians' five titles to Delhi Capitals' none will matter little when the heavyweights, equipped with multiple match-winners, lock horns in a clash of titans in a new IPL here on Sunday.

Mumbai have retained their core in skipper Rohit Sharma, Ishan Kishan, Kieron Pollard and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, and the role of these four would be crucial against DC at the Cricket Club of India (CCI), as well against other teams through the season.

While the leadership skills and tactical acumen of Rohit, who is now the India captain in all formats, are well documented, how Rishabh Pant performs as skipper will be watched with interest, keeping in mind the need to identify future leaders for the country.

Rohit has already announced that he and Ishan Kishan, who was bought for a staggering Rs 15.25 crore, would open the batting. The duo can take any good attack to the cleaners, and Delhi's

experienced one would be wary of their prowess.

Suryakumar Yadav isn't available for the game as he is undergoing rehabilitation at the NCA and Fabian Allen, another hard-hitting stroke-maker, could be an able replacement.

While Bumrah will spearhead the pace attack, experienced left-arm pacer Jaydev Unadkat can be more than handy on the Brabourne track. Meanwhile, with Australian David Warner yet to join the squad, Prithvi Shaw and Pant could open the batting for DC.

The key for the Capitals will be Pant, who will need to lead from the front and is known for his ability to single-handedly turn a game on its head.

South African pacer Anrich Nortje is expected to lead the DC pace attack and be the team's go-to man in the death overs, along with Mustafizur Rahman.

Smith ruled out of Pak series

PTI ■ KARACHI

Australia suffered a blow ahead of their upcoming ODI series and lone T20 against Pakistan with senior batter Steve Smith being ruled out with an elbow problem. Cricket Australia said on Friday night that Smith will miss the white-ball leg of the tour of Pakistan to manage discomfort in his left elbow. "Smith experienced some discomfort during the three-match Test series and, with a full schedule of international cricket over the coming 18 months, it was felt prudent to prioritise recovery and treatment at this time," a CA statement said.

Leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson who failed to impress in the three-match Test series has replaced Smith in the white-ball squad. Australia play three One-Day Internationals (March 29, 31 and April 2) and a T20 International (April 5), with all the matches taking place in Lahore.

SQUAD

Aaron Finch (capt), Sean Abbott, Ashton Agar, Jason Behrendorff, Alex Carey, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Marnus Labuschagne, Mitchell Marsh, Ben McDermott, Marcus Stoinis, Mitchell Swepson, Adam Zampa.

RCB, Punjab begin quest for 1st title

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

Quitting captaincy may unburden Virat Kohli the batter but the focus will still remain on the maestro in Royal Challengers Bangalore's IPL-15 opener against Punjab Kings here on Sunday.

For, it will be the first time Kohli will not be leading RCB in nearly a decade, turning out only as a player, instead. Relinquishing captaincy, however, will in no way take away any attention from Kohli, who will look to rediscover his glorious touch and power the franchise to a maiden title triumph in the 2022 edition of the event.

Both RCB and PBKS will have new captains at the helm in Faf du Plessis and Mayank Agarwal respectively, but Kohli will certainly attract a lot of attention now that he is not

entrusted with leading the side, something which he last experienced in 2012.

Still eying their maiden title triumphs, both teams will be eager to make a strong statement first up.

Seasoned South African du Plessis, who was acquired by RCB for Rs 7 crore in the IPL mega auction last month, will captain the side even as it continues its search for its first-ever title, having failed in the previous 14 outings. At 37, du Plessis doesn't have many IPL seasons left in him and he would be too eager to guide the team to an elusive triumph.

While they will have a new captain with fresh ideas, RCB will have to grapple with the absence of Australian duo of Glenn Maxwell and Josh Hazlewood in the team's first few matches. Maxwell is away for his marriage while Hazlewood is in Pakistan

with the Test side and will miss three matches at least, so is pacer Jason Behrendorff.

But RCB still have some good options in players like Sherfane Rutherford, Finn Allen etc. A lot of focus will be on Sri Lankan all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga and Dinesh Karthik.

On the other hand, the Kings will miss the services of Jonny Bairstow, who is in the West Indies with the England Test side in their first game, and also Kagiso Rabada as he has just finished his ODI engagement for South Africa against Bangladesh.

In the absence of Rabada their bowling attack looks quite thin and they would hope that back-up players deliver the goods against a strong RCB batting unit.



PBKS vs RCB
Live from 7:30 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 & 2

Prannoy enters Swiss Open final

PTI ■ BASEL

Continuing his impressive run, India's H S Prannoy stormed into the men's singles final at the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton tournament with a hard-fought win over Indonesia's world number 5 Anthony Sinisuka Ginting here on Saturday.

The 29-year-old eked out a 21-19, 19-21, 21-18 win over Ginting in a thrilling semifinal

that lasted an hour and 11 minutes. It was Prannoy's first final in five years, having won the US Open in 2017.

He will take on either compatriot Kidambi Srikanth or Indonesia's Jonatan Christie in the summit clash on Sunday.

On Friday, Srikanth notched up a stunning three-game win over world number three Anders Antonsen to progress to the men's singles semifinals of Swiss Open tourney.



Ponting sees Pant as 'successful' future India captain

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Two-time World Cup-winning Australian skipper Ricky Ponting has no doubt that flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant will be a successful India captain if he is handed the responsibility in future.

Pant took over the captaincy at IPL franchise Delhi Capitals last season in the absence of an injured Shreyas

Iyer, with the Ponting-led team management showing faith in the player.

"With some experience in a role like this in such a high-pressure tournament like the IPL, you know, I've got no doubt in years to come there is every chance that Risabh could be international captain. No doubt about it," Ponting said.

Ponting, who oversaw Rohit Sharma's rise to become

the most successful IPL skipper for the record five-time champions Mumbai Indians, feels the duo of Pant and Rohit have identical qualities.

"I haven't thought about that actually. But I think they are actually quite similar. When Rohit took over at Mumbai, he was quite a young man as well and he just sort of started out in his international career. He would probably been about 23-24, similar age

to what Rishabh over here.

"To be totally honest, they're actually quite similar people. I know they're great mates and they probably exchange little things about leadership and captaincy along the way as well," he said.

Ponting said Pant can emulate what Rohit has achieved for Mumbai Indians.

"There is every opportunity for Rishabh's journey to be quite similar to Rohit."

Salah sets up win for Egypt over Senegal



AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Prolific Liverpool scorer Mohamed Salah was the architect of the only goal as Egypt edged Senegal 1-0 in Cairo on Friday in a high-profile World Cup play-off first leg.

Salah turned inside the box and slammed the ball against the crossbar with the rebound hitting Senegal defender Saliou Ciss and rolling into the net for an own-goal. The eagerly awaited clash was a repeat of the Africa Cup of Nations final last month, which Senegal won 4-2 on penalties in

Messi's Argentina take unbeaten run to 30

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES

Lionel Messi scored on his return to the national team as Argentina stretched their world-leading unbeaten run to 30 matches with a routine 3-0 World Cup qualifying win over Venezuela on Friday.

Goals from Nicolas Gonzalez and Angel Di Maria,

Cameroon after 120 goalless minutes.

It was one of three first legs decided by a solitary goal with Algeria winning 1-0 against Cameroon in Douala and Tunisia achieving a similar result against Mali in Bamako.

Ghana and Nigeria played a

both created by Rodrigo De Paul, also kept a packed Bombonera stadium enthralled in Buenos Aires for a match that had nothing riding on it. Argentina have long qualified for the World Cup in Qatar later this year, while Venezuela were the first team in South America's single 10-nation qualification group to be eliminated.

0-0 draw in Kumasi and Morocco came from behind to hold the Democratic Republic of Congo 1-1 in Kinshasa.

The five second legs are scheduled for Tuesday and the aggregate winners will represent Africa at the World Cup in Qatar from November 21.

Bates, Rowe star in NZ win

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

Suzie Bates compiled her 12th ODI century and became the first New Zealand batter, and fourth overall, to reach 5,000 runs in the format as the hosts beat Pakistan by 71 runs to end an otherwise disappointing Women's World Cup campaign on a positive note here on Saturday.

After Bates' magnificent century guided New Zealand to 265 for eight, a maiden five-wicket haul from medium pacer Hannah Rowe helped New Zealand register a comfortable victory at the Hagley Oval.

Bates hit 126 from just 135 deliveries in the White Ferns' total and that proved too much for Pakistan as Rowe picked up 5/55 to effectively seal the result for New Zealand.

The victory is unlikely to help the Kiwis reach the semi-finals of the tournament though, with New Zealand now requiring both England and India to record large losses on Sunday to have any chance of sneaking in.

Women's World Cup semis berth at stake for India



PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

India vs South Africa
Live from 6:30 am IST
STAR SPORTS 2 & 3

the last four, and a point from the game will also work for the Mithali Raj-led side, as they have a superior NRR (+0.768) than West Indies (-0.890).

In case India lose to South Africa, their only hope of advancing to the semifinals will be if England, who have a better NRR (+0.778), also lose their last league stage match to Bangladesh and finish on a lower NRR. That seems unlikely, though.

But the 'Women in Blue' would want to hold all the cards and also get a two-match winning momentum going into the semifinals.

India's inconsistent batting came to the fore yet again in an otherwise 110-run win against Bangladesh, and skipper Raj would be keen to improve on that aspect against a challenging South African bowling attack.

Raj herself has been struggling with the willow. She has four single digit scores in the tournament.

Potentially playing her last game for India should they not make the semis, the 39-year-old veteran would be eager to get some runs under her belt, and ensure that her team makes the cut.

Smriti Mandhana, barring the century against West Indies, has also looked scratchy. Shafali got some much-needed runs against Bangladesh while Yastika Bhatia has slotted herself perfectly at No 3.

Vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur has been India's most consistent performer with the bat while all-rounders Pooja Vastrakar and Sneha Rana have shown they can be counted on to score quite rui as a group to get the better of South Africa who have only lost one match in the tournament.

Swiatek becomes new world No 1 with Miami win

AP ■ MIAMI

Poland's Iga Swiatek clinched becoming the new world number one in women's tennis on Friday by defeating swiss Viktorija Golubic 6-2, 6-0 at the WTA Miami Open.

Swiatek will move into the top spot vacated by Australian Ashleigh Barty after the three-time Grand Slam champion announced her retirement ear-



lier this week.

The 20-year-old Warsaw-born star had to win her second-round match at the South Florida hardcourt tournament to ensure she would replace Barty.

Swiatek will be the first Polish woman to reach the rankings summit, eclipsing the old mark for players from her homeland she shared with former world number two

Agnieszka Radwanska.

Poland's first Grand Slam singles title was won by Swiatek at the 2020 French Open.

Swiatek has enjoyed a blistering start to the season, winning WTA titles at Doha and Indian Wells and is now on a career-best 12-match win streak.

She's also the first player since Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki in 2009 to win five or more titles before turning 21.

**'I OWE ALL
MY SUCCESS
TO MY
JOURNEY
TO DID'**



”

I just want to ask them to keep showering their love on me and the show **DID Lil Masters Season 5** as they always have done. Also, **DID** is on-air now and I request them to watch it once for me and I know they will not regret

A close-up photograph showing a person's hand holding a long, thin metal rod vertically. Below the hand are two glass jars on a wooden surface. The jar on the left contains several metal rods, and the jar on the right contains several pens with light-colored barrels. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a workshop or office environment.

The writer is founder, Smiling Tree

Actor Vidisha Srivastava recently entered &TV's cult comedy show *Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai* as the new Anita Bhabhi. She says, "Anita Bhabhi is an iconic character who enjoys massive popularity and fan following. I feel elated and honoured to be given this opportunity. When I got selected, my first reaction was, 'Oh my gosh! Is this really happening!'. I was ecstatic. I have always enjoyed watching the show for its entertaining characters and humorous plots. I had never imagined that I would be a part of it as one of its lead characters one day. I am thrilled to take on this huge mandate and, most importantly, share the screen with the accomplished and talented actors Aasif Sheikh, RohitashGouri, and ShubhangAatre. I am grateful to Sanjay and Binaifer Kohli Ji for believing in my abilities and giving me this wonderful opportunity."

It is John VS John in this film as the season actor returns to his favourite action genre in a high octane triple role a rarity especially in the past decade of cinema. Sequel to the 2018 Satyamev Jayate, Satyamev Jayate 2 is a John Abraham show through and through with the action hero rocking an enticing triple role of a vigilante, a police officer and a father, as he sets out on a mission to see a corruption free India. However, the vision of a corruption free India is filled with roadblocks as enemies and wrong doers are spread across verticals in society from police, to politicians, industrialists and even common men. Will Satya prove successful in his fight against corruption and abuse of power? Initially hesitant to play the third role of the father, John Abraham does justice and teleports us to a different era as he dons the hat of a herculean farmer much different from the real life people he is known to portray on screen.



the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

Guide to the times

In *The Hindu Manifesto For India's Democracy*, Subramanian Swamy has articulated his points with sharpness & clarity

10



12

Relationship calls for living for other

Life is an expression of the harmony of opposites. We need to learn to live for each other rather than in a demanding mode

What's natural is beautiful, and when you're not you anymore, you become a caricature — Monica Bellucci



GENETIC ANALYSIS FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

The increased accessibility and affordability of genetic analysis and preventive healthcare are indicative of the possibility of how the healthcare system in the country can evolve to not only provide early diagnosis to patients but also better prognosis along with curative or preventive treatment, writes RAHUL RANGANATH

With a modern lifestyle come modern problems. And these modern problems require modern solutions. The rising number of health issues in the country's population is one example. From obesity to cancer, the graph continues to rise and the causes are often linked to a combination of factors including an unhealthy lifestyle, genetics, and environmental impact. But can we say for sure what causes these diseases? Is there a way to catch them before they manifest in the body? And if so, does India have the healthcare infrastructure to implement these measures?

The simple answer to all of the above questions is 'yes'. But the reality is slightly more nuanced. When it comes to the human body, there is so much that we don't know and we are still making sense of what we do know. That however doesn't mean that we haven't made advancements that can help catch diseases and lifestyle disorders early enough that individuals can take preventive measures.

Did you know that to date more than 7,000 diseases have been known and reported worldwide? From these, nearly 80% are known to have a genetic predisposition (according to Global Genes). That's a huge number! What if you could predict with a certain amount of surety if you have the gene for particular diseases like obesity and hypertension? This is where predictive healthcare and genetic analysis come in.

Despite the fact that on average eight crore Indians are affected by rare diseases that have genetic causes, the predictive healthcare industry has only just started growing in the country. However, DNA-based wellness organisations are helping increase the reach of predictive healthcare across India. This has far-reaching implications because it means that individuals can now use services like these to help predict the likely turn their health might take and take preventive measures to lessen or altogether avoid the impact of serious diseases and medical conditions.

The field of genetics is developing at a fast pace across the country, with more people becoming aware of its impact and benefits towards the betterment of physical health and wellbeing. With this rapid growth, in fact, it is hard to believe that the first effort to sequence a genome cost nearly \$3 billion and took 13 years to complete (the Human Genome Project). Fast forward nearly two decades ahead, and it's harder to believe that Whole Genome Sequencing can nowadays be done for under Rs 1 lakh and targeted genetic analysis for specific

conditions can be done below 10 thousand in India.

Now before we delve any deeper into the benefits of predictive healthcare and genetic analysis, let's understand how it actually works. The process of genetic analysis basically involves studying a person's genes, which are these units that carry the hereditary information that determines all of a person's traits. These genes, therefore, carry information about what kind of diseases someone might be predisposed to. For instance, you may have heard a doctor tell someone they have a family history of high blood pressure or thyroid and therefore should take better care of their health. Well with procedures like genetic analysis, blood analysis, and lifestyle analysis that are now available, you can figure this out with a certain amount of surety and thereby take preventative measures accordingly without having to shoot in the dark.

The reason why genetic analysis is so important and groundbreaking is that the human body has around 20,000 genes and the mutation in any of these genes on their own or in a combination with others can result in disease. So analysing your genetic code can actually help understand where the mutation happened. And this has far-reaching implications not just for the regular Indian but also for all branches of medicine. Because this is information that can help doctors give a better prognosis for a disease. For instance, if someone has a parent or grandparent who suffered from cancer, the predictive health analysis from genetic testing can actually help doctors figure out the patient also has the genetic predisposition for the disease. This can help them take preventive measures, making it a lot easier for them to even deal if this is something they can't avoid. There are plenty of examples in mainstream media of celebrities who have done this successfully. One celebrity who comes to mind is Angelina Jolie who got a double mastectomy done after the results from her genetic testing procedure revealed she possessed the gene that put her at a higher risk for breast cancer and it was passed down from her mother's side.

Although the Indian market is not as developed as let's say the United States, where you can get genetic analysis as well as screening on a day-to-day basis, it holds a huge potential. Compared to 5 years ago, when the market for it was nearly non-existent in India, the industry has risen to a market share of over 500 crores and is growing at 30% annually. This is a sign of how far genetic testing has come in India, with an increasing number of tests being done

THE REASON WHY GENETIC ANALYSIS IS SO IMPORTANT AND GROUNDBREAKING IS THAT THE HUMAN BODY HAS AROUND 20,000 GENES AND THE MUTATION IN ANY OF THESE GENES ON THEIR OWN OR IN A COMBINATION WITH OTHERS CAN RESULT IN DISEASE. SO ANALYSING YOUR GENETIC CODE CAN ACTUALLY HELP UNDERSTAND WHERE THE MUTATION HAPPENED



here and a lot of them costing half as much as they did five years ago. Moreover, tests that took weeks can now be done in days.

Its further rise in popularity can be addressed to the discovery of new ways in which genetic testing is helping people in their day-to-day lives. Predictive health analysis, which is becoming a popular tool amongst many individuals concerned for their health, is making use of genetic data to provide users with actionable insight that can have serious implications on their healthcare.

Post the pandemic there has been a rise in the level of health awareness in the country. People are now looking for healthier lifestyle changes and attempting to lead more holistic lives. The problem here is that most people approach healthy living from a one-size-fits-all approach but in reality that is not how it works. For instance, a lot of people go on crash diets or rigorous workout schedules to try and lose weight without first understanding why they're gaining weight in the first place. It could be simply because of a sedentary lifestyle or it could be another issue altogether like having metabolic issues that are leading to the condition, or it could be a deeper issue still such as a hormonal imbalance. When people dive head-first into lifestyle changes without first understanding how their body will react and whether the said change will even work for them or not, they might be doing more harm than good.

This is where predictive healthcare is a game-changer. By studying and analysing a person's genetic data pool, it helps in identifying those key areas where the problem actually exists. Accordingly, lifestyle and habit changes can be suggested that the individual can then easily incorporate into their lifestyle and achieve better results sustainably in a shorter time.

In fact, bringing about lifestyle changes to help people lead healthier lives is one of the biggest advantages that genetic analysis can offer on an individual level. The promise this field holds is immense. Its ability to provide in-depth analysis of a person's health from multiple sources is second to none. From identifying lifestyle trigger points that prompt certain genes in our body to react in a particular manner to predicting how they might impact one's health in the future, predictive healthcare has a huge potential in shaping healthier lifestyles that are specifically tailored to our individual needs.

Other uses of genetic testing include carrier testing which helps in identifying people that carry one copy of a gene mutation which, when

present in two copies, can cause a genetic disorder. This type of testing is being offered to individuals who have a family history of a genetic disorder and to people in certain ethnic groups where consanguineous marriages are prevalent, giving rise to millions of individuals from the same ancestral line suffering from single-gene disorders.

In every case, such tests can provide a sense of relief from uncertainty and help people make informed decisions about managing their health. Take, for example, one negative result that can eliminate the constant need for unnecessary checkups and screening tests in some cases. And a positive result, in contrast, can direct a person toward available prevention, monitoring, and treatment options.

Apart from individual betterment, genetic data is also enabling law enforcement agencies to function more optimally. Forensic testing, which uses DNA sequences to identify an individual for legal purposes, has developed into a sophisticated tool for solving crimes or helping catastrophe victims, for ruling out or implicating a crime suspect, or establishing biological relationships between people in case of disputes, among other things.

Since the industry is still in its nascent stages in India, there are of course challenges that still must be dealt with. For instance, scores of people who can be helped by genetic analysis are unable to avail it, either due to lack of awareness or owing to the expenses involved. Further to this, the tests generally available are modelled on the European or American populations, hence, limiting their accuracy for the Indian population. This problem can only be solved by increasing the amount of genetic testing in the population to create an India specific database of genetic markers and their implications. This would also unlock precision medicine for our population where medications for a range of disorders are provided basis an individual's genetic profiles so as to maximise the efficacy and minimise the side-effects of a drug.

The increased accessibility and affordability of genetic analysis and preventive healthcare are slowly showing the possibility of how the healthcare system in the country can evolve to not only provide early diagnosis to patients but also better prognosis along with curative or preventive treatment. In the years to come, this could help people increase life expectancy, find better treatment options, and live overall healthier lives.

The writer CEO & Co-Founder of Nugenomics, a wellness start-up that marries genetic testing & artificial intelligence

PAMARTY VENKATARAMANA

