



# #CreatingForIndia

Creative entrepreneurs on YouTube helped generate **6,83,900** full-time equivalent jobs in India.



 / CARachanaPhadkeRanade

Every day, millions of Indians come to YouTube to learn new skills, earn a living, and transform their lives. YouTube is privileged to play a role in helping Indians achieve their dreams. Take Rachana: Through her YouTube channel, she breaks down investment and stock market concepts for viewers with the goal of inspiring financial discipline and instilling confidence in women to secure their futures. With her channel reaching 36 lac subscribers during the pandemic, Rachana leveraged YouTube to become a leading 'finfluencer' in India.



Scan the QR code  
to read about  
YouTube's  
positive impact

According to Oxford Economics, YouTube's creative ecosystem supported 6,83,900 full-time equivalent [FTE] jobs in India in 2020.






**KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)  
CIN: U85110KA1970SGC001919

No. A1M1B3/Fly Ash/BTPS/Mar 2022  
**E-AUCTION NOTIFICATION** (Through e-Procurement Portal of GoK)  
(Evaluation of Auction participants and E-Auction bidding)  
Name of Work: SALE OF DRY FLY ASH FROM BELLARY THERMAL POWER STATION (BTPS) Unit 1 to 3 OF KPCL. KPCL has already finalized H1 (M/s. UltraTech Cement Ltd.) and H2 (M/s. Dalmia Bharat Cement Ltd.), bidders in the previous tender cum auction for lifting of dry fly ash from Ballari TPS and is already issuing fly ash to them after entering into contract agreements with them. Tenders are invited through e-auction from direct end-users/ suppliers to end-users of fly ash for H3, H4, H5.....In positions for 'Lifting of dry fly ash of approximately 7.30 lakh MT per annum (2000 MT per day) on 'as available' basis for a period from finalization of this auction and issue of Letter of Award up to 06.06.2024 from Ballari, i.e., from Bellary Thermal Power Station - Unit # 1 to 3 of KPCL. Even the above two existing H1 and H2 bidders can participate in this auction and have a separate contract additionally. Operation & Maintenance of Ash Handling System and Silo of BTPS, Unit 1 to 3, including Spares, Consumables, Housekeeping & Miscellaneous works, if any, is in the scope of KPCL. The last date for receipt of the completed bids: 17.00 Hrs. on 21.03.2022. The Auction document can be downloaded from the website <https://www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. Further details can be had from: **The Superintending Engineer (Mines), KPCL, No.82, Shakti Bhavan, II Floor, Race Course Road, Bengaluru- 560001.** e-mail: [cefulskpcl@karnataka.gov.in](mailto:cefulskpcl@karnataka.gov.in) / [sufels@gmail.com](mailto:sufels@gmail.com) Website: [www.karnatakapower.com](http://www.karnatakapower.com) e-Portal/ HP Helpdesk : 080-22234115 / 22230960.




**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL- II, CHANDIGARH**  
SCO 33-34-35, First Floor Sector 17 A, Chandigarh

Summons under sub section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993.  
Exh. No. 5423 PUBLICATION SUMMONS Case No. OA/643/2021  
**HDFC Bank Vs. Bhim Sain**  
1. Bhim Sain S/o Sh. Hari Singh Bhim Sain Son of Shri Kashri Ram Resident of Near Dew Saw Mai Village/Nathohar Tehsil/Rasid District/Sirsa/Haryana 125076(Borrower)  
2. Malkiet Singh Son of Shri Hari Ram Resident of Badher (2371) Nathohar Tehsil/Rasid District/Sirsa/Haryana  
WHEREAS, OA/643/2021 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 21/02/2022.  
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 32,78,828/- (Application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).  
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-  
(i). to show cause, within thirty days of the service or summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;  
(ii). to disclose Particulars of properties or assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A or the original application;  
(iii). you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the Application for attachment of properties;  
(iv). you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;  
(v). you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets or other assets and Properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets.  
You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 25/04/2022 at 10:30A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.  
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 25.02.2022  
Sd/-  
Registrar, DRT-II, Chandigarh



**INDIA EXPOSITION MART LTD**  
CIN: U99990DL2001PLC110386  
Regd. Office: Plot No. 1, 210 - Atlantic Plaza, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Local Shopping Centre, Mayapuri Phase-4, Delhi - 110081 Tel: +91-120-2328011-20, Fax: +91-120-2328010 Email id: [cs@indiaexpocentre.com](mailto:cs@indiaexpocentre.com), Website : [www.indiaexpomart.com](http://www.indiaexpomart.com)


**NOTICE OF THE 12TH EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING, INFORMATION ON E-VOTING**  
**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** THAT the 12th Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Company is scheduled on Tuesday, March 29, 2022 at 02:30 PM at Govt. Servants Co-operative House Building Society Limited, Kalyan Kendra, 9, Paschim Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi – 110057 to transact the business as stated in the notice sent to the members individually.  
The Notice of EGM has been dispatched to all the members whose email IDs are registered with the Company. Physical copies of the same have been sent to all other members at their registered address in the permitted mode.  
The same are also available on the Company's website [www.indiaexpomart.com](http://www.indiaexpomart.com). Additionally, the notice of EGM is also available on the website of National Securities Depositories Limited ('NSDL') at <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com>. The documents pertaining to the businesses to be transacted at the EGM are available for inspection at the Registered Office of the company between 12 Noon and 3 PM on all working days except Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays upto the date of EGM. The dispatch of notice of EGM has been completed on March 04, 2022.  
In terms of Section 108 of Companies Act, 2013, read with rules thereto, as amended, the company is pleased to provide Remote e-voting facility to the members to cast their vote by electronic means (remote e-voting) on all the resolutions set forth in the notice. The company has engaged services of NSDL for providing e-voting facility. Kindly refer the notice of the EGM regarding instructions on e-voting.  
The remote e-voting commences on Thursday, March 24, 2022at 10:00 AM (IST) and will end on Monday, March 28, 2022 at 05:00 PM (IST). The remote e-voting shall not be allowed beyond the said date and time.  
• The cut-off date for determining the eligibility to vote by electronic means or at the EGM is Tuesday, March 22, 2022.  
• Aperson whose name is recorded in the register of members as on the cut-off date, i.e. March 22, 2022, shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting or voting facility available at the meeting, as the case may be.  
• Any person who has acquired shares of the company and becomes member of the company after dispatch of the Notice and holding shares as on cut-off date, may obtain the login id and password by sending a request at [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in) or [cs@indiaexpocentre.com](mailto:cs@indiaexpocentre.com) by mentioning DPID/ Client ID No.  
• The company shall also provide facility for voting through electronic voting system or polling paper at the meeting and Members attending the meeting who have not already casted their vote by remote e-voting shall be able to exercise their right to vote at the EGM.  
• The members who have casted their vote by remote e-voting prior to the meeting may participate in the meeting but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.  
• In case of any queries, you may refer to the 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQs) and 'e-voting user manual' available in downloads section of NSDL's e-voting website <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com>. In case of any grievances, you may contact Ms. Pallavi Mhatre, Manager, of NSDL at Toll free number 1800-1020-990 and 1800-2244-30; email: [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in) in who will also address grievances connected with the voting by electronic means.  
The results of voting would be declared as stipulated under the relevant rules and will also be posted on the above-mentioned company's website and website of NSDL.  
By Order of the Board of Directors  
Anupam Sharma  
Company Secretary & Compliance Officer




**सेण्ट्रल बैंक ऑफ इंडिया**  
**Central Bank of India**  
"CENTRAL TO YOU SINCE 1911"

**Central Bank of India**  
REGIONAL OFFICE - SCO 30-31, 3rd Floor,  
Guru Ram Dass Divine Towers, PUDA Complex, Jalandhar - 144001  
**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE**  
Public Notice For e-auction Sale Of Immovable Property On : 28.03.2022 Between 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.  
Last Date For Submission Of EMD & Documents Online On Or Before 25.03.2022 Upto 04:00 PM  
(It May Take 2-3 Working Days For Approval Of Documents)  
E - auction Sale Notice for sale of immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) & 9(1) of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive /physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Central Bank of India, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and " Whatever there is basis".  
**DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES**  
Sr. No. Name of the Branch &/ Account/Borrower /Guarantor Detail of Property secured assets & owner of the property Date of Demand Notice Amount as per Notice Possession Date Name & Contact no of the Authorised Officer Reserve Price EMD Bid Increase Amount Date & Time Of E-auction  
1. CIVIL LINES - BATHINDA Property i.e Residential including construction thereon measuring 100 sq. yds comprised in Kharsa No. 4371 06.09.2019 Rs. 24400873/- as on 29.06.2019 + further interest thereon 05.04.2021 Ashok Kumar 98888-51810 Rs. 09.24 Lacs Rs. 0.92 Lacs Rs. 10,000/- 28.03.2022 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM  
Jaswinder Singh/ Smt. Veerpal Kaur/ Sh. Devinder Singh min (11-14,1/2) 4371 min (4-9) Khawat/Khatauni No. 2497/12753 as per famd jamaabadi for the year 2007-2008 situated at Gali No. 12, Lal Singh Basti Patti Jhuthi, Bathinda vide sale deed No. 7900 dated 26.03.2015 registered with Sub-Registrar Bathinda in the name of Sh. Jaswinder Singh S/o Sh. Ram Singh and Smt. Veerpal Kaur. Boundaries : East: Property of Soma Rani 20'-00", West: Gali 20' wide, North: Property of Mohan Singh 45'-00", South: Property of Ashwani Kumar 45'-00"

**STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002**  
The E-Auction is being held on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is basis". 1. To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorised Officer, There is no encumbrance on the property. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of property put on auction and claims /rights / dues /effecting the property, prior to submitting their bid. 2. Bidders has to complete following formalities well in advance-  
**Step 1 - Bidders/Purchaser/Registration:** Bidder to register on e-Auction portal <https://www.msfccommerce.com>. Or <https://www.msfccommerce.com/auction/home/bapi/index.jsp> using his mobile number and email-id. **Step 2:** KYC Verification: Bidder to upload requisite KYC documents. KYC documents shall be verified by e-auction service provider(may take 2 working days). **Step3: Transfer of EMD amount to his Global EMD Wallet:** Online/Off-line transfer of fund using NEFT/Transfer, Using challan generated on e-auction portal. **Step 1 to Step 3** should be completed by bidder well in advance, before e-Auction date. Copy of proof of address, without which the bid is liable to be rejected. **Uploading Scanned Copy Of Annexure-II & iii (Mentioned in The Tender Notice) After Duty Filled Up & Signing 3.For Detailed Terms & Conditions of E-Auction, Please refer The Link <http://msfccommerce.com> & Secured Creditor's Website i.e. <https://www.centralbankofindia.co.in> Before Submitting Their Bids and Taking part in E-Auction.**  
**Note:- The Inspection of the Property/ies put on auction will be permitted to interested bidders during working days between 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM with Prior appointment and consultation with the branch Manager / Authorised Officer.**  
**DATE: 05.03.2022 PLACE: JALANDHAR AUTHORISED OFFICER**




**Environment Clearance**  
This is to inform that, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC) has granted Environmental clearance to IAN MACLEOD DISTILLERS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED for 5 KLPD MALT Spirit / Distillery located at Plot No.A-2, A-3 and A-4 Pandoga Industrial Estate, Pandoga Village, Tehsil Haroli, District Una, Himachal Pradesh. EC Identification number is EC22A022HP156935 and File No. IA-J-11011/201/2021-IA-II(I) dated 02/03/2022. Environmental clearance letter copy is available with the SPCB and at website of the Ministry and at <https://parivesh.nic.in>




**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL- II, CHANDIGARH**  
SCO 33-34-35, First Floor Sector 17 A, Chandigarh


Summons under sub section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993.  
Exh. No. 5339 PUBLICATION SUMMONS Case OA No. 910/2021  
**HDFC Bank Vs. Charan Singh**  
1. Charan Singh Son of Gyan Singh Village Uplana Tehsil Assandh District Karnal, Haryana PIN 132029 Contact 8295830091 (Borrower Mortgage)  
2. Sarjeen Son of Kashi Pal Village Uplana Tehsil Assandh District Karnal Haryana ( Co-Borrower)  
WHEREAS, OA/910/2021 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 11/02/2022.  
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 40,80,270.20 (Application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).  
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-  
(i). to show cause, within thirty days of the service or summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;  
(ii). to disclose Particulars of properties or assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A or the original application;  
(iii). you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the Application for attachment of properties;  
(iv). you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;  
(v). you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets or other assets and Properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets.  
You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 25/04/2022 at 10:30A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.  
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 21.02.2022  
Sd/-  
Registrar, DRT-II, Chandigarh



**EXPRESS EDUCATION**



**LAW AMBITION**  
LAW INSTITUTE



**'Law is nothing but common Sense and logic,,**  
**Alok Kr. Ranjan**  
Headmaster

**JUDICIARY FOUNDATION**  
OFFLINE ONLINE  
**7 March, 22 7 March, 22**  
Contact Us : +91- 8800660301


**JUDICIARY WEEKEND**  
OFFLINE ONLINE  
**3 April, 22 3 April, 22**  
Contact Us : +91- 8800662140

**IAS LAW (Online)**  
Foundation Test Series  
**21 March, 22 10 April, 22**  
Contact Us : +91- 8800662140

**CLAT/LL.B. (OFFLINE/ONLINE)**  
FOUNDATION - 1 Year FOUNDATION - 2 Years  
**14 March, 22 26 March, 22**  
Contact Us : +91- 8800660380


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**Ambition Law Institute**  
**Website : [www.ambitionlawinstitute.com](http://www.ambitionlawinstitute.com)**  
**Ambition Law Institute**  
**B-10, 1st Floor, Above Maharashtra Bank, Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009**

Contact for Advt. Booking: M/s Friends Publicity Service  
(M): 9212665841, 9212008155



**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**EXCISE & TAXATION DEPARTMENT**  
**CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION**

NOTICE FOR REGISTRATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN E-TENDERING PROCESS FOR ALLOTMENT OF RETAIL LIQUOR LICENSES OF INDIAN MADE FOREIGN LIQUOR, IMPORTED FOREIGN LIQUOR AND COUNTRY LIQUOR (L-2/L-14A) FOR THE YEAR 2022-23 IN U.T., CHANDIGARH.  
This is for the information of General Public that the process of online registration of persons to participate in the e-tendering process for allotment of liquor vend for the year 2022-23 in U.T., Chandigarh, will commence from 14.03.2022.  
All willing persons may visit the official website of the department i.e. [www.etdnt.gov.in/exciseline](http://www.etdnt.gov.in/exciseline) for information/ to know the procedure and those who intend to participate in the e-tendering may get themselves registered at <https://etenders.chd.nic.in>.  
It is further, informed that all prospective bidders will have to get themselves registered for e-tendering on the Chandigarh Administration's e-tender website i.e. <https://etenders.chd.nic.in>. For the commencement of the participants, a live demo-cum-workshop on e-tendering will be held on 09.03.2022 and 10.03.2022 at 03:00 pm to 05:00 pm in the Conference Hall of the Excise & Taxation Department, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Additional Town Hall Building, Sector-17, Chandigarh.  
A helpdesk has also been set up in the office of the Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner, U.T., Chandigarh for providing assistance to the participants for e-tendering.  
-sd/-  
**Excise & Taxation Commissioner**  
Excise & Taxation Department  
Union Territory, Chandigarh




**CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EXCISE & TAXATION**  
**Notice for inviting e-tenders for allotment of licences for Retail Sale Vends (L-2/L-14A) from the general public for the year 2022-23 in U.T., Chandigarh**


1. It is hereby notified for the information of general public that e-tenders are invited for the grant of retail sale i.e. L-2/L-14A licences in the form of licensing units for the Excise Policy, 2022-23 (commencing from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023). Each Licensing Unit will comprise L-2/L-14A (Indian Made Foreign Liquor, Imported Foreign Liquor and Country Liquor) under one roof. There will be 96 licensing units across the entire city and e-tenders shall be invited individually for all the licensing units.  
2. The Retail sale vends shall be allotted to the highest eligible bidder, quoting equal to or above the reserve price of the licensing unit. In case of more than one bid quoting the same highest price is received, the allotment shall be determined by draw of lots among the bidders quoting the same highest price.  
3. All willing participants may visit the official website of the department i.e. [www.etdnt.gov.in/exciseline](http://www.etdnt.gov.in/exciseline) for information/ to know the procedure. The detailed procedure for e-tenders and submission of participation fee and earnest money, in accordance with the Excise Policy 2022-23, is available on the official website of the department i.e. [www.etdnt.gov.in/exciseline](http://www.etdnt.gov.in/exciseline) as well as in the Excise Office of the Department.  
4. In order to submit e-bids, every prospective bidder is required to get himself registered at <https://etenders.chd.nic.in>.  
5. The terms & conditions and the detailed list mentioning localities/sectors of Licensing Units, Vend Code, permissible no. of vends, quota and reserve price can be downloaded from the official website of the Excise & Taxation Department i.e. [www.etdnt.gov.in/exciseline](http://www.etdnt.gov.in/exciseline) from 'Public Notice' section.  
6. All bidders shall be granted subject to the Punjab Excise Act, 1914 (as applicable to U.T., Chandigarh) and the Rules framed there-under and the Excise Policy for the year 2022-23. The Excise Policy for the year 2022-23 is available on the official website of the Department [www.etdnt.gov.in/exciseline](http://www.etdnt.gov.in/exciseline).  
7. E-tenders will be available at <https://etenders.chd.nic.in> on 14.03.2022 at 10:00 am and the bidders may start to submit their bids from 14.03.2022 (10:00 am).  
Schedule of dates for allotment of liquor vends:  

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Starting date and time for bid submission | From :14 <sup>th</sup> March, 2022 (10:00 am)   |
| 2. Closing date and time for bid submission  | Till : 21 <sup>st</sup> March, 2022 (upto 02:00 pm)   |
| 3. Opening of Technical e-bids               | 21 <sup>st</sup> March, 2022 (03:00 pm onwards)<br>22 <sup>nd</sup> March, 2022 (10:00 am onwards) at Hotel Parkview, Sector 24, Chandigarh |
| 4. Opening of Financial e-bids               |   |

  
-sd/-  
**Excise & Taxation Commissioner**  
Excise & Taxation Department  
Union Territory, Chandigarh




**कार्यालय पंचायत सामुदायिक केंद्र मज़ि़यार**  
विचारतर्हिंद राष्ट्रीय शिल्प हस्तोत्पाद (विचारतर्हिंद प्रदेस)  
सर्ब 2022-23 के लिए लसी मर्दों मारकेट, लसनाप, 15वां विचारतर्हिंद अर्दि कर्ब रेंदु विचारतर्हिंद अर्भर्त्रि की जाती हैं। शिल्पक पर्बर्न शिल्प प्रकार से है।  
1. क्रेसर बजरी C10, 20, 40MM प्रति क्यूबिक मीटर  
2. क्रेसर रेत/ सहु रेत प्रति क्यूबिक मीटर  
3. सोलिंग प्रति क्यूबिक मीटर  
4. सहु बजरी प्रति क्यूबिक मीटर  
5. पेंवर टाइल 60, 40 80mm (151 माकरी) प्रति पीस  
6. इंट प्रति इंट (अखल/ लोगम)  
7. शटरिंग लकड़ी/ स्टील (प्रति स्वकार्य मीटर)  
8. पानी टैकर प्रति (3000 लीटर) प्रति टैकर  
9. साइन बोर्ड (2x3, 3x4 फुट) लिखाई सहित  
10. कंटीट ब्लॉक (08, 06,16) प्रति पीस  
11. सीमेंट क्रेजरिंग प्रति बैग  
12. गोला पन्वर प्रति क्यूबिक मीटर  
13. मिक्चर मशीन with oil per day  
सह लसी विचारतर्हिंद जीएलसी मंबर की होनी चाहिए, जीएलसी नंबर की प्रति सख रोलनम होनी चाहिए। विचारतर्हिंद रंद लिफाके नं डिप्लोम 23 मार्च 2022 को सख 4:00 बजे सख, सख ह्वाट, कर्बर्लस सख रेंदुपय वेला में पंहुच जानी चाहिए। इसके बाद कोई भी विचारतर्हिंद को जान्य नहीं होनी। विचारतर्हिंद 24 मार्च को सुबह 11:00 बजे पंचायत कार्यालय नं कजेरी के सख सख लसी जाएगी। जिस किसी की विचारतर्हिंद पास होनी सह 10000 लिफाकेट के रूप में वहां जमा कर्बर्लस। सह विचारतर्हिंद 01/04/2022 से सख कट दी जायेगी  
प्रधान, श्राल पंचायत मज़ि़यार




**THE ADMINISTRATION OF UNION TERRITORY OF LADAKH OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN LPSSRB**  
(email-[igp-ladakh@police.ladakh.gov.in](mailto:igp-ladakh@police.ladakh.gov.in) (Office Phone No.019822-260887).


**NOTICE**  
SUBJECT: PMT/PST test for the Post of Constable Executive, Armed/ IRP, HG/CD/SDRF in Ladakh Police.  
Through the medium of this notice it is informed to all the applicants for the post of Constable Executive, Armed/IRP, HG/CD/SDRF in Ladakh Police Advertised vide Notification No. 385 of 2021 dated 16.10.2021 and the tentative date of commencement notified through Notice dated 14-02-2022 that, the Physical Measurement Test/ Physical Endurance Test (PMT/PET) shall commence from 15-03-2022. The Schedule for Physical Test (PMT/PET) is as follows.  
Kargil: 15-03-2022 to 24-03-2022.  
Leh: 28-03-2022 to 01-04-2022.  
The Admit Cards can be downloaded from the Web Portal [www.ladakhpolicecrerutment.in](http://www.ladakhpolicecrerutment.in). The link will remain active with effect from 04-03-2022 to 14-03-2022 (1600 hrs).  
The Candidates are advised to download their admit cards and report at the given examination center on the schedule date and time as provided in the Admit Card.  
The candidates are further advised to follow the following advisory for their convenience during the examination.  
1. The candidates shall carry a valid ID card and a printout of the Admit card.  
2. The candidates shall bring all their original documents/ testimonials along with one set of photo copies of the documents and two pass-port size photographs.  
3. The candidates shall not bring any mobile phone and eatables.  
Sd/-  
Chairman,  
LPSSRB, PHQ UT-Ladakh.  
Dated 02.03.2022



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ई-मेल-[infoanham@mp.gov.in](mailto:infoanham@mp.gov.in)  
फोन नं-0755-4092590, 4092591

**विज्ञापित**  
भोपाल, दिनांक :-----  
रजिस्ट्रार स्वास्थ्य विभाग, म.प्र., अंतर्गत उप-विभाग (आई.टी.) के तहत की गई रजिस्ट्रार के स्वास्थ्य से किने जाने हेतु सर्व अनिवार्य है। कोटेशन प्रस्तुत किए जाने हैं।  

| क्र. | पदवर्क | वर्क की संख्या | अर्जित की जाने वाली कीमत | अंश | अंशवर्क | केवल रूप की कीमत |
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**15,920 INDIANS EVACUATED ON 76 FLIGHTS SO FAR**

## Hoping for rescue 'any minute', Indian students wait in Sumy

Officials hope to get them out via western border

**SHUBHAJIT ROY & JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU**  
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, MARCH 6

ELEVEN DAYS into Russia's invasion of Ukraine, India's evacuation efforts have entered a critical stage with all eyes on the north-eastern Ukrainian city of Sumy, close to the Russian border, where about 700 Indians, mostly students, are waiting for rescue — the last big group from the country still stranded there. Officials said that a team from the Indian Embassy is stationed in Poltava, a city in central



A man leaves the town of Irpin, near Kyiv, with his child after heavy shelling on Sunday. Reuters

## Civilian rescue stalls as ceasefire fails, Ukraine leader gives call to arms

**YURAS KARMANAU**  
LVIV, MARCH 6

A SECOND attempt to evacuate civilians from a besieged city in southern Ukraine collapsed on Sunday amid renewed Russian shelling, but President Vladimir Putin said the invasion could be halted "only if Kyiv ceases hostilities".

Food, water, medicine and almost all other supplies were in desperately short supply in the besieged port city of Mariupol, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

**EXPLAINED** Problem with a no-fly zone

ENFORCING a no-fly zone could mean shooting down Russian aircraft, which NATO fears could trigger a "full-fledged war". Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned that any country enforcing a no-fly zone would be "participating" in the conflict.

## Evacuation proves rising influence in world: PM

**ANURADHA MASCARENHAS & AJAY JADHAV**  
PUNE, MARCH 6

THE FACT that India succeeded in evacuating its nationals amid the war in Ukraine is proof of the country's growing influence in the world, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday. "You have seen how, under Operation Ganga, India is bringing its citizens safely out of the war zone. Many big countries are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



## LAST PHASE TODAY

A polling staffer at a distribution centre in Varanasi. PTI

**DECISION 2022**

UP PHASE VII TODAY  
**54 SEATS**  
613 candidates | 2.06 cr voters

RESULT: MARCH 10

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By UNNY



## Manipulation case: NSE ex-MD Chitra Ramkrishna held by CBI

**DEEPTIMAN TIWARY**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

THE CBI on Sunday arrested Chitra Ramkrishna, the former CEO and MD of National Stock Exchange (NSE), in the agency's 2018 case of alleged manipulation of the bourse, an official said.

Ramkrishna's arrest came the day after a Delhi court rejected her anticipatory bail application and pulled up the CBI for its "lackadaisical" investigation.

The agency's move marked its second high-profile arrest in the

case after it took into custody Anand Subramanian, NSE's former group operating officer, in Chennai on February 24. Earlier last month, the agency had questioned Ramkrishna, Subramanian and former NSE CEO Ravi Narain in the case.

"Ramkrishna has been arrested following questioning and will be produced in a competent

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

REGION

## IN UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE COURSES, PUNJAB YOUTH SPOT GATEWAY TO OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

PAGE 7

## Civilian killed, policeman among 24 hurt in Srinagar grenade attack

**NAVEED IQBAL**  
SRINAGAR, MARCH 6

A CIVILIAN was killed and 24 people including a police official suffered injuries Sunday in a grenade attack in the heart of Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar city.

No outfit has claimed responsibility, said Central Kashmir DIG Sujit Kumar.

The attack took place at around 4.20 pm in the busy



The blast site in Srinagar on Sunday. Shuaib Masoodi

Amira Kadal area that also has a popular Sunday market.

"As of now, one person has succumbed to injuries. One of our personnel is also injured. However, the majority of those injured are civilians," Kumar told The Indian Express

On January 25, a grenade attack had taken place within metres of the same spot, injuring multiple civilians and damaging a police vehicle.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

WORLD



## BESIEGED MARIUPOL BECOMING 'UNFIT FOR HUMAN LIFE'

**WILL TRY MEDIATING EVEN IF PROSPECT SLIM: ISRAEL PM**  
PAGE 14

## Survivor, not victim: Kerala actor opens up about trauma following sexual assault

**SHAJU PHILIP**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 6

MALAYALAM ACTOR Bhavana, who was abducted and sexually assaulted in 2017, a case in which actor Dileep is one of the accused, on Sunday said the idea of victims of sexual assault coming out in public and voicing their experiences should be normalised.

Speaking at 'We the Women Global Townhall 2020', a show



Actor Bhavana on Sunday. She was abducted and sexually assaulted in 2017

hosted by journalist Barkha Dutt on her digital platform Mojo Story, Bhavana, when asked where she draws her courage from, said, "It makes me very angry and very sad (that perpetrators of sexual assault get rehabilitated)... It's not every day that I feel empowered and ready to fight. So many days, I have wanted to give up... We must normalise the idea of the person who has gone through a trauma coming out in public and voicing it out. We must normalise that as a society, normalise that courage."

The actor was kidnapped and assaulted by a group of men in February 2017 while she was travelling from Thrissur to Kochi. The investigation led to Dileep, one of Malayalam industry's biggest actors, being named as an accused.

On Sunday, Bhavana spoke about the trauma and the finger-pointing that followed in the days after the incident. "When it happened, my whole life turned upside down. My mind was constantly searching for somebody

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## In Ahmedabad, modified city buses offer impoverished children a road to learning

PAGE 1  
ANCHOR

**RITUSHARMA**  
AHMEDABAD, MARCH 6

SIBLINGS Sonal (8 years) and Jigar (10 years) Minama had never been to a school or even seen a formal classroom, but all that changed on Sunday morning. Instead of their daily routine of taking care of their two younger siblings and helping out in household chores, today they stood outside their shanty at the Doordarshan tower intersection,



A 'Signal School' run out of a modified city bus. Express

**GOVERNANCE**  
AN EXPRESS SERIES  
GUJARAT

excitedly waiting for the *pili* (yellow) bus.

The yellow bus is the 'Signal School' — an initiative implemented by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) and Municipal School Board with support from the state government and Gujarat State Legal Services Authority (GSLSA).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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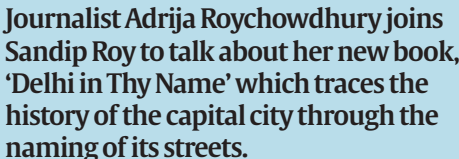
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*Har Pal Aapke Saath*





Depending on the demand the scheme will be replicated with more buses, says the Municipal School Board Administrative Officer L.D. Desai. The School Board Chairman Dr Sujoy Mehta added that "instead of appointing regular senior teachers, 20 young dynamic teachers have been recruited on a contractual basis for these buses".



# 5 THE CITY

## PANCHKULA

# Two lawyers among four assaulted at b'day bash, DBA threatens strike

DBA issues statement, says will go on strike if the accused are not arrested within the next 24 hours

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
PANCHKULA, MARCH 6

FOUR PERSONS including two lawyers were allegedly attacked by 10-12 bouncers and their employer with sticks and iron rods during a birthday party. They were identified as Inder, Chetan and two lawyers, Gaurav Sikhri and Tarun Sharma.

The incident took place at a resort on Morni Road near Nada village on Saturday night and the early hours of Sunday. A case has been registered against two identified and other unknown suspects. The two accused have been identified as Abhinav and Harpal. Sikhri and Sharma were taken to the Civil Hospital for treatment.

Reacting to the incident, the District Bar Association Panchkula issued a statement, as told by Ketan Khurana Advocate Secretary, stating that if arrests are not made within 24-hours, the DBA will go on a strike.

The complainant, Gaurav Sikhri, a resident of Sector 11, said that it was on Saturday night



One of the injured getting examined at the Civil Hospital and (right) Gaurav Sikhri, the complainant, whose elbow was fractured in the incident. *Express*



when he was hosting his birthday party at resort Marina Bay with colleagues and friends when the incident took place.

"Around 12 am, the attendants of the resort shifted all guests to a hall room. Two hours later, my two friends, Inder and Chetan tried to re-enter the hall room after coming back from the washroom. However, the bouncers didn't

allow them despite repeated attempts and shoved them to the ground. Meanwhile, Abhinav came to the spot and dared to teach both of them a lesson. Upon hearing shouts, my two advocate friends Tarun Sharma and Lavish Arora and I rushed to the spot. Despite this, they kept on beating our friends. Tarun intervened but they charged at him too and

then attacked me and other guests. They punched Tarun in the face, which left his upper teeth broken. The accused hit an iron rod on my left arm due to which I suffered an elbow fracture," reads the FIR.

"Later, they dragged Tarun outside the resort to the roadside. Somehow, all four of us managed to run away from the spot and hide in the bushes to

save our lives," the FIR further reads.

The Sikhri's colleague Lavish Arora then shouted for help after which another colleague Manoj Arora arrived at the spot. Manoj, as per the complaint, then made a phone call to the SHO Chandimandir and DCP Mohit Handa, whose office requested Manoj to dial 112. A PCR vehicle then reached the spot around 2:30 am.

"Despite the arrival of the police, the prime accused Abhinav bragged that he has connections in the police department as police receive bribes from him for allowing him to run his resort," Sikhri stated. Sikhri also alleged that the accused also snatched a gold chain from Sharma's neck during the assault. The case was registered under sections 148, 149, 323, 325, 341, 379-B, and 506 of the Indian Penal Code at Chandimandir police station.

Inspector Lalit Kumar, SHO at Chandimandir police station, said they were yet to arrest any accused in the case.

## Absence of signals a major cause of snarls in Zirakpur

**JAGDEEP SINGH DEEP**  
MOHALI, MARCH 6

THE LACK of traffic signals at various points in Zirakpur are found to be one of the leading causes resulting in long traffic jams. Due to the lack of signals, vehicles get converged at the main light points, where long jams are witnessed every day. Dera Bassi Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Swati Tiwana issued instructions to the Municipal Council (MC) officials in Zirakpur to install grills to shut some dividers on the main roads and clean the roads to decongest traffic. Tiwana told *The Indian Express* that she has already passed the instructions to Zirakpur Estate Officer (EO) to ensure the decongestion of roads.

Speaking about the reasons leading to long jams, she said that the heavy flow of traffic in peak hours has remained consistent. "Also, cleanliness is an issue. Patchy roads too hamper the speed of vehicles. So, I am ensuring that is at least taken care of immediately," she added.

When asked about the installation of more traffic lights in the city, she added that they had already proposed to install traffic lights at some points. She said,



Traffic in Zirakpur. *Express*

"We have taken some immediate steps. The entire stretch of roads needed massive cleaning. That's done over the weekend. Patchwork, certain repairs, shutting of dividers with grill to stop the crossing over etc." Manoj Das, a Zirakpur resident told *The Indian Express* that signals are a must at crucial points to halt the flow of traffic and create smaller windows, for vehicles to be able to pass. "The traffic coming from Patiala towards Zirakpur only halts at the Chatt light point. If the traffic lights are installed at the two or three more points, the speed of the traffic flow would be slowed down," he said.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
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## Jharkhand man arrested with 2 kg opium

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MOHALI, MARCH 6

KURALI POLICE arrested a man and recovered 2 kg of opium from him on Sunday. The accused was arrested from near Padiala bypass where the police had laid a trap.

According to the information received by the police, accused Dinesh Kuram Dangi was going towards Kurali to deliver drugs to his customers.

A team led by Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Bhagatbir Singh laid the trap near Padiala bypass and arrested Dinesh Kuram Dangi, who is a resident of Jharkhand.

"The accused was working in the area for nearly a year. He had come to Kurali to deliver drugs, in this case, opium to his clients," a police officer said.

A case under the relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act was registered at Kurali (city) police station.

## The accused were working in the area for nearly a year and had come to Kurali to deliver the drugs

## ‘We are looking forward to adding new facilities this year’

A renovated Clinical Biochemistry Lab and High Dependency Unit were recently reopened at GMCH-32

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 6

WITH NEW Covid cases decreasing daily, all the departments at GMCH 32 are fully functional now. "OPDs are functioning like pre-Covid times. The elective surgeries have also resumed and some of the Covid areas in the hospital are now closed, as cases and hospitalisations have decreased substantially. We are still doing Rapid Antigen tests in the OPDs, and RT-PCR tests for those who have to undergo surgery and are also going to finalise the scope of work in many areas. We are looking forward to adding new facilities for patients here," said Dr Jasbinder Kaur, Director-Principal, GMCH-32.

The Clinical Biochemistry Lab, Level I, Block B and a High Dependency Unit, Level II, Block Cin GMCH, were reopened after renovation and dedicated to public service by Dharam Pal, UT Adviser to Administrator on Monday.

The Clinical Biochemistry Lab receives samples from the IPD and OPD patients for blood, urine and body fluid analysis. It is



Dr Kaur after inauguration of the labs. *Express*

equipped with fully automated random-access chemistry analysers with a capacity of 2,700 tests per hour. The samples can be analysed for liver and kidney function tests, sugar, lipid, and iron profile tests, therapeutic drug monitoring, and inflammatory and cardiac markers. With the installation of the latest high-capacity equipment the lab has added many new tests and the turnaround time has also decreased for the benefit of patient care. The lab also houses other high-end equipment like the gold standard HPLC based equipment to test for HbA1c crucial for the management of diabetic patients and metabolite

analyser for management of critical patients, among others.

The HDU is equipped with latest mechanised beds, multipara monitors and UPS donated by Rotary Club. It has 12 dedicated beds which are utilised for critically sick patients of neurosurgery, general surgery, orthopedics and ENT. It has highly trained nursing staff and is equipped with the latest high-end ventilators, multipara monitors and mechanised beds. Covid patients were successfully managed in HDU. Critical neurosurgery patients like head injury and spine injury are being routinely managed and high-risk and critical post-operative surgical patients are also managed in HDU.

Dr Kaur said that the hospital was not designed for pandemics, and for the health care workers, it was a challenging time. The setting up of state-of-the-art Advanced Centre for Infectious Diseases in an area of 1.6 acres here is the need of the hour, for there is no institute in the entire region providing specialised services and training for highly infectious and communicable diseases, she added.

## PGI to announce new director this month

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 6

THE COUNTDOWN for the new director of PGI has started, with the name likely to be announced this month. As many as 33 candidates have applied for the post, with interviews and presentations being held in mid-January. The search-cum-selection committee chaired by Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, has shortlisted names, and according to a senior official of PGI, all are from the institute.

According to Kumar Gaurav Dhawan, Deputy Director Administration, it is pure speculation that four or five names have been short-listed for the post, as there has been no disclosure in this regard. "This is up to the selection committee and the list of names finally goes to the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) and of course, apart from the eligibility criterion listed for the post, there are many other considerations of the selection committee. By this month, we should know who the new director of the institute will be," shares Dhawan.

For the past many years, the key considerations for the post include that the applicant have more than three years of service left, for the post of the director is of five years. This apart, a rich administrative, teaching, and patient care experience, research impact, academic practice, publications, extra grants, etc., are also sought. An important consideration is the H index, which measures both the productivity and citation impact of the publication.

As opposed to previous years, no panel was announced in the body meeting. The Union Minister of Health, who is also the president of the institute has been authorised to finalise names and send for approval to the ACC. Apart from Bhushan, other members of the research-cum-selection committee include Dr KK Talwar, former Director PGI, Dr Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Dr Pratima Murthy, Director, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore.

## Glaucoma awareness walks held in UT, Mohali

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
CHANDIGARH, MOHALI, MAR 6

ADVANCED EYE Center, PGI, Eye Research Foundation and Glaucoma Support Group organised a Glaucoma Walk from Rock Garden to Sukhna Lake, to spread awareness about glaucoma, the leading cause of blindness. The walk was flagged off by Deputy Director PGI Kumar Gaurav Dhawan and Financial Advisor Kumar Abhay. About 150 people took part in the walk, that concluded with a street play organised by the Chandigarh Theatre Arts Group.

Meanwhile, Dr BR Ambedkar Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS), Mohali also organised a Glaucoma Awareness Walk on Sunday.

The ongoing week-long long awareness drive will throw light on the symptoms and prevention of the disease.

The awareness walk is observed all over the world on the first Sunday of March every year. The walk for awareness started from Verka Garden, Phase-VI, and was flagged off by Dr S S Pandav, Professor and Head, Advanced eye Centre, PGIMER, Chandigarh.

## ‘In women, loss of bone mass is accelerated after 35 years’

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 6

ONE OF the main concerns as women advance in age is their bone health.

Dr Sandeep Gupta, Senior Consultant, Orthopedics, Fortis Hospital Mohali, in an advisory, tells how women should keep their bones healthy.

Dr Gupta, said, "There is continuous churning of bony structure with a net gain of bone mass till the age of 35 years. The net loss of bone mass after 35 years is further accelerated in women after menopause due to hormonal changes. This can potentially lead to a health condition

referred to as osteoporosis. This can lead to an increased risk of fractures of the hip, wrist, and spine".

### HOW TO AVOID BONE DEPLETION

Women need to undertake measures to avoid bone loss in the long run. Dr Gupta advises that a good Calcium intake of 1-1.5 gm per day ensures healthy bone health.

When it comes to protein a diet rich in it with 0.8gm/kg is preferred. This is often a neglected part which is essential for bone health. Physical activities such as walking, jogging, swimming, etc., is also advised to maintain good bone health.

## Tricity reports 29 new Covid cases

Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula: The Tricity on Sunday reported 29 new Covid cases. While Chandigarh now has 71 active cases, Mohali has 66 and Panchkula has 36 active cases. No Covid-related deaths were reported in any of the three cities. A total of 2,45,482 cases have so far been reported in the Tricity.

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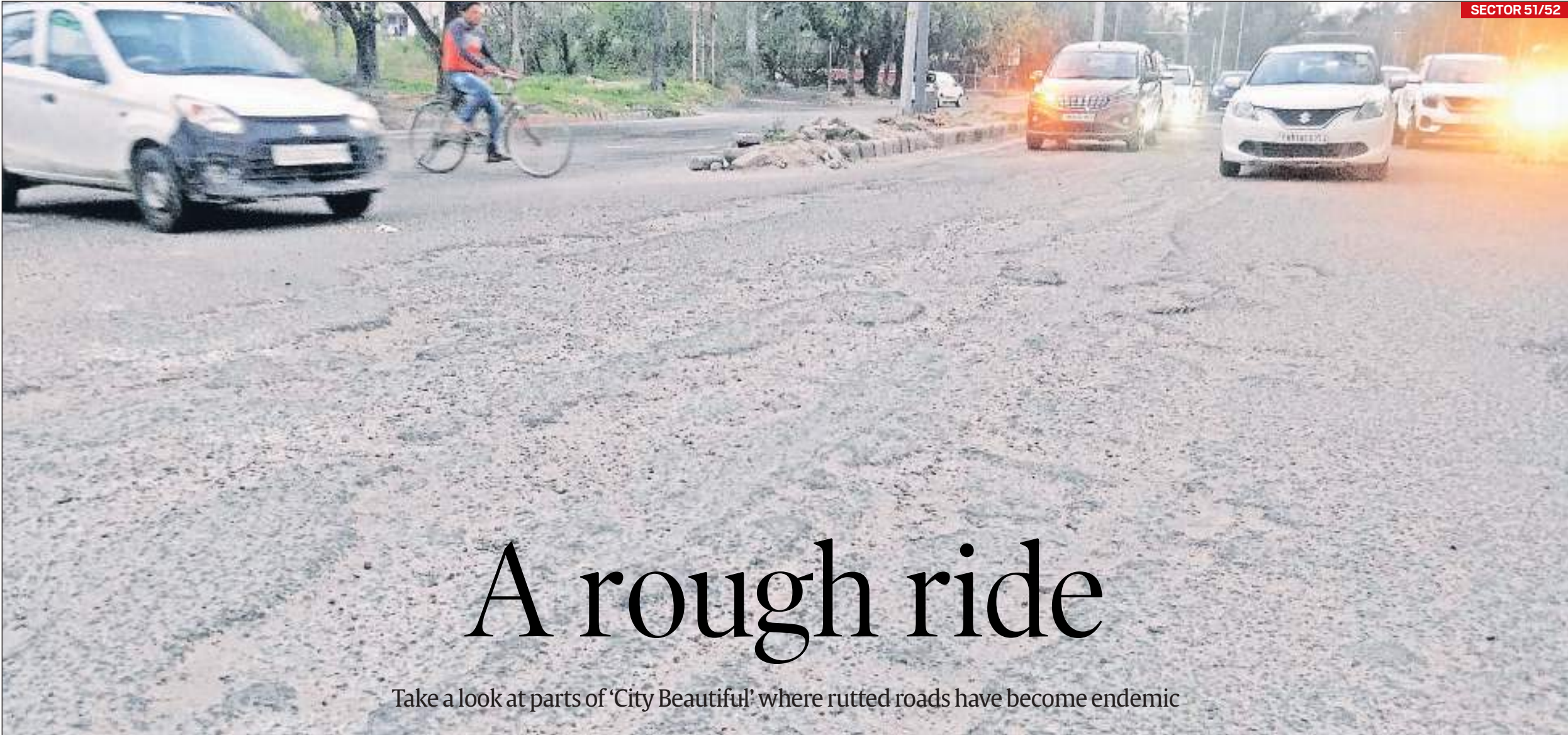
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# A rough ride

Take a look at parts of 'City Beautiful' where rutted roads have become endemic

HINAROHTAKI  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 6

POTHOLES, WORN macadam, uneven patches and wide craters. These have come to define roads in several parts of the City Beautiful, once famous for its smooth commute.

A drive on these stretches can be a bone-rattling experience if you are not careful. Be it a so-called VIP sector, a busy thoroughfare in the industrial area or the railway station, you are sure to encounter a perilous pothole or two that will endanger not only the shockers of your vehicle but also those of your spinal cord.

In the first part of its series on The Bumpy Roads, Chandigarh Newsline picked out some areas where bad roads have become endemic despite the annual touch-ups with tar and bitumen.

## SECTOR 7 ROAD

A few metres away from the residences of the top brass of the city lies a pot-hole-ridden stretch of road in Sector 7. This stretch of unforgiving

### THE BUMPY ROAD

While it's easy to break your vehicle's axle or fall off your scooter while using this road, it's a smooth ride once you turn into the lane where the likes of the UT Advisor and MP Kirron Kher stay. Although the road belt is the same, the problems are practically non-existent for the city's big names.

Ish Sharma, a resident says, "It is an everyday struggle for us. There are times when two-wheeler owners have skidded here during night time because

they are met by a sudden rough patch in the road," he said.

A few days back, a patchwork was done, a tiny band-aid that came off very quickly. "The patchwork doesn't even last a year. It is worst for the elderly and anyone with spinal problems."

Interestingly, civic officials diligently recarpeted the road in front of MP Kirron Kher's house but managed to completely miss the long formed craters on this stretch of the road.

## SECTOR 21 ROADS

The internal lanes of Sector 21 are full of craters. The road by vehicles coming towards Sector 21 from the roundabout has been in a bad shape for quite a while now.

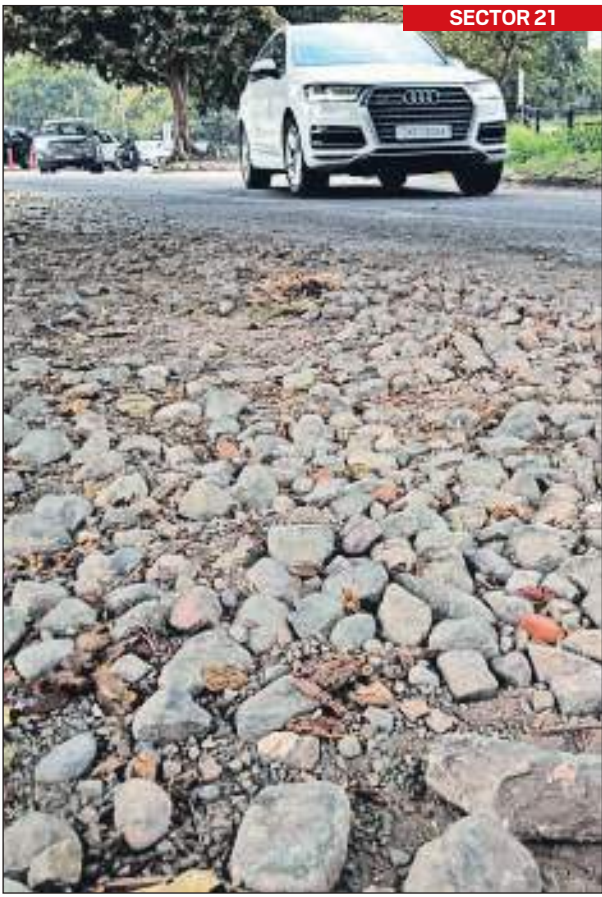
Baljinder Singh Bittu, Chairman of Federation of Sectors welfare association of Chandigarh and a resident of sector 21, said that the residents have been inconvenienced for far too long.

"There are big potholes here. The civic officials come, fill the holes with mud bumps is right in front of a chain of shops, cafes, fuel pumps and restaurants; it tests the balancing skills of those atop two-wheelers and is fit for off-road-ing enthusiasts.

While it's easy to break your vehicle's axle or fall off your scooter while using this road, it's a smooth ride once you turn into the lane where the likes of the UT Advisor and MP Kirron Kher stay. Although the road belt is the same, the problems are practically non-existent for the city's big names.

Ish Sharma, a resident says, "It is an everyday struggle for us. There are times when two-wheeler owners have skidded here during night time because

Photos: Jaipal Singh, Kamleshwar Singh and Jasbir Malhi



duties properly? The seniors must keep a check on the work done by their subordinates."

## SECTOR 44, 45 ROADS

Roads in sector 44 and 45 are in a pathetic shape. Residents wonder whether the civic authorities have actually left people to their fate.

Sanjeev Bansal, President of the sector 45 Resident welfare association said that driving has become risky on the potholed roads.

"Situation of many roads near Sector 45A Tyre market and residences is awaiting repair for months. Driving at times is really risky here," Bansal said.

Subhash Chand Gupta who is a Member of Senior citizens association said that the worst sufferers are of sector 45 civil hospital.

"The entrance towards sector 45 Civil Hospital adjoining staff residences is really in a bad shape and for over an year it has been giving bumpy ride to residents, visitors, attendants and patients as well," he said.

Many two wheeler drivers have actually slipped on the road near fuel pump in sector 44C during the dark.

"The road near petrol pump sector 44C on National Highway is so bad that it has literally become a death trap particularly during night time. This stretch has still not been repaired despite being visible so conspicuously. It also lacks proper light and illumination which is risky during night times," NK Jhingan, Environmentalist and a Social Worker said.

## SECTOR 51, 52 ROADS

Looks like no official ever visited this area if one takes his vehicle on the road separating sector 51 and 52. What adds to the woes of the commuters is that non functional street lights make the stretch more risky.

"Roads in sector 51 especially

the route outside Burail Jail in sector 51 is in deplorable state. Due to the incessant rains in January too, the condition has worsened. At night when street lights don't work, it becomes a nightmare. Majority of the street lights in sector 48, 49, 50, 51 are also not working which add to the woes. There is immediate need for recarpeting in sector 51, "Sunny Dhaliwal, Professor & Resident of Sector 48 Group Housing said.

The roads near LIG houses were repaired but potholes again appeared. Kamaljit Singh, President of the sector 52 Residents welfare association said, "Roads near LIG houses in sector 52 are full of pot holes and uneven at many places even though these were metalled recently. It seems quality was completely overlooked as they don't last for a short time too."

## ROAD WHEN ONE COMES OUT OF RAILWAY STATION AND ELANTE

Railway station and Elante mall—are two places where one would either receive or takes his guests to while being in Chandigarh. And the state of the roads towards these two places gives a grim picture of the 'City Beautiful' to the guests visiting the city.

The moment you pick your guests from the railway station and take the route towards Chandigarh railway light point, one gets to have a feel of being in Chandigarh. As one's vehicle loses balance on the big crater towards the left hand side of the road, the area gives a glance of the smart city Chandigarh.

Even the Elante mall road when one comes out of a plush mall, he rattles on a potholed stretch all of a sudden. It looks like that the road has been bad for ages now.

# Jadeja's brilliance a perfect summary of Day 3 as fans savour 'memorable match'

NITIN SHARMA  
MOHALI, MARCH 6

RIGHTFULLY EARNED, Ravindra Jadeja's stellar performance saw him collect the match trophy after India scored an innings and 222-run win over Sri Lanka on the third day of the first Test match at IS Bindra PCA International Stadium.

Jadeja scored an unbeaten 175 runs in India's first innings and also claimed a total of nine wickets in the match. While fans had come to watch and celebrate Virat Kohli's 100th Test match, it was the all-round effort of Jadeja which enthralled the fans apart from Rishabh Pant's breezy knock of 96 runs in the Indian team's first innings.

"While we missed India's matches in the last two years, it



Cricket fans enjoying on 3rd day of Test Match between India and Sri Lanka on Sunday. Express Photo

has been a memorable match for each one of us. Apart from getting to watch Virat sir's 100th Test match, we also got to watch

Ravindra Jadeja's record-breaking innings and nine wickets. Pant enthralled us on the opening day and Jadeja's all-round ef-

fort on the second and third day got us chanting his name. The win by an innings and 222 runs has made this series even better," said 36-year-old Ram Babu, who was accompanied by Bengaluru-based fan Sugumar who had come in his trademark headgear.

The duo were also accompanied by Sri Lankan fans Pubudu Kalum and Gayan Senanayaka. "I have attended a lot of matches at M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru but coming to Punjab always makes me feel special," said Pubudu.

Pubudu Kalum was seen cheering for the Sri Lankan team from the pavilion terrace block and waving his country's flag even when a Sri Lankan batsman departed. "Post the first wave of Covid-19, we are glad that we

can travel with our team to watch them play. While our batsman could not decipher the Indian spinners, we hope that they will give a good fight in the day-night Test match at Bengaluru. We also feel special to attend Virat Kohli's 100th Test match," said Kalum.

15-20 girl cricket trainees of a local academy too watched the match from the west block. "While we also followed the India Pakistan women World Cup match over our coach's phone, we were also closely observing and learning from Jadeja sir and Ashwin sir's spin bowling," said Tanu Sharma, a trainee.

Both the teams will also be in Chandigarh till March 9 and will then depart for Bengaluru. The team will have an optional practice session on Wednesday.

# Azadi Week festivities get off to a gala start in Chandigarh

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 6

UT Administrator Banwarilal Purohit inaugurated the week-long celebrations of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by flagging off the vintage car/ bike rally at Lake-42 on Sunday.

This iconic week is being celebrated from March 6 to 13 under an initiative of the Government of India to commemorate 75 years of progressive India.

Purohit said, "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is a festival of awakening of the nation: a festival of fulfilling the dream of good governance and the festival of global peace and development."

The grand opening saw a series of daredevil stunts by motorcyclists and the dog squad of Indo-Tibetan Border Police



Vintage car rally flagged off by UT Administrator Banwarilal Purohit on Sunday. Kamleshwar Singh

(ITBP). The girl students trained by Chandigarh police under Swayam also impressed the gathering by demonstrating different self-defence techniques.

The activities for March 7 in-

clude special guided forest tours starting at Paryavaran Bhawan, tapestry weaving workshops at Le Corbusier centre, art workshop by city artists at underpass Sector 17, Kavi Sammelan at Tagore Theatre.



# In Ukrainian language courses, Punjab youth spot gateway to other European countries

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA  
JALANDHAR, MARCH 6

MEDICAL EDUCATION is not the only reason students from Punjab go to Ukraine for higher studies. Many – around 400 every month as per some estimates – also reach that distant land to pursue a course in the Ukrainian language. While it may seem an unlikely choice, but to students from the state, the course provides an easy ticket to other European countries. Also, getting admission in language courses does not require clearing the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam, a major bugbear for quite a few Punjabis seeking settlement abroad.

Manpreet Singh (name changed), 32, from Jalandhar, who had gone to Ukraine in November last year to pursue Ukrainian language course and is currently in Poland, said, “My agent in Punjab promised me that he had contacts with local agents in Ukraine who will manage my entry to Poland and from there to Portugal once my course was over here.”

He revealed that for Ukrainian language courses, the



Banga SDM with parents of a student still stuck in Ukraine. *Express*

upper age limit for admission is a generous 38 years, and even a 10-year gap between this course and the last one pursued by the student is allowed.

According to the 32-year-old, a large number of students pick Ukrainian language studies as taking admission in this course

ensures 100% visa guarantee to reach Ukraine.

“There are 15 more students from Punjab who are doing the language course along with me in the same university in Kyiv. Moreover, no one comes here to learn Ukrainian language, but they arrive to earn money and

then to enter other European countries that are peaceful and offer good chance of getting work...Till the time they study here, they also work and earn around Rs 1-1.5 lakh per month,” he said, adding that most of such students are either working as taxi drivers or in hotels.

A Kapurthala student studying Ukrainian at the Kyiv International University said that some of their “seniors after completing their language course from here have gone to Portugal on a valid visa that they managed to procure with the help of some agents”. In Portugal, he added, that they managed to get a one-year work permit making them eligible to work anywhere in 24 Schengen countries.

This Kapurthala student has now been forced to return to Punjab due to the war. He claims to have earned “good money” in six months there and regrets that war hit his plans of entering some other European country as he had to come back without finishing his 10-month course.

Another reason for this course being a draw is its cost. A student from Bathinda, who is also studying Ukrainian there, said the cost of the entire course is not more than Rs 2.50 lakh to Rs 3 lakh, including stay and agent fee. Some agents, he said, charged Rs 5-8 lakh from the aspirants with a promise of 100% visa guarantee. “Aspirants also pay this amount because they go there to enter better European countries and it is good offer for

those who cannot clear IELTS,” he said, adding that they earn back this amount in 5-6 months if they get regular work in Ukraine.

An education consultant from Jalandhar, who sends students to Ukraine, said that over the past one year students who could not go to Canada, Australia, UK etc. after failing to clear IELTS preferred Ukraine as it is a gateway to other European countries.

“A large number of students went to Ukraine in the past over a year for doing a language course. But who goes there to learn language!” he quipped.

Owner of Kapurthala’s i-Can consultancy, Gurpreet Singh, said that though they don’t deal in sending students to Ukraine but during Covid period, a new trend of sending students to Ukraine for language courses became popular in the state.

“I have seen some students spend Rs 10 lakh to go Ukraine to do such language courses while the total expenditure of such courses including airfare, three months stay expenses is not more than Rs 3 lakh,” he said, adding that even students with 10 years of gap after completing their studies were eligible to do such course there. “Earlier, only

MBBS students and engineering students were going there but this language courses trend is the recent one,” said Singh.

“They want to go abroad to work without caring about the course. They take this option after being told that it can help them to enter other European countries,” said another Amritsar-based consultant, adding that agents also mislead them without telling them that it was not that easy to enter Schengen countries.

“Even a large number of reputed consultancies were indulging in such immigration practices during Covid when businesses were in bad shape. They sent several aspirants to Ukraine for language courses after charging 2-3 times more than actual expense for it,” he added.

This consultant, however, blamed Delhi-based immigration consultancies of coming up with this “language course method as it guaranteed visas to Ukraine”.

Nearly 300 to 400 students from Punjab were going to Ukraine every month for the past several months, said the Amritsar consultant, adding that some students from other states were also opting for these courses.

## 1,234 Haryana students evacuated from Ukraine: Khattar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GURGAON, MARCH 6

HARYANA CHIEF Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Sunday said around 1,800 students from the state were stuck in the war-torn Ukraine, of which 1,234 have been evacuated.

The CM said this after interacting with students who returned from that country.

Of the remaining students, 80 are still stuck in Ukraine cities while the others have reached the country’s borders, Khattar told mediapersons.

### Of the remaining students, 80 are still stranded in Ukraine cities while the others have reached the country’s borders

Khattar said the students who have completed their course in Ukraine will be given internship opportunities. About the students who are yet to complete their studies there, Khattar said once the situation normalises, the government will talk to their colleges over the issue. For now, our priority is to bring back all Indians stuck in Ukraine, the CM said.

# Diplomatic intervention key to safe return of Indians from Ukraine

ANIL MALHOTRA

THE COLLAPSE of the ceasefire to facilitate evacuation of civilians from the strategic port of Mariupol in the southeast and the eastern town of Volnovakha spells more bad news for Indian students stuck in various cities of Ukraine.

On Saturday, Indian students stranded in Sumy in north-eastern Ukraine had released a video, announcing their decision to risk the long and perilous walk to the Russian border, prompting a response from the MEA. Arindam Bagchi, spokesperson

for the Ministry of External Affairs, in a Twitter post, said, “We are deeply concerned about Indian students in Sumy, Ukraine. Have strongly pressed Russian and Ukrainian governments through multiple channels for an immediate ceasefire to create a safe corridor for our students. Have advised our students to take safety precautions, stay inside shelters and avoid unnecessary risks. Ministry and our Embassies are in regular touch with the students.”

Meanwhile, Russia seems all set to widen its attack as it advances on Kyiv to topple the Ukraine Government.

Thousands of Indians stranded in Ukraine in bunkers and underground metro stations, are at grave risk of dying of freezing cold, if not gunfire. The first Indian student casualty, a shocking death, had stepped out of a bunker to purchase food and exchange currency. Stranded at about 1400 kilometers from borders of European countries, their chances of evacuation on their own are bleak. Appeals on social media are heart wrenching.

Accounts indicate that Russians have started targeting civilian buildings. Reportedly, Indian Embassy office has now

been set up in Lviv.

Hundreds of Indian students are also stuck in the open on Romanian border. Those reaching train stations to head for the Polish border from Lviv, faced opposition from jam-packed

## SPECIAL TO EXPRES

Ukrainian refugees forcing them out. Deputing Indian Ministers at Poland, Romania and Hungary, 1600 kilometers away may offer little solace to those in underground isolation without

food, money or transportation.

Russia has asked all civilians to abandon Kyiv as it would be hit by high precision weapons. A thermobaric rocket launcher with 24 chambers fires volleys of vacuum bombs spraying a mist of fuel, which on detonation creates fireballs sucking oxygen from the hit air, causing total destruction. Heavens, beware.

The air space for civilian aircrafts in Ukraine is closed following the Russian attack. Access to borders by train or taxis is the only route. But this is fraught with danger. Earlier videos show that those who reached

Romanian border were not allowed to pass by Ukraine troops. Videos show jostling Indian students being hit with guns and boots. Those lucky to return talk of a “living hell”.

Commissioning Indian Airforce transport planes may help only those who reach Budapest, Bucharest or Warsaw. Indian nationals stuck in Ukrainian towns continue to be in grave danger.

India’s neutrality at the UNSC, must now come into play. India must appeal to both Russia and Ukraine to bail out Indians and stop bombing till the civilians are evacuated. This cease-

fire coupled with a safe corridor assured by Russians can save many young Indian lives.

As of now, risky air strikes, unpredictable troop movements, lack of food, water and resources, make travel to Poland, Hungary and Romania, an impossibility. The easiest exit from Ukraine is through Belgorod International Airport, Russia, which is about 100 kilometers from Kharkiv. But this necessitates intervention of Indian diplomats to convince Ukrainian armed forces to offer safe passage to stranded Indians. Simultaneously, Indian diplo-

macy must prevail over Russian counterparts to allow Indians to enter without Russian visas, as was done by Poland, Hungary and Romania. Indian diplomats can verify antecedents of Indians entering Russia.

For India, the battle can be won, while the war rages but we must act immediately before the situation worsens.

(The author, a practicing lawyer, has nine books pertaining to issues of private international law. He can be reached at anilmalhotra1960@gmail.com. www.anilmalhotra.co.in)



Devotees take part in a procession during the 'Maha Shivratri' fair, in Mandi, Sunday. *PTI*

# Channi seeks time from Shah to discuss BBMB issue

Chandigarh: Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi has sought time from Union Home Minister Amit Shah to take up with him the recent change in rules for the selection of members of the Bhakra-Beas Management Board.

Channi also intends to take up the issue of evacuation of Punjabi students from Ukraine with the home minister.

The chief minister has sought a meeting with Shah to take up these two issues of “utmost importance”, sources said.

Earlier on February 28, Punjab Assembly Speaker Rana K P Singh had met Governor Banwarilal Purohit and said the recent change in rules for the selection of two members of the BBMB would be detrimental to the interests of Punjab and Haryana.

Singh had submitted a memorandum to the Governor on the issue and requested him to take up it with the Centre.

The change in rules has started a controversy with several political leaders in Punjab strongly opposing the Centre’s move.

The BJP alleged a deliberate attempt by some leaders to create

confusion on the matter. The BBMB, which is a statutory body under the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966 and manages water resources of Sutlej and Beas, has a whole-time chairman and two members.

According to convention, the member (power) is always from Punjab and the member (irrigation) is from Haryana. They are selected from a panel of senior engineers. But now the change in rules for selection allows anyone to apply for these posts.

Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt) chief Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa, whose party is an ally of the BJP, had recently said the decision to abolish the representation of Punjab from the BBMB would “weaken” the federal structure of the country and hence the Union government should immediately reverse its decision.

Over a week ago, Punjab Congress leader Sunil Jakhar had said BBMB rules have been tweaked “to the detriment of Punjab” and had written to Channi, urging him to take up with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and also lead an all-party delegation to meet the PM.

However, BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh had recently hit out at the Congress and the Akali leaders for their statements on the working of the BBMB. Chugh had said there was a deliberate attempt by some political leaders to create confusion and arouse public sentiments against the Centre.

The canard being spread by the Congress has been exposed with the BBMB stating that there is no attempt to change the already existing system to give due representation to Punjab and Haryana, the BJP leader had said. Meanwhile, on the issue of Punjab students stuck in war-hit Ukraine, Punjab Chief Secretary Anirudh Tewari had on Friday disclosed that 225 students have already returned safely and the state government is sparing no effort to help the distressed families.

The calls received on the state government’s dedicated control room numbers and these queries are being immediately forwarded to the Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for ensuring safe and secure evacuation of the remaining persons, he had said on Friday.

## HP budget focuses on state’s growth, says Thakur

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, MARCH 6

CHIEF MINISTER Jai Ram Thakur said that the annual budget is orientated towards all round and inclusive development of the state. He was addressing the virtual conference Jan Samvad on budget 2022-23 on Sunday from Shimla. He said that the annual budget for the year 2022-23 outlines need-based modifications in the ongoing schemes and also proposes an increase in the outlays of many schemes, besides having its orientation towards all round and inclusive development of the State.

Jai Ram Thakur said that it was the first time that a Chief Minister was interacting directly with the masses after presenting the annual budget of the state.

### Jai Ram Thakur said that it was the first time that a CM was interacting directly with the masses after presenting the annual budget of the state

He said that the main aim of the Himachal Pradesh government during the last four years was to ensure the socio-economic upliftment of the poor and the downtrodden.

He said that all the schemes, policies and programmes of the state government were aimed at the upliftment of the people living at the lowest ebb. He said that the very first decision of the present Government was aimed at welfare of the old people and another at ensuring proper shelter to the abandoned cattle.

He said that Rs 500 were being provided per month per cattle in Cow Sanctuaries and Gau Sedans, which now has been increased to Rs.700 per month per cow in the budget 2022-23.

# Everyone unhappy with BJP-JJP rule in Haryana: State Cong chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 6

ALLEGING “CORRUPTION was at its peak” in Haryana and it was “number one in unemployment”, state Congress chief Kumari Selja on Sunday claimed all sections of the society were unhappy with the “misrule” of the BJP-JJP government.

After a meeting of the Haryana Congress in the national capital about the upcoming civic polls in the state, she alleged every day a new scam was being exposed and that “inflation has broken all records”.

Elections for 48 municipal councils and municipal committees in Haryana are likely to be held in the last week of April.



Selja said every section wants to get rid of this government

The meeting was presided over by the Congress’ Haryana

affairs in-charge Vivek Bansal and attended by Selja, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Deepender Singh Hooda, Kuldeep Bishnoi, Ajay Singh Yadav and Kiran Choudhry among others.

“There is no section of the state which is not unhappy with the misrule of this government. Today, every section wants to get rid of this government as soon as possible. Every section was looking at the Congress party,” Selja said after the meeting.

Echoing Selja’s views, Bansal alleged that corruption was at its peak in Haryana and the state continued to be “number one in terms of unemployment”.

“Every day, new scams were being exposed in the state. The

government was deliberately not rolling out new recruitment, due to which unemployment had crossed the peak.

“Inflation has broken all records. Industries and businesses had been destroyed due to the failure of this government. Crime is also increasing and farmers were suffering,” Selja said.

She also claimed that the Haryana government had not opposed the recent change in rules for the selection of the two members of the Bhakra Beas Management Board.

“The Central Government abolished the permanent membership of Haryana in the Bhakra Beas Management Board but the state government did not oppose it,” The state Congress chief alleged.

## Himachal CM flags off dental van

Shimla: Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur flagged-off Mobile Dental Van from Oak Over here on Sunday on the occasion of ‘Dentist Day’.

He said that this Dental Van worth Rs 34.53 lakh would go a long way in organising Dental Treatment Camps in schools and far-flung areas of the state where facilities of dental treatment were not available.

He said that this would also help in providing treatment to specially-abled people who cannot visit hospital for treatment. Thakur said that the van has been equipped with a fully automatic chair with all accessories such as scaler, light cure, compressor suction etc., X-ray facility, generator, water storage tank, public address system, air conditioning system etc.

ENS



# Join hands, chase away the govt from Centre, Malik tells khaps

SUKHBIR SIWACH  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 6

REFERRING TO the three contentious farm laws that were repealed last year, Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik Sunday alleged that a friend of the Prime Minister had set up a godown in Panipat before the enactment of these laws "to buy wheat at cheaper rates and sell it at higher prices".

Addressing a function organised by the khaps of Jind district at Kandela village on Sunday, Malik said: "Even today, they (buyers) decide the price of our crops, not us. This time, it (farmer agitation) was a decisive battle to ensure fair prices of crops after implementation of the MSP. But why is MSP not being implemented? Pradhan Mantri ka dost hai jisane 50 acre me godam bana diya hai Panipat me, ye kanoon pass hone se pehle. (There is a friend of the Prime Minister who built a godown in Panipat before passing of these laws). He needs wheat at cheaper rates. He will take your wheat at lower rates and will sell it at higher prices. This is the basic battle."

Malik further urged the farmers to unite and form their own government. "I would like to request that now you quit holding dharnas and sitting on roads. Form your government by getting together, change the government, there will be no need to beg from anybody."

Malik said: "The big thing is that the (Lok Sabha) elections will take place after two years. If you unitedly cast votes, all these leaders will run away from Delhi and there will be a government of the farmers."

Commenting on the UP elections, Malik said, "The result of the UP election has not been declared but I tell you no minister could enter any village in western UP. The people said, 'Where were you when we were sitting on dharna?' This Smriti Irani was also made to flee."

Indicating his political ambitions, Malik said: "Hundred per-



Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik during a khap mahapanchayat at Kandela village in Jind district, Sunday. Manoj Dhaka

cent, in the upcoming polls, you will realise that new people and parties have entered (the electoral battle) and they will win and form the government...I can (lead) but it's not good that I say this thing. Whoever leads, I will participate in it...My governorship is going to end in 7-8 months...(In the coming polls) main puri takat lagakar, pure Uttar Bharat me campaign karunga aur inko bhagaunga (I will campaign with all my might throughout North India and will chase them away)."

When asked what if he was removed from the post of Governor, Malik said: "Is this post a big thing? Was I was born Governor? I don't fear it at all. I have never been afraid."

On the Red Fort flag hoisting incident during the farmer agitation last year, Malik said: "I said ... don't call our boys traitors. Don't lodge cases against them.

They had just planted the flag, it was not of a (political party) but Nishan Sahib. For Nishan Sahib, thousands of Sikhs have sacrificed their lives."

Praising the farmer agitation, he said, "In the history of the world, there has been no such agitation where not even a sparrow was killed but the goal was achieved. (During the farmer agitation), I used to see the problems my people (farmers) faced in all the weathers-- summer, winter and rains--on the roads of Delhi. The Prime Minister lives at a distance of ten kilometres from there, he did not try to find out their issues by visiting them. Even when a dog dies, a letter is issued from Delhi (to express condolence), our 700 men (farmers) died but no letter of condolence was sent. When I became very upset with this situation, I decided to leave the governorship and join the farmers

in their battle (agitation)...I went to a minister of this (central) government to tell him that I was resigning. He said 'Don't make a mistake, speak for them (farmers), fight for them, sit on a dharna but resign only when these Delhiwalas (central government) ask for it. I went to meet the Prime Minister and said, 'Sahab, I don't know whether you are ashamed or not, but I am very ashamed that we are sitting on such posts and our forefathers are sitting there (on dharna)...You (PM) resolve this matter by holding talks with them because they are with justice...I won't tell you what the Prime Minister replied. But it was very painful and I decided that I will speak on this battle till the end. Many friends suggested to me that you can become President or Vice President, if you remain quiet. I said I'd rather kick these posts."

Malik further said: "These posts are nothing... I had worked with Chaudhary Charan Singh, he used to say 'Beta, whenever a sawal is raised on your class, leave everything but don't compromise'. I also decided that I have to speak up... (for farmers) and I spoke continuously. A day before these laws were repealed, I said, 'In the next polls, the Prime Minister won't be found even if you search for him, all of them (BJP leaders) will disappear, the farmers will chase them away'."

Malik termed the compromise between the farmer leaders and the government as "aadha-adhura" (half-unfinished) adding the issues of farmers are still hanging fire. "These are not the issues of today, the issue of fair pricing has been pending since the days of Chaudhary Chhotu Ram," he added.

## Delegates from 26 countries to watch poll today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

AS POLLING across the five poll-bound states concludes on Monday, the Election Commission (EC) will organise International Election Visitors Programme (IEVP) for foreign election management bodies via live-streaming.

More than 135 delegates from over 26 countries across the world — Australia, Bahamas, Bhutan, Croatia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Guinea, Guyana, Kenya, Liberia, Maldives, Mauritius, Moldova, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Romania, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Suriname, Tanzania, Uzbekistan and Zambia — and four international organisations will watch live-streaming of polling in Varanasi and Uttar Pradesh on Monday and recorded broadcast from select polling stations.

The participants will be also be shown a recorded broadcast from select polling stations in each of the five states of Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh where polls have taken place.

Besides, Ambassadors/High Commissioners and other members of the Diplomatic Corps based in India from 20 countries have been invited to participate in the virtual IEVP.

"The ongoing legislative Assembly elections in the five states have a combined electorate of 183.4 million, one of the largest to vote amid the Covid-19 pandemic. IEVP constitutes an important part of EC's international outreach and is organised with the goal of familiarising fellow EMs with the electoral system and processes adopted in the world's largest democracy," the EC said.

# On table, suggestion to take junk food ads off children's TV shows

HARIKISHAN SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

THE UNION Women and Child Development Ministry has suggested that junk food ads should not be aired during children's programmes, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The idea was brought up at a recent meeting where draft guidelines on "misleading advertisements" were discussed. The meeting, chaired by Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh, was attended by officials from several ministries including Home Affairs, Health, Information Broadcasting and Consumer Affairs.

During the meeting, held February 17, a WCD Ministry official suggested that advertise-

**EXPLAINED** **E** **Penalty for misleading ads**

UNDER THE Consumer Protection Act, the Central Consumer Protection Authority is empowered to "regulate" matters relating to violation of rights of consumers, unfair trade practices and false or misleading advertisements. The act also provides for a penalty for misleading ads which may extend to Rs 10 lakh and prohibition from making endorsement for up to three years.

ments promoting junk foods should not be permitted during children's programs, it is learnt.

The official also observed that ads should not "promote" carbonated beverages which show celebrities performing "dangerous stunts." The WCD ministry official also suggested that advertisements should not endorse health supplements like DHA omega 3 fatty acid which claims to support brain development, it is learnt.

The official observed that the ads should not promote those "unhealthy" junk foods which leads to "obesity" in children. He cited figures from National Family Health Surveys to show the rising obesity in children in the country.

Officials at the meeting discussed the draft of the Central Consumer Protection Authority

(Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Necessary Due Diligence for Endorsement of Advertisements) Guidelines, 2021, which have provisions on "advertisements targeted at children".

*The Indian Express* has learnt that after inter-ministerial consultations, the Consumer Affairs Department is expected to release these guidelines, being prepared under the Consumer Protection Act of 2019, by end of this month.

First draft of these guidelines was released by the Department of Consumer Affairs in 2020 and did not have specific provisions related to junk food advertisements. In this draft, the government had intended to prohibit "behaviour" in ads that could be dangerous for children or affect their mental health, among several other steps.

# 'Intent behind assault on minor sexual': HC dismisses plea against conviction

JAGPREET SINGH SANDHU  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 6

THE PUNJAB and Haryana High Court has dismissed a plea challenging conviction in a case of unnatural offences (Section 377 of IPC) and POCSO Act, saying that Section 377 can be attracted even when "the predominant intent in the commission of the act is sexual".

The plea had contended that there was no external mark of injury around the body of the victim and the charges against the accused were not substantiated by evidence. In the case of assault on an 8-year-old boy, the Principal Magistrate, Juvenile Justice Board, Sonapat had convicted that accused in March 2021 under Section 377 of IPC and Section 10 of POCSO Act.

In the plea before HC, it was argued by the counsel that the victim had never deposed about being sodomised and has only stated that a "wrong act/bad act" was done with him.

Also, it was said that since the

medical examination is stated to have taken place on the same day and without any delay, absence of any external marks of injury or detection of semen on the body or clothes of victim rules out any possibility of the victim being subjected to forcible intercourse or having been sodomised.

The bench of Justice Vinod S Bhardwaj after hearing the matter held, "Any act that would involve touching the private parts/genitalia or primary/secondary sexual characteristics of a child with a sexual intent involving physical contact without penetration would amount to a sexual assault."

Citing judgements of different High Courts, the bench further said, "It is evident that in order to attract Section 377, the act in question must have to do with flesh and sensuality and that the same must involve penetration other than penile-vaginal penetration. The contention of the petitioners is restricted only to one of the aspects of the scope of Section 377 i.e. sodomy...The suggestive interpretation of the

petitioner that Section 377 IPC cannot be attracted but for occurrence of an eventuality where there is an anal penetration does not find support in the statute."

Justice Bhardwaj added that, "Section 377 can be attracted even in a situation where the penetration happens to be on any other part of the body of a victim, the predominant intent in the commission of the act, however, has to be sexual. Hence, the argument of the petitioners that conviction is bad for want of any external mark of injury around the body of the victim is liable to be rejected as not being well founded. The judgements of courts below thus cannot be held to be perverse on the said count."

Dismissing the plea challenging the conviction, the judge held: "Considering that the victim happens to be a child of only 8 years as on the date of occurrence, his dignity having been violated by sheer brute force, I am not inclined to accept the said submission as well and reject the same."

# Haryana home secy gives 'clean-chit' to DGP-rank IPS officer, IG takes battle to Centre

SUKHBIR SIWACH  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 6

WITH HARYANA ADDITIONAL Chief Secretary (ACS-home) Rajeev Arora giving a "clean chit" to a DGP rank IPS officer Manoj Yadava nearly three months ago in the allegations levelled against him by an IGP rank IPS officer Y Puran Kumar, Kumar has taken the battle to the central government for intervention.

Nearly two years ago, "some differences" had emerged between the then DGP Manoj Yadava and the then Ambala IGP Y Puran Kumar over the latter's visit to a temple in a police station of Ambala district. Later, Y Puran Kumar blamed Rajeev Arora for not acting on his complaints lodged against Yadava.

In an order issued on the behalf of Haryana Governor in December 2021, Arora had rejected Kumar's complaints insisting that "no case is made out for initiation of action against Yadava", who is currently on central deputation. In January and February, Kumar filed two complaints against Arora and even sought his transfer from the post of ACS home. Now on March 3, Kumar has written a letter to the Chief Secretary Sanjeev Kaushal to inform that the Union Home Secretary has taken cognizance of his complaints against Arora and has referred the matter to the Secretary, DoPT.

Kumar alleged that "due to the alleged undue delay and vindictiveness in processing his earned leave application by Arora, I could not visit my hometown Secunderabad, Telangana on the occasion of the golden jubilee wedding anniversary of my parents."

Kumar said: "Even, today I am not able to visit my hometown Secunderabad, Telangana after over one and half years which is not only harassment beyond any words but also an embarrassment for me being an IPS officer who is in his 21st year of service."

On the other hand, an official of the government had earlier told *The Indian Express* that "Earned Leave is not a right of an official but a privilege adding its discretion of the government whether to grant the leave or not keeping in view the available circumstances".

The official further said: "The competent authority has to see whether a request of an officer for any kind of leave including Earned Leave has to be accepted or not. The competent authority has to see various fac-

tors including requirements and availability of the officials at a point of time.

Originally the temple matter began in May 2021 when Kumar was posted as IGP of Ambala range and Yadava was the then state DGP. According to the ACS home's order, the then DGP by taking note of a news item wrote a DO letter to Y Puran Kumar "wherein, by referring to the clause 3.3 (2) of the Punjab Police Rules, 1934, (PPR), it was requested to inform whether prior sanction of Government was obtained before setting up the place of worship in Police Station, Shahzadpur, district Ambala." Thereafter various communications were made between Y Puran Kumar and Manoj Yadava on the issue. Kumar has been alleging that he harassed for visiting the temple stating there are numerous places of worship existing on police premises in various police units across the state. Kumar sought "disciplinary action" against Yadava for his alleged "partial and discriminatory treatment in dealing with fellow IPS officers on common issue".

But in his order, Arora had concluded: "After careful consideration of the material on record including complaints of (Y Puran Kumar)..., comments submitted by Sh. Manoj Yadava, IPS, the then DGP Haryana and the other relevant record placed on file, no case is made out for initiation of action against Sh. Manoj Yadava, IPS as has been requested by the petitioner (Y Puran Kumar)...It will not be out of place to mention here that going through the entire record of the case, it is transpired that the routine administrative communication/issue has been unnecessary dragged to such an avoidable situation. Both the officers belong to Uniform service, where discipline is the essence. The decency of official communication must be maintained at all times and the difference of opinion should be sorted out amicably. Such open display of difference in opinion can have adverse effects on the force at large besides vitiating the discipline in the force. Precious office time and primary aim of serving the people should not suffer due to time and efforts being spent on issues that can be easily sorted out within the existing administrative structure. It is hoped that such kind of unhealthy and unwanted communications could/would be avoided." Arora was not available for comments.

# Two arrested for running illegal sex determination racket in Rajkot

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
RAJKOT, MARCH 6

A MALE NURSE from Una in Gir Somnath and a woman from Rajkot city were arrested by the Rajkot Crime Branch Sunday after they were caught conducting a sex-determination procedure with the help of an unregistered medical ultrasound device.

After getting a tip-off that Nayankumar Girnara (42) and Beena alias Meera Deda (32) were doing illegal sex-determination tests of foetuses and even providing facility for illegal abortions, the Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) of Rajkot laid a trap by asking a woman constable to pose as a customer and another woman constable to pose as her sister-in-law. The two constables went to a place on Sant Kabir Road as agreed with Girnara and Deda. However, while Girnara and Deda were doing sonography on the dummy customer, officers of DCB and Dr Jayeshkumar Vakani, medical officer of health (MoH) of Rajkot Municipal Corporation raided the premises.

After Girnara and Deda couldn't produce any documents of registration of the ultrasound sonography (USG) machine nor of the place as is required under The Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994, the duo were detained from the spot and their device was seized.

The DCB booked the duo under PCPNDT Act on Sunday and arrested them formally.

"Girnara holds a degree of Bachelor of Science (General Nursing and Midwifery). Neither of them are qualified to conduct USG procedure on pregnant women nor was their USG device registered with the RMC as is required under the law. In fact, they were offering their services of conducting sex-determination tests at the place of customer's choice and also used to perform illegal abortions," Jayesh Dhola, police inspector of DCB said.

# Haryana sees 156 new Covid cases

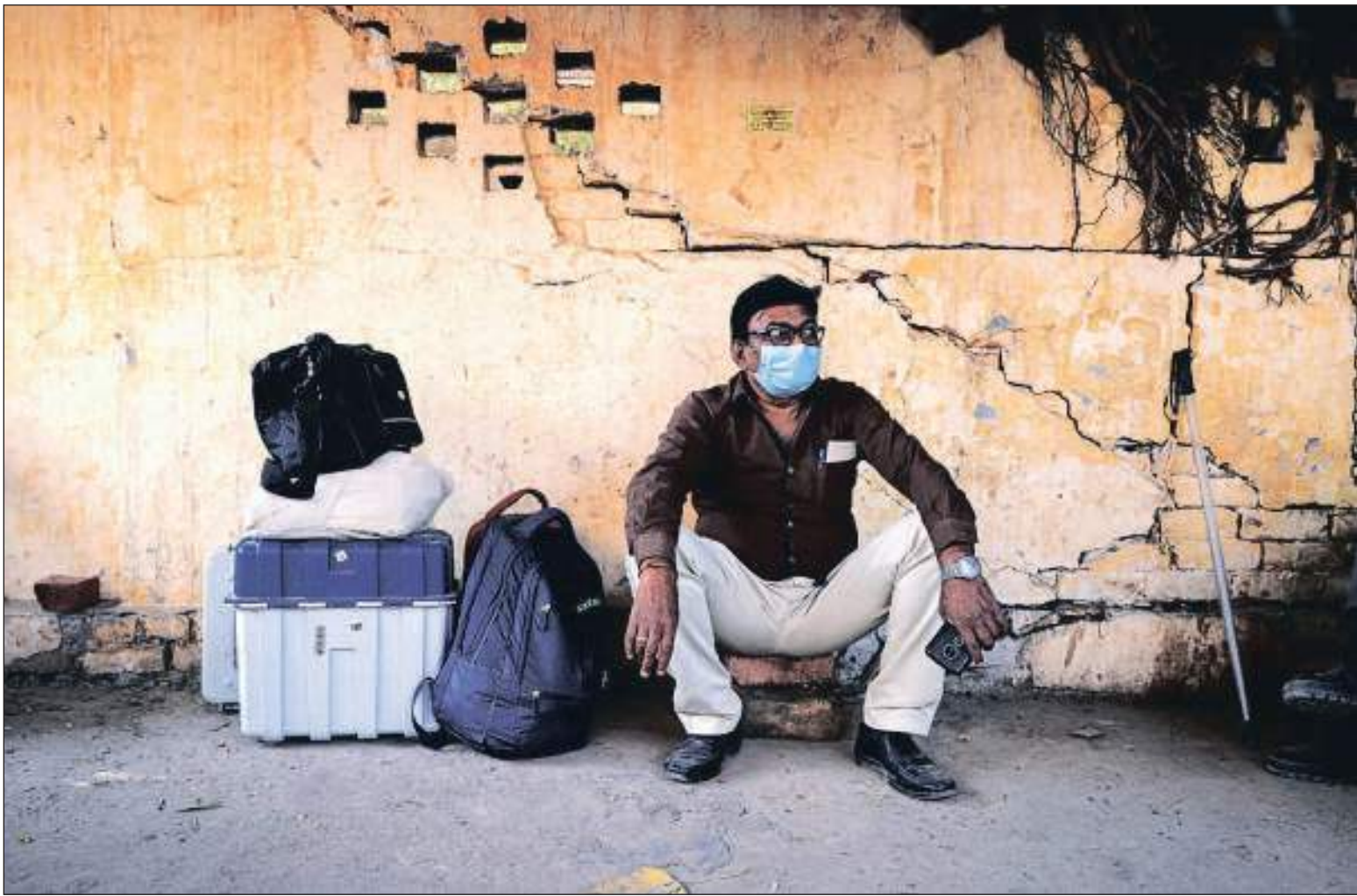
*Chandigarh:* Haryana on Sunday reported 156 fresh Covid-19 cases, pushing the state's infection count so far to 9,83,018.

No death due to the disease was reported in the state in a day, and the fatality count stands at 10,571, according to a health department bulletin. The fresh cases include 65 from Gurgaon district and 11 from Faridabad, while Hisar and Panchkula reported 10 cases each. The Covid-19 recovery rate is at 98.80 per cent, as per the bulletin. **PTI**









LAST ROUND

A polling officer after collecting an EVM from a distribution centre in Varanasi on Sunday, a day ahead of the last phase of elections in UP. Reuters

I HEREBY DECLARE

ANIL KUMAR YADAV  
CONG CANDIDATE  
FROM NIZAMABAD  
(AZAMGARH)

TOTAL ASSETS  
₹1.74 lakh

MOVABLE ASSETS  
Self: ₹1.74 lakh  
IMMOVABLE ASSETS  
Nil

LOANS FROM BANKS  
AND OTHER FINANCIAL  
INSTITUTIONS  
Nil

CRIMINAL CASE  
1

PROFESSION:  
Social worker

EDUCATION:  
MA in Medieval  
History (2012)

DURGA PRASAD  
YADAV  
SP CANDIDATE FROM  
AZAMGARH

TOTAL ASSETS  
₹22.38 crore

MOVABLE ASSETS  
Self: ₹50.04 lakh  
(includes a pistol and a  
rifle)

Wife: ₹83.67 lakh

IMMOVABLE ASSETS  
Self: ₹12.64 crore  
Wife: ₹8.41 crore

LOANS FROM BANKS  
AND OTHER FINANCIAL  
INSTITUTIONS  
Couple (joint account):  
₹37.45 lakh

CRIMINAL CASES  
3

SOURCES OF EARNING  
Self: MLA salary,  
agriculture

Wife: Agriculture

EDUCATION: LLB (1991)

VOTING FOR THE LAST PHASE TODAY

On test today: Modi magic in Varanasi and Akhilesh charisma in Azamgarh

Small parties in big race; 54 constituencies in nine districts go to polls today

LALMANI VERMA  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 6

WITH 54 constituencies, spread across nine districts, going to polls on Monday in the seventh and final phase of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, allies will be on BJP's performance in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Lok Sabha constituency Varanasi. Samajwadi Party's show of strength in Azamgarh, from where Akhilesh Yadav was elected to Parliament in the 2019 general elections, will be on test, too.

Also, the impact of the smaller allies of the BJP and SP such as Apna Dal (S), NISHAD Party, SBSP and Apna Dal (K) in determining the electoral fate of their respective big partners will be gauged in this phase.

In the 2017 Assembly elections, BJP had won 29 of the 54 seats, while its allies Apna Dal(S) and OP Rajbhar's Suheldeo Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) bagged seven. The SP, on the other hand, had won 11 seats,

BSP six and the NISHAD party one seat. Notably, in this election, the SBSP is with the SP, and the NISHAD Party with the BJP.

In the 2012 Assembly elections, when Samajwadi Party came to power, most of the seats in this southeast UP region were won by it — 34. BSP had then won 7, BJP only 4, Congress 3, Quami Ekta Dal (QED) two, Independents three, and Apna Dal one seat.

Besides Varanasi and Azamgarh, the seven districts that will vote on Monday are Bhadohi, Chandauli, Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Mau, Mirzapur, and Sonbhadra.

In this phase, there are 2.06 crore eligible voters who will decide the fate of 613 candidates, including 75 women candidates.

For BJP, the litmus test of its popularity will be the three urban seats of Varanasi — Varanasi South, Varanasi North and Varanasi Cantonment. While they are considered safe seats for the party as it has never lost the election in these three seats in the past several elections, re-

ports of strong anti-incumbency against the sitting MLAs in Varanasi South and Varanasi North made the BJP jittery, thereby forcing the party and RSS to lend their full strength in the campaign. Modi himself led a roadshow in Varanasi on Friday that criss-crossed through these three constituencies.

In nearby Azamgarh district, where the SP had won nine of the 10 seats in 2012, but managed to win only five in 2017, Monday's vote will test SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's influence in the district where Yadav and Muslim votes determine the outcome.

The prestige of two Union ministers — Mahendra Nath Pandey and Anupriya Patel — is also at stake in their respective Lok Sabha constituencies of Chandauli and Mirzapur.

Anupriya Patel, the president of Apna Dal (Sonelal) faction which is a junior partner of the BJP, has to consolidate Patel or Kurmi-OBC voters behind the BJP. Her mother Krishna Patel, who runs another faction of the

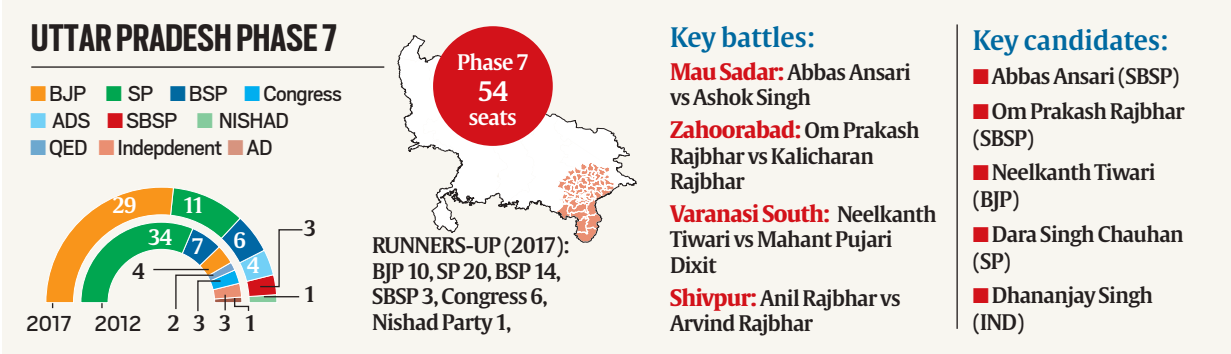
party — Apna Dal (Kamerawadi) — has forged an alliance with the SP and has fielded its candidates on three seats in this phase.

SBSP president Om Prakash Rajbhar who had won his first election in 2017 from Zahooraabad in alliance with BJP, is seeking re-election from the same seat, but this time in alliance with the SP. Rajbhar was a minister in the Yogi Adityanath government before snapping the ties with the BJP in the run-up to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. His son, Arvind Rajbhar, is contesting from Shivpur in Varanasi district. The BJP has fielded candidates from the Rajbhar community against both the father and son.

Jailed MLA Mukhtar Ansari's son, Abbas Ansari, is contesting from his father's constituency Mau as an SBSP candidate.

Among the SP's allies, SBSP is contesting on six seats and Apna Dal (Kamerawadi) on three.

NISHAD Party, an ally of the BJP, has fielded candidates on four seats, while Apna Dal(S) in three.



TALKING POINT

Not just bulls, how bulldozers made it to election lexicon in UP

MANISH SAHU  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 5

THE SAMAJWADI Party mentioned it first, as a jibe. The BJP decided to wear it as a badge of honour. And hence the bulldozer entered the poll lexicon this time in Uttar Pradesh, with Yogi Adityanath seeing in it an affirmation of both his government's "tough on criminals" and "high on development" image.

During the campaign, the Chief Minister and Home Minister Amit Shah contended that in the past five years, law and order had been brought under control in UP, especially the mafia dons. It is properties of these dons demolished by his

government that Adityanath proudly cites for his "Bulldozer Baba" credentials.

The rhetoric

Addressing a rally in Ayodhya last month, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav said: "Till now, we were calling him (Adityanath) 'Baba mukhyamantri'. But today, one of the reputed English newspapers called him 'Baba Bulldozer'... It's not me who has given this name."

Soon after, the BJP started ensuring bulldozers were parked at CM's rallies. These carried banners declaring "Baba ka Bulldozer".

At a public meeting in Karhal

in Mainpuri, from where Akhilesh is contesting, Adityanath warned: "I have sent the bulldozers for repairs. Once they start working again after March 10, all those who are hot-headed now will be silenced."

The Congress too tried to hop onto the bandwagon. Last week, general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra asked the public in Chandauli if the BJP had used the bulldozer against the local mafia.

The reality check

Between March 2017, when the Adityanath government came to power, and December 5, the UP Police claims to have arrested



BJP supporters at a recent rally by Yogi Adityanath in Siddharth Nagar. PTI/File

DUDDHI & OBRA

In UP's only 2 ST seats, anger over stalled projects, drinking water

MAULSHREE SETH  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 6

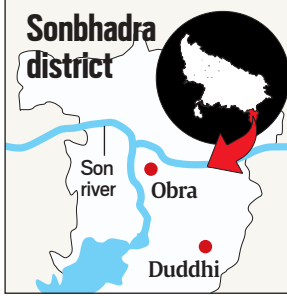
DUDDHI AND Obra, the only two Assembly constituencies reserved for Scheduled Tribes in Uttar Pradesh, seem stuck in a time warp. The two seats in backward Sonbhadra district go to the polls on Monday — the last day of polling in the state — with the all-too-familiar issues of *roti-kapda-makaan*, besides clean drinking water, as their basic demands.

The four seats of the Naxal-hit tribal belt (besides Duddhi and Obra, Robertsganj and Ghorawal), which share their boundaries with Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, also have unemployment as a major issue. In 2017, the BJP won three out of four seats in this tribal belt, while its alliance partner, the Apna Dal(S), won one (Duddhi).

While the BJP is banking on the projects that it inaugurated in the past five years — a medical college, housing schemes, a project to provide clean drinking water — resentment has been building up since most of these schemes are yet to get off the ground.

The Samajwadi Party, meanwhile, is banking on its established tribal leaders in a region where land is the main currency and which has in the past seen clashes over land rights — in 2015, over the Kanhar irrigation project, and in 2019, when 10 tribals were killed in Umbha.

In the current Assembly, Duddhi is represented by BJP ally Apna Dal(S) MLA Hariam. But this election, the BJP has decided to



**DUDDHI**  
**2017 POLLS**  
**Winner:** Hariam, Apna Dal(S); 64,399 votes and 34.24% vote share  
**Runner-up:** Vijay Singh Gond, BSP; 63,314 votes and 33% vote share  
**OBRA**  
**2017**  
**Winner:** Sanjiv Kumar M, BJP; 78,058 votes, 49.24% vote share  
**Runner-up:** Ravi Gond, SP; 33,789 votes, 21.31% vote share

contest the seat on its own and has chosen Ram Dular, a tribal leader.

A miffed Hariam has switched sides and is now the BSP candidate, but locals say much of the anger over unfulfilled promises is directed at Hariam and therefore, the fight could be between Ram Dular and SP's Vijay Singh. In the 2017 election, about 8,500 people of this constituency had chosen the NOTA option.

Vijay Singh is a seven-time MLA and a former minister who

has won from the seat both on Congress and SP tickets. His supporters have been assuring voters that the Gond leader will get a space in the Cabinet if the party is voted to power. Singh had contested the 2017 election as a BSP candidate.

The Congress has fielded a woman candidate, Basanti Panika.

Campaigning for Ram Dular, Yogi Adityanath had promised to provide clean drinking water to the region. Reason: The high fluoride content in the water here has been blamed for several ailments among people. The government had approved an RO water project, but work on it is still underway in some regions.

Sensing the anti-incumbency in neighbouring Duddhi, five months before the elections, the BJP government in UP made Obra's sitting MLA Sanjiv Kumar, a Gond leader, a minister in the Yogi Adityanath Cabinet. The party hopes the course-correction will see the party through this election.

The SP has left Obra to its alliance partner, Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, which has fielded Rakesh Kumar Gond. The Congress, on the other hand, is banking on Ram Raj, a young tribal leader who had led the 2019 protest over land in Umbha.

After the incident, however, the village was turned into a model village with pucca homes, land rights to farmers and even piped drinking. While the BJP is focusing on this turnaround, the Opposition is attempting to keep the focus on the incident

Martyrs to a hockey player, the icons brought alive this poll season

SHIVNARAYAN  
RAJPUROHIT  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

ALL POLITICAL parties hold dear their icons. The list gets longer during polls as parties dust off history books to project long-forgotten heroes or revive prominent ones to woo votes from specific communities.

Over the last one month of the election campaign, UP CM Yogi Adityanath has invoked at least 70 such personalities — saints, local deities and freedom fighters — in his tweets, which he usually puts out before he goes out to campaign in a constituency associated with the person. Here are some of them: **Devraha Baba (Deoria):** A seer who lived on a machan along the Saryu river, the baba counted former prime ministers Rajiv Gandhi and Lal Bahadur

Shastri, former president Rajendra Prasad and the late Congress leader Arjun Singh among his followers. He famously used to bless his devotee with his foot. The Liberhan Commission, set up to investigate the Babri mosque demolition in 1992, named Baba as an accused.

**KD Singh 'Babu' (Barabanki):** The prolific hockey striker was part of India's Olympic gold-winning teams in 1948 and 1952. He later coached the national team.

**Malik Muhammad Jayasi (Amethi):** The 16th century Sufi poet is best remembered for his epic poem Padmavat. Adityanath in his tweet described the poet as a devout disciple of the 11-century saint Gorakhnath. The CM is the chief priest of the Gorakhnath Math.

**Nanaji Deshmukh (Gonda):** A Bharat Ratna awardee, Bharatiya Jana Sangh leader's organisational skills were instru-

mental in spreading RSS ideology in eastern Uttar Pradesh in the 1950s. Adityanath called him the "Rahstriya Rishi" (national saint).

**Veera Pasi (Rae Bareilly):** Born in the district in 1935, he was a commander in the army of king Rana Beni Madho, who crossed swords with the British during the revolt of 1857. The Dalit warrior successfully executed a jail-break plan for Madho.

**Narpat Singh (Hardoi):** Despite the fall of neighbouring territories to British soldiers in 1857, the zamindar of Hardoi remained defiant. He died in the Hardoi battlefield.

**Uda Devi (Lucknow):** The Dalit warrior asked Begum Hazrat Mahal to enlist her in the army to take on the British. In the battle of Sikandarbagh, she is said to have killed many soldiers while shooting from a vantage point atop a tree. She was later spotted and killed.



11

IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

Anyone can see that there is Russian aggression on a neighbour, which is a democratically elected government, is a member of the United Nations, and is not a small country. We are still in shock

**Shubhajit Roy: Did the Russian aggression against Ukraine come as a surprise to Germany?**

It came as a surprise to many of us. Nobody would have thought that President Vladimir Putin would brutally attack his neighbours. Let's call a spade a spade, he lied to everyone. First they said, "We will build up troops of 50,000 (soldiers) around Ukraine. Don't worry, nobody wants to invade, this is just for manoeuvre reasons." Then he said, our troops are there as peacekeepers. A peacekeeper doesn't bring bombs and doesn't shell civilian houses. They bring, not water and not food, but death and destruction. The latest lies are about blaming the victims, that they are the ones who have taken hostages. Anyone can see that there is Russian aggression on a neighbour, which has a democratically elected government and parliament, is a member of the United Nations, and is not a small country; it has 40-plus million people. We are still in shock. Who would have expected this from a leader of a global power?

**Shubhajit Roy: What is Germany's assessment of why Putin is doing this?**

Germany and Russia have a very strong relationship. Without Mikhail Gorbachev there wouldn't be a reunited Germany. And what's happening with Putin now, the war of Putin, I have no idea.

**Shubhajit Roy: Do you think Germany is so overly dependent on Russia for its energy needs that it had tied Germany's hands in the past.**

It is true that we import a lot of our energy from the Russians. But I don't think this has had too much influence on our political decisions. Since the Crimean occupation (in 2014), we have reduced our imports from Russia. We will be reducing it more. We also have to reduce the influx from Russia. Being the economic powerhouse in Europe, the sanctions from the German side are very drastic. We have put a freeze on the pipeline — Nord Stream. We have decided to increase our military budget and export weapons. We have never exported weapons into zones of tension. We have said this in the United Nations and in the German parliament. Democracy has its price and we are willing to pay it. Which means that inflation might go up, prices might go up. You can't get freedom and democracy for nothing. We have lived in a peaceful time for 70 years. Two to three generations have taken things for granted and Putin has made us open our eyes, and to keep that peace, there might be a price.

**Shubhajit Roy: There's also India's dependence on Russia for its defence needs. Could India have done something different?**

I'm a German ambassador here so I'm not the one who gives unwanted advice. Every country has a different history and different dependencies on neighbours. India has brilliant diplomacy, excellent diplomats. I was in New York for three years and some of the best and skillful diplomats were Indians. They know what to do and how to judge this. But I'm sure everyone in the world agrees that we cannot have the law of the jungle prevailing.

**Krishn Kaushik: Do you think Russia's concerns of the eastward expansion of NATO is legitimate?**

I don't want to go into a historic evaluation of who said what after the reunification of Germany. The fact is that NATO is a defence alliance. It's not threatening anyone. And what happened after the (Berlin) Wall came down is that those countries who became independent, and were previously with the Soviet, had their own choices to see to which alliances they belong to. These countries opted for being members of the NATO and European Union; with Georgia and Ukraine, it was a bit different, because they were still having border disputes. So, it was never on the actual agenda to make them members of NATO. The discussion was not even on the table. To justify this kind of breach of international order, you need a fake narrative. So, they're kind of bending history. And in this fast-living world, all these fake narratives have the tendency to prevail and influence people. If we let this happen, we all suffer.

**Krishn Kaushik: Are we moving towards a more militarised world?**

I grew up in a left-wing environment. We were protesting against the Vietnam War — make love, not war. Weapons are not a good thing. The world has to be a better place and fewer arms would be better than more arms because there are

WHY **WALTER J LINDNER**



Germany is one of Russia's closest partners in Europe and has deep historical, political and economic ties. With Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Germany, which is dependent on Russia for its energy needs, has decided to reverse its seven-decade long policy of not supplying arms to conflict zones. Under new German Chancellor Olaf

Scholz, this reversal is seen as a watershed moment. German ambassador Walter J Lindner, who has been in India since 2019, has engaged with G-7 and EU ambassadors over the last few weeks to convey their position to New Delhi. As a veteran diplomat, he is perfectly placed to put forth the German and European view on the crisis.



Putin is acting as an autocratic person. That's why democracies around the world have to speak with one voice. The additional danger is that this will set a precedent and we will have the law of the jungle in international relations

‘Putin has made us open our eyes, that to keep peace, there might be a price’

Walter J Lindner talks about the Russian aggression on Ukraine, Germany's lessons from history, putting pressure on Putin and the role of civil society. He was in conversation with Shubhajit Roy, Deputy Chief of National Bureau, *The Indian Express*



Walter J Lindner, German Ambassador to India, in conversation with Shubhajit Roy, Deputy Chief of National Bureau, *The Indian Express* Abhinav Saha

so many challenges. You have climate change, overpopulation, poverty reduction, there are so many things to do. We need money for this. So, what do we do? We have to spend more money for the military which instead should be spent for poverty reduction or on infrastructure. But Putin forces things on us. And that's another thing which I don't accept because he changed the world.

**Shubhajit Roy: Moscow's policies are very clear, where it allows it to use nukes to end conflict. Where do you think this is going?**

So far, there was a kind of a taboo to threaten countries which are not in possession of nuclear weapons with nuclear weapons. We know what the repercussions of world wars have been. A third world war will be the end of us all. It's irresponsible behaviour to threaten a nuclear world war which will end the planet. Who is he to do this?

**Shubhajit Roy: As a diplomat, what do you think it will take for a ceasefire to come in place?**

This is a lesson which we have learned in Germany, living on the edge of the Cold War with the Berlin Wall. In Berlin, where I live, there are still reminders of the Berlin Wall as a remembrance for our future generation. We have to always keep channels of communication open. We have called it the *Ostpolitik*, which led to the disappearance of the Wall. Negotiated ceasefire would be the just thing to do, of course. But let's not comment from the outside. The Ukrainians are under threat of death and life and have to do this negotiation.

**Liz Mathew: Do you think other countries should also change the contours and terms of diplomatic relations with countries in the new world order?**

Shall we already call this a new world order? Shall we give Putin the right to define a new world order? Will a new world order be defined just by Putin and no one else? I think it's important that the whole world says 'no' to Putin, with one voice. I think that's a common understanding which we want to achieve in the world. I've talked to people who were in the UN meetings. Except a few of the diehards, like North Korea or Syria or Belarus, nobody is defending this. Sanctions are working already. Let's hope that this contributes to changing Putin's mind.

**Shahid Judge: Is this going to test the heft the West has in international politics and economy.**

I wouldn't say this is a test for the West; it's a test for the world. I don't want to see it as a confrontation between East, West, North, South. No, it's not. It's be-

tween Putin and most of the rest of the world, except those five countries, maybe. If you see the situation in the voting patterns in the Security Council, the Russians were the only ones with a veto against their own condemnation. And they had the presidency of the Security Council. By the way, it shows how outdated the Security Council is, it doesn't reflect the realities of today. So that's why they had to move this from the Security Council to the General Assembly. If you see, there were 141 (countries condemning Russia). That is big in historical terms.

**Sourav Roy Barman: What explains the difference in reaction of European nations to refugees from Ukraine, who are being welcomed, and those in 2015 from Syria and Afghanistan?**

I wouldn't share the view that this is a similar situation like 2015. What we have now is the aggression of one country towards another country, which is a democratically elected country. The United Nations Refugee Coordinator is expecting millions of people to flee from Ukraine. So that would be a massive movement. That's why the European countries are saying, okay, you can come from Ukraine and even choose where you want to go in Europe, there will be no visa issue. It's our answer to this brutal violation of norms. Our answer is: We are human, we take them in and we support them. Look at the support activities everywhere in Europe. Civilian groups, civil society, are collecting stuff, so are students in universities, wherever you go, football clubs, similar. They're all supporting the freedom and independence of Ukraine. Maybe that's why it's not really comparable to what happened with the refugees who were running away from Iraq or Syria.

**Harikishan Sharma: Like Putin, there are strong leaders in other parts of the world. Do you think that they can**



**also commit such mistakes?**

Putin here is acting as an authoritarian, autocratic person. So, you're right, this might be a stimulus for others. That's the additional danger, that this will set a precedent and then we will have the law of the jungle in international relations and nobody will win from that.

**Anil Sasi: How much of a surprise was the Sunday (February 27) Reichstag session? Was it expected that the action would be as severe (against Russia) on weaponisation, the energy aspect and the sanctions?**

Honest answer, I didn't expect it and many didn't expect it, because it's a watershed. For Germany, it was maybe the biggest leap, because it is the European powerhouse and the financial and economic sanctions we are talking about would, of course, only make sense if Germany goes along. I think it was the call of the hour of our historic responsibility to make this leap. And we did in the face of the threat, which came there, and it shows the seriousness of this threat. And when he (Chancellor Olaf Scholz) presented this package of our reaction, there was a standing ovation afterwards, from left to right.

**Raj Kamal Jha: Why is Putin using the term 'de-Nazification'?**

He draws on anything. What better use of the word 'denazification' because then everyone remembers World War II. He said denazification and demilitarisation. There are no NATO troops, there are just Ukrainian people there. You can see they're going there with self-made Molotov cocktails and with lots of kitchen material on the streets. Where is the denazification? This is a part of the narrative he does and you see how often he has to repeat it. There are a lot of people in Russia, a vast majority, who are not feeling well with this, they might be ashamed of the President. People are go-

ing on the street in Petersburg, in other places. If you go out there, the next thing that happens is that you go to jail. Still, they go out, and still there are journalists who write about it. There is a brave civil society still out there.

**Shubhajit Roy: With Russian dependence on China for its economy, do you think there is a great amount of leverage that China has?**

Every country must see what kind of means they have to change Putin's course. Every country has different kinds of history, relations, and dependencies with Russia. Every country should use its influence. Your Prime Minister has already talked to Putin several times. But you asked the question whether Putin first consulted China or not. I don't know. You have to ask him. What let him do that and who said to him, "yes, we agree" or not, I don't know. This is a speculation. It's Putin's war so he's responsible for it.

**Krishn Kaushik: What are the red lines for NATO?**

An attack on NATO territory is a red-line, it's in the NATO Treaty. And Ukraine is not a NATO territory.

**Divya A: Will the relation between the people of Ukraine and Russia change with this situation?**

If you know the history of Russia, there is Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. So, they're brothers. I'm sure that's what you see sometimes on the streets. There is no problem between the people. But it will of course, change their attitude towards Putin and his regime.

**Shubhajit Roy: When chancellor Angela Merkel was around for more than 16 years, there was a great deal of stability. Now, we have the new Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Does the country feel the absence of Merkel?**

Merkel left huge shoes to fill. But it would be unfair to expect from a new chancellor to have 16 years of experience. But he has been mayor in Hamburg and vice-chancellor and is an old hand. The way they are dealing with this crisis and how they reshaped German foreign politics, I think, has been pretty good.

**Raj Kamal Jha: You talked about the history between Germany and Russia. Chancellor Merkel had strong ties... Can there be a back-channel... you make it seem Moscow revolves around one man.**

As we see the reactions of the *nomenklatura* in the Kremlin, they're very focused on one person, it is pretty clear who calls the shots. The matter of the game is

how do we make Putin stop. Through these diplomatic channels? If possible, yes. Whoever has an influence should do it. Or through social media, or through contradicting their false narratives, or through civil societies and sanctions. Whatever it takes, it's necessary right now.

By the way, you didn't bring up the question of any kind of mistreatment of refugees, who have a different skin colour? I say that for the reason that it could be fake news, it could be a kind of a narrative. But there could also be cases like these. Our foreign minister said in the General Assembly, "If there are cases like these, we take them very seriously." And we take them up with Ukrainians and the Ukrainians have also said if there are such cases, we are taking them up. This is the difference between a democracy and an authoritarian regime like Russia. We are not putting this under the carpet. All the information we get, we take them seriously, and we try to find out what's behind it.

**Shubhajit Roy: Germany has had relatively stable periods under long chancellor-ships. How do you see the trajectory of German politics ahead?**

There was always a kind of a lower-intensity crisis like the Brexit, refugee crisis, and the economic breakdown, the bubble which burst, and then, you had Afghanistan. These days, I think being in politics means crisis management, wherever you are. I think that the result of our elections last year also reflects the situation in the world, which at that time, without Putin, was more focused on climate change. That's why the Green Party did very well. And that's why we have this kind of rainbow coalition, which means in the future not only in Germany, but in many European countries, climate will be a very important topic.

**Shubhajit Roy: The India-German relationship in the last three years, you've seen it grow. What are the challenges that you faced in this relationship?**

I think the challenges are to know how to get crises like Ukraine and such things out of the way because we have to focus on the real things which matter — cooperation between the two countries, economic growth, getting jobs, working on renewable energies and technic transfer and getting the students to Europe. There are so many positive things which we have to focus on, you should not focus on the war. We have 2,000 companies here, we have six Goethe institutes, the highest number of Indian students in Europe are in Germany, they're not in the UK. France has 8,000 and the UK has 25,000. Germany has 30,000 students. We could do more.





The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

CALLING ON MOSCOW

Russia needs to be told: Its invasion endangered students, their safety is India’s national interest, hostage talk obfuscates

INDIA’S FIRST PRIORITY in the Ukraine war is the safety of all Indian students and other citizens in that country, parts of which are being subjected to heavy bombardment by Russian troops. So far, blending diplomacy and logistics, since the invasion began, the Government has brought back home over 15,000 Indian nationals. However, groups of students are still stuck in eastern Ukraine — reports from Sumy, close to the Russian border in northeastern Ukraine, raise deep concern. The town, where 800 Indian students are stuck in miserable conditions, is under near continuous shelling by Russian forces. While a “regime of silence”, or ceasefire, called by Ukraine and Russia to enable civilians to leave the cities of Mariupol and Volnovakha collapsed amid mutual recrimination, it is doubtful if the students stuck in Sumy, 600 km to the north, could have taken advantage of the suspension had it held. They have no access to transport to make such a long journey. The Russian border, towards which these students decided to walk, is closer but is 48 km away and the journey hazardous because of shelling. On an appeal by the MEA that it is making efforts to evacuate them, the students have, for now, called off the journey. The next challenge is to ensure a humanitarian corridor to evacuate those stuck in Sumy, and in the Pischyn area of Kharkiv, even if it takes more high-level calls between Delhi and Moscow. Both phone conversations between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin dwelt on the safety of Indian citizens. India must lean on him to do more.

At the same time, New Delhi was right to call out Moscow’s specious claim about Indian students being taken hostage by the Ukrainians. As a top official told this newspaper, had that been the case, these young men and women would not have been free to post heart-rending videos and SOS messages on social media, or keep in touch with their family members and friends back home. Not one of them has complained about being held captive or being asked to pay for a safe passage. Certainly though, trapped as they are, these hapless students are hostage to a situation not of their making.

This has to be conveyed to Moscow along with the message that India’s abstention in the UN votes on resolutions condemning Russia doesn’t mean an abdication of national interest. And, right now, India’s national interest is that each of its students stuck in Ukraine following the Russian invasion should return home safe and secure. Over a relationship of decades, Delhi has built enough friendships in the Kremlin to speak frankly and tell its friends how crucial the safety of the students is for the relationship. Russia’s invasion is what has endangered the students, the ball, therefore, is in Moscow’s court.

THANK YOU, JUSTICE

Justice Akil Kureshi’s remarks on judicial independence and the collegium strike many chords. Hope his colleagues heard him

CHIEF JUSTICE OF the Rajasthan High Court Akil Kureshi retired Sunday ending a remarkable nearly two-decade long career as a judge of a constitutional court. In his farewell speech, Justice Kureshi broke his silence on the controversy surrounding his elevation nearly four years ago — and he deserves applause for that. First, he responded to the charge former Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi, made in his autobiography that the government had a negative perception of him based on his judicial pronouncements. As a judge, Justice Kureshi, said he considers such a perception a “certificate of independence”. He added that what is of a greater significance to him was the perception of the judiciary, which was never officially communicated to him. It was in 2018, that the government broke convention and appointed Justice A Dave in place of Justice Kureshi as acting chief justice of the Gujarat High Court. As senior-most judge of the court, Justice Kureshi would have had to serve under a chief justice who was his junior. Following protests from the Bar, the government withdrew the notification. He was acting chief justice for just two weeks before he was transferred to the Bombay High Court. When he was recommended for elevation as Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court, the government once again stalled the process. The collegium buckled and instead appointed Justice Kureshi as Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court. His elevation to the Supreme Court, when he was second in line in the All India List of Seniority of Judges, was the cause of an unprecedented two-year long impasse within the collegium, virtually stalling all appointments to the Supreme Court. Eventually, under a new CJI, N V Ramana, the impasse was resolved with a list of nine appointments to the SC — that did not include Kureshi.

The government may have had reservations about Justice Kureshi — valid or otherwise — but it is the collegium’s refrain on his elevation that is disquieting. While the collegium system of appointing judges keeps the public away from these crucial conversations, it is of concern that even the judges in question are kept guessing. It is a testament to his judicial tenure that the Gujarat Bar went on an indefinite strike and even moved the Supreme Court on the judicial side when he was not appointed the acting chief justice of the High Court. It is fitting that Justice Kureshi invoked Justice H R Khanna in his farewell speech — Justice Khanna is remembered for his integrity and standing up to the government of the day during the Emergency at the cost of his appointment to the Chief Justice of India’s office. Justice Kureshi eloquently, reminded his colleagues on the bench what that means today — and what a democracy expects them to do.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



VIKRAM SINGH MEHTA

WHAT WILL BE the impact of the Ukrainian crisis on India’s energy sector? What lessons should it draw from the playbook of the crisis? What policies must it frame to safeguard its national energy interests? These are the questions that this article will address. The focus will be on energy.

The tangible and unavoidable impact of the crisis will be on India’s macro-economy. Sajjid Chinoy has, last week, summarised well the balance of payments, exchange rate and inflationary consequences of rising oil prices (‘Crude Pressures’, IE March 4). I want to add that the inflation-adjusted price of Brent crude is \$83/bbl (as of writing, the nominal price is \$116 / bbl), which is lower than the peak of \$145/ bbl in 2008 and the average price that year of \$100/bbl. In other words, prices could rise much further and we would still not be in uncharted waters. Further, there are manifold uncertainties. The price trajectory will depend on the duration of the conflict, its impact on global energy demand, countervailing supply measures (for example, drawdown of strategic reserves, diversion of US LNG supplies to Europe, the Iranian nuclear deal which, if signed, could release up to 1 mbd of Iranian crude into the market) and whether in all this mayhem, the pipeline infrastructure currently feeding Russian gas into Europe remains operational. One cannot discount the possibility of a wayward missile disrupting supplies. Let me also add that our earnings from petroleum products (diesel, petrol, naphtha) will be adversely impacted. In 2021, these products generated \$39 billion in revenue and at 14 per cent, they accounted for the highest share of export earnings.

A still difficult to quantify impact will be on the value of India’s energy assets in Russia. ONGC has a 26 per cent stake in the Vankor oil field, a 20 per cent stake in the Sakhalin-1 LNG/oil export complex and maybe a few other less valuable interests. All these holdings have eroded substantially in value. Many Western majors (Exxon/BP/Shell) have walked away from their investments. ONGC has that option too, as also the opportunity to increase its shareholding on the cheap. It will not do the

To deal with energy volatility, India must build reserves, revive talks with Iran, Turkmenistan

The Ukraine crisis throws up many learnings. But one needs particular emphasis. It is not enough to read the tea leaves of supply, demand and geopolitical trends to understand the trajectory of the energy market. It is comparably important to understand the mindsets of the autocrats that hold the levers of energy policy. Three individuals, in particular, must be carefully studied. President Putin, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and President Xi Jinping. These three exercise plenipotentiary powers over energy policy in their country and the hydrocarbon market has been witness to the consequences of their ‘irrationality’ twice in two years.

former and it would be opportunistic and morally wrong to do the latter. So, for the present perhaps, it should do no more than making provisions for a write-down. In India, Rosneft (the Russian national oil company) operates the 20 mtpa refinery in Vadinar through Nayara Energy. Nayara is not sanctioned but the traders of crude/products might worry about transacting with an Indian company owned by a sanctioned Russian entity.

India will also be affected by the emergent energy landscape. Four features define this landscape.

One, the tightening energy embrace of Russia and China. Only last week, for instance, Gazprom signed off on an agreement to build a second gas pipeline to China christened “Power of Siberia 2”. The “Power of Siberia 1” pipeline has been pumping gas into China since 2019.

Two, the emergence of the US as the largest producer of oil in the world and potentially the largest exporter of LNG. It has the capacity to blunt the impact of a supply shortfall but as it is controlled by profit-maximising private corporates, this will depend on market forces. Supplies will head towards the highest bidder.

Three, the ability of Saudi Arabia to swing the crude oil market. It is the one member of OPEC plus with significant spares, low cost, producible capacity (approx 3 mbd) of crude oil. The US has pressured Saudi to bring this volume into the market but they have, as yet, not buckled.

And finally, the chokehold of China over the rare earths, minerals and components that are required to effect the transition to a clean energy system.

India will have to navigate the consequential (and conflicting) geopolitics generated by these four features.

The final impact will be on the petroleum industry. Ahead of the current state elections, the government disallowed the oil marketing companies (OMC) from passing on the rise in prices to the consumer. If this ban continues, the OMCs will be financially crippled and plans to privatise BPCL will come a cropper.

The Ukraine crisis throws up many learn-

ings. But one needs particular emphasis. It is not enough to read the tea leaves of supply, demand and geopolitical trends to understand the trajectory of the energy market. It is comparably important to understand the mindsets of the autocrats that hold the levers of energy policy. Three individuals, in particular, must be carefully studied. President Putin, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS) and President Xi Jinping. These three exercise plenipotentiary powers over energy policy in their country and the hydrocarbon market has been witness to the consequences of their “irrationality” twice in two years. In Q1 2020, the oil market went into free fall because MBS was determined to protect Saudi’s market share, and increased supplies, despite the Covid-induced collapse in demand. The result was so dramatic that on one day in April, the holders of crude futures had to “pay” to offload their holdings. The price of oil was in negative territory. President Putin has today driven an equally “irrational” wedge into the market with comparably severe but opposite ramifications.

The lesson: One must presume the word “rational” does not have the same meaning for these leaders as for those who derive its interpretation from the Oxford dictionary. And that to understand what it means for them, one must interpret it through the prism of their personal predilections, egos and political ambitions.

Against this backdrop, I offer five broad policy suggestions for India. One, frame it around the expectation of continuing volatility. Two, build up strategic reserves to safeguard against the unexpected. Three, revive conversations with Turkmenistan and Iran about a transnational gas pipeline. Four, fast forward efforts to decouple the supply chain dependence on China for the minerals and components required for the clean energy transition. And, finally bring in psychologists to get a better fix on the logic that drives the decisions of the energy autocrats.

The writer is chairman and distinguished fellow, Center for Social and Economic Progress



VARAD PANDE AND ROHIT KUMAR

A LOT HAS been written about the emphasis on “digital” in the 2022 Union Budget. But one aspect that hasn’t been talked about as much is the importance given in the budget to digital public infrastructure (DPI) — the idea that cross-sectoral “digital rails” like ID, payments and data exchanges when combined with open interconnected data systems in sectors like health, education and social protection, can transform service delivery.

India is seen as a global trendsetter in the DPI movement, having set up multiple large-scale DPIs like Aadhaar, UPI and sector-specific platforms like DIGIT for eGovernance and DIKSHA for education. These have helped push the frontier of public service delivery. This year’s budget adds to the growing discourse on DPIs by making four key announcements: In health, an open platform with digital registries, a unique health identity and a robust consent framework; in skilling, a Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood (DESH-Stack) to help citizens upskill through online training; a Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) to streamline movement of goods across modes of transport; and for travel, an “open source” mobility stack for facilitating seamless travel of passengers. These announcements are welcome. Research by Omidyar Network India and BCG shows that the creation of national digital ecosystems in sectors like health, jobs and skilling, agriculture and justice can lead to economic opportunities worth Rs 35 lakh crore by 2030. Similar analysis by the Centre for Digital Economy Policy Research (C-DEP) also estimates that national digital ecosystems could

PHYSICAL FOR DIGITAL

Fix non-tech elements like governance to realise utility for digital platforms

India must also focus on developing anchor institutions and robust governance frameworks. Just as Aadhaar is anchored by UIDAI under an Act of Parliament, and the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission is anchored by the National Health Authority, every new ODE requires an accountable institutional anchor. These institutions are critical for setting standards, ensuring a level playing field and safeguarding consumer interest.

add over 5 per cent to India’s GDP.

But important design considerations must be set right if we are to truly unlock the value of these platforms. One way to think about this is by differentiating between the “tech” and “non-tech” layers of our digital infrastructure — while India seems to have made significant headway on the “tech” layers, the “non-tech” layers of community engagement and governance need a lot more work. The combination of these three layers is what is critical to making tech work for everyone. Together, they embody what we call the open digital ecosystems (ODE) approach.

To unleash the true potential of India’s ODEs, we need to get the “non-tech” layers right, by prioritising principles around data protection, universal access and accountability. While this presents a large menu, three specific non-tech levers are critical.

First, protecting the data of all users and giving them agency over how their data gets used. The passage of a robust Data Protection Bill is imperative. But we also need to go beyond the mere requirement of “consent”. Consent as a construct is insufficient, as anyone who has tried to read privacy policies knows — it forces you to make a binary choice in quick time, in an environment overloaded with information suffused with dense legalese. Recent research by the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC) suggests that users can be “nudged” to make privacy-conscious decisions by providing standardised privacy ratings, presenting privacy policies more visually, and mandating users to stay on the privacy page for at least a few minutes.

Second, it is important to address the digital divide. Research by ORF, for instance, shows that Indian women are 15 per cent less likely to own a mobile phone and 33 per cent less likely to use mobile internet services than men.

So, we need a “phygital” approach that provides services through both online and offline options and strong grievance redressal mechanisms. Research has shown that leveraging trusted local intermediaries who are embedded in communities can significantly improve access to tech platforms for marginalised groups.

Finally, as we push the frontier on digitisation, India must also focus on developing anchor institutions and robust governance frameworks. Just as Aadhaar is anchored by UIDAI under an Act of Parliament, and the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission is anchored by the National Health Authority, every new ODE requires an accountable institutional anchor. These institutions are critical for setting standards, ensuring a level playing field and safeguarding consumer interest. The sector-specific institutions also need to be complemented by a “National ODE Council” to inform coordinated policies and keep the focus on citizen-centricity.

From Aadhaar and UPI to DBT and CoWin, India’s tech stacks are grabbing global attention. It is now critical to bring the gaze on to the non-tech layers of the stack, so that the potential of these platforms can be unlocked for every Indian.

Pande is a partner at Omidyar Network India and Kumar is co-founder of The Quantum Hub

MARCH 7, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

UPROAR IN HOUSE

THE BUDGET SESSION of the West Bengal assembly had a boisterous start marked by walkouts and noisy scenes throughout the brief sitting. The main business before the session is the vote-on-accounts for the period from April 1 to June 21, when the term of the present government expires. The walk outs were prompted by the address delivered by the governor BD Pande. The small SUCI group left the house in criticism of the state government’s policies on education and language. When the house convened after the recess, the Congress members walked out. The Congress (I) leader described governor BD Pande’s speech as an election manifesto.

BAD WEATHER

THE UNION AGRICULTURE minister’s hopes of a bumper wheat harvest will be threatened if the bad weather does not clear. Reports do not indicate countrywide losses but damage to the wheat crop has been reported in some states, particularly Punjab and Haryana. About 200 villages in Haryana are believed to have been affected by hailstorm.

LOK DAL CRISIS

THE LOK DAL general secretary Madhu Limaye is believed to have quit the party post pushing the crisis-ridden party to the brink of disintegration on the eve of its national ex-

ecutive meeting. It’s also believed that Limaye will stay away from the meeting. Karpoori Thakur and George Fernandes may also follow him.

SIMLA BUILDING FIRE

YET ANOTHER HISTORIC building of Simla, the Kennedy Cottage, was gutted. The oldest building in the summer capital during the British rule housed the state electricity board, the Forest Survey of India, the CPWD’s electrical wing, statistical department, home guards and the office of an insurance company. The losses amounted to well above Rs 1 crore, besides valuable documents.



# Drawing the future

Given their inclination to question, cartoonists have predicted war and taken on authoritarians. But it's a demoralised cartoonist who faces the current moment. Hardly a state of mind to reflect, let alone predict



E P UNNY

IT TOOK A Vladimir Putin to remind us of the long-forgotten nuclear button. Mercifully, so far, he has pushed only the rewind button. A minor military operation he started, meant to conclude in hours, isn't going away in a hurry. It is staying on to invoke parallels from the past. A favourite flashback point is the advent of World War II.

Cartoonists won't easily let go of that moment. Britain's star cartoonist David Low got that war right, ahead of prime ministers and kings. For him, the war began unsurprisingly. Not that he had any mystical gift for predicting or mind reading. He had fewer illusions. As an adversarial cartoonist, he would habitually question and disbelieve. Also, given his professional standing, he worked with much autonomy for publisher Lord Beaverbrook's Evening Standard. What he gave back to the paper was rigour.

David Low did better homework than his own government on the man who started the war. Adolf Hitler ordered German troops to march into Poland from the west at daybreak on September 1, 1939. In just over a fortnight, in choreographed timing, Soviet troops entered Poland from the east. Three days later, Low's iconic cartoon appeared in the Evening Standard. Under the one-word title 'Rendezvous', two vastly dissimilar political entities, Hitler and Stalin, were on the same page in the same frame bowing to each other over a man lying dead on a Polish battlefield.

To the world, the Nazi and the Communist were sworn enemies till their non-aggression pact went public. The deal was announced just a week before Hitler struck. Low had no inkling on what led up to the instant bonding. But when it occurred, he wasn't shaken, having sized up the players over the years. Both would do exactly what suited them. The cartoon said it.

There was nothing hurried or slapdash about the drawing. The artwork had all that one associates with the master – riveting composition, rehearsed brush strokes and gestural language in perfect sync with the message. Which was that big guys can violate national borders jointly or severally. A series of such violations ensued to build up a war worldwide.

Low was a known critic of his own PM, the conflict-averse Neville Chamberlain. "War" wasn't a word the cartoonist shied away from. He had more than hinted at it in the weeks and months before the outbreak, so much so that friends of the PM had called him a warmonger. Across the maritime border, Goebbels agreed that the cartoonist was an alarmist and must be restrained. Hitler's propaganda minister did know the truth which was that Britain's PM was more clueless than its cartoonist. To cut a long story short, Chamberlain went down appeasing the German regime. Low celebrated the exit with a gleeful drawing of a Nazi tiger with swastika stripes. The well-fed creature is in post-prandial repose with the prime ministerial remains strewn around – dentures, moustache, and the ubiquitous umbrella.

In the annals of cartooning, this is an oft-



C R Sasikumar

repeated success story. In a world yet to recover from its first big war, a young cartoonist zeroes in on the one who would start the second. Is anything like that happening now, when the world has shrunk too much to keep secrets? Did any contemporary cartoonist anticipate Putin's strike the way Low foresaw Hitler's? Today, the world over, cartoonists are digitally savvy. They couldn't have missed much. They have been following Putin as well as Low and his peers tracked Hitler.

Putin has been around since 2000, a good 22 years and he is by no means low key. He lacks the toothbrush moustache but offers a lot more to the caricaturist. While the German Chancellor was almost always seen in formal military wear, the Kremlin celeb goes about bare-bodied on trips to catch pike and battle bears. Cartoonists often fill up the torso with tattoos. He was the biggest cartoonist's delight till a bigger challenger popped up. In 2017 President Donald Trump appeared and the global cartooning space got seriously contested for the next four years. Trump packed a surfeit of everyday misanthropy into his presidency, enough to exhaust the cartoonist.

"Oh, good lord", was Pulitzer winner Ann Telnaes' reaction the day after the election of Donald Trump, "when it dawned on me that I would be serving my year as the president of the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists during the same time as the guy who wanted to 'open up' libel laws and weaken the First Amendment so he could sue journalists more easily." A year into Trump's

In a world yet to recover from its first big war, a young cartoonist zeroes in on the one who would start the second. Is anything like that happening now, when the world has shrunk too much to keep secrets? Did any contemporary cartoonist anticipate Putin's strike the way Low foresaw Hitler's? Today, the world over, cartoonists are digitally savvy. They couldn't have missed much. They have been following Putin as well as Low and his peers tracked Hitler.

presidency, she bemoaned that there was not a single day she could keep the man out of the cartoon. Putin had been squarely beaten.

The Russian supremo had better luck with Patrick Chappatte, perhaps the most globally watched editorial cartoonist today. Born in Karachi to a Lebanese mother and Swiss father, raised in Singapore and Switzerland, the 55-year-old works out of Los Angeles and Switzerland. Can't get more global than that and true to form, he did try to set universal standards by letting Putin in whenever he could. Even so, most days Trump clung to the cartoon. When finally, he was voted out in 2020, it was the pandemic that came into cartooning focus. Putin waited for the virus to recede.

The last century was good to cartoonists. It gave them a world war to hone their skills on tyrants like Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and Stalin and apply these skills to question all authority including what prevailed in labelled democracies. The practitioners were far from kind to Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, Richard Nixon and the Bushes. But none confounded the cartoonist more than Donald Trump. How do you cartoon a caricature who distorts everything he touches?

Unlike David Low, the jaunty New Zealander who went to work in pre-war London, it is a demoralised cartoonist who faces the war on Ukraine. Hardly the state of mind to sit back and reflect, leave alone predict.

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# The fire next time

Forest-dwelling and tribal people must be seen as allies in fighting forest fires



AARAN PATEL

INDIA'S VARIED forest habitat is a giant tinderbox that can release vast amounts of carbon dioxide, imperilling lives and livelihoods. But, if safeguarded and thoughtfully expanded, these very forests could be vital in slowing down the world's warming by drawing down greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. In combating wildfires, we can no longer continue to ignore the critical role of our allies – the forest dwellers and tribal communities.

Inaction on forest fires would have grave consequences for the country. In 2021 alone, large blazes in Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha and Uttarakhand destroyed ecosystems of species from the microscopic to the magnificent, releasing thousands of tonnes of carbon. This trend is increasing across our planet – a new UN report describes a "global wildfire crisis" primarily because of climate change. In India, data on this issue – and forest cover more broadly – are either scarce or sketchy and will be critical to guiding decision-making.

India's ecosystems are closely intertwined with several state and societal goals. As part of the Paris Climate Accord, the Indian government committed to adding forests and tree cover as "carbon sinks" to absorb 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalents by 2030. On the livelihoods front, 300 million Indians depend on forests for their subsistence and jobs, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Given that these tribal and local communities live in forests or on their fringes, in the blame that follows the blaze, those who have the least power and voice are often cast as the villains. However, an emerging understanding from ecologists and grassroots organisations indicates how communities can be allies in arresting and preventing fires. In Simlipal, for instance, tribal people were on the frontline of battling fires last year and as this summer looms, women's self-help groups have been clearing the brush and creating fire lines.

For centuries, forest-dependent communities across the world have fine-tuned a balance between their needs and the natural world's regeneration. Their thoughtful practices are the principal reasons for the health of large parts of our planet's ecosystems, research has found. However, in India, long-standing mindsets from a colonial forestry model have transitioned into a fortress-style conservation model that keeps communities out. This marginalisation manifests itself in an energy poverty that leaves many tribal communities dependent on firewood for basic needs like cooking in the 21st century.

At the same time, fire is central to communities' culture and socio-economic cycles. On cool late spring mornings in the sal forests of central India, Baiga and Gond communities light fires under mahua trees while they wait to gather the pale yellow flowers that fall on the ashen earth. These small blazes

keep them warm and keep potential rivals like bears away from the mahua harvest.

As conservation science fuses with social disciplines like anthropology, these traditional practices, which may have once been derided as primitive, could be seen as prescient. After ignoring Native Americans' knowledge about periodic controlled burns, the US is experiencing the consequences of allowing a massive build-up of flammable stock that combusts in mega blazes like in California in 2021. "Good fire" of low to moderate intensity may reduce the fuel for larger blazes and aid germination of plants whose seeds need fire to crack open.

These complexities require fusing contemporary knowledge with contextual needs. For instance, researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Mandi have tested an intervention that makes the alpine forests of the Himalayan foothills less susceptible to forest fires and provides local livelihoods. Based on these studies, communities in Himachal Pradesh have set up businesses that gather and process highly flammable dry chir pine needles into bio-pellets that can be fired with or instead of coal in industrial processes.

To combat forest fires, India will also need to improve coordination between ministries and agencies at the union and state levels to ensure contextually appropriate interventions that can be delivered by the forest department and local administrations. Technical knowledge should also be decen-

tralised so that people on the ground have access to information that helps them respond to disasters and build resilience in the long term.

A fundamental shift in making India's forests less vulnerable will also require being clear-eyed about problematic community practices. Apart from accidents and negligence, flames can leap over into wooded areas because of stubble burning in forest-adjacent fields. Occasionally, there can be sinister issues like intentional arson to clear forest land for agriculture. However, tackling these challenges should move past blaming communities to addressing root causes of issues like incentives for unsuitable farming.

Even Indians in concrete jungles are not removed from the fate and fecundity of the country's diverse and wondrous ecosystems. Forests continue to be central to our civilisation by shaping our air and rivers and to how pollinators give life to the fields that feed us and are a source of immense aesthetic and spiritual value. Tribal communities have a strong intuitive understanding of this. There is much to learn from how their relationship with natural resources is regulated by natural rhythms and cycles. Communities' knowledge and customs should be central to how we deal with forest fires in a warming world.

The writer is co-founder of Earth Focus Kanha

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

Ordinary Russians are unlikely to lose much sleep if the oligarchs lose out. But they will be hurt in a wider economic war with the west. — THE GUARDIAN

# The lessons that count

The post-pandemic school must seize the opportunity to fix systemic issues, allow teachers more autonomy and promote meaningful learning



SANJAY KAUL AND UMA MAHADEVAN-DASGUPTA

THE COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating for schoolchildren. Of India's 265 million children enrolled in school, the vast majority have barely set foot in the classroom for almost two years.

Now that schools are reopening, they must first welcome the return of children, with warmth and reassurance. The classroom must be a safe and non-threatening space where children can shed the anxiety, stress and isolation of the last two years.

Thereafter, the immediate imperative is to address learning gaps. Failure to do so would leave this generation of children irreparably affected. E-content can only have minimal impact, as less than 12 per cent of government schools have internet connectivity, and only 24 per cent of families have smartphones. Most poor households do not own a TV. Hence, along with school reopening, we need a massive basic instruction and revision programme in the first year, to help primary school children consolidate the skills of reading, writing, numeracy, and comprehension at their own pace. Older children will also be able to settle back into the school rhythm without added stress. Government schools must institutionalise this revision and support programme to bridge learning gaps before embarking on new stages of the syllabus.

Equally, we must resolve the fundamental systemic issues of weak learning and an unimaginative curriculum. Primarily due to the obsessive and misplaced focus on rote learning, many children of low-income households struggle with basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, even after eight years of schooling. Compounding this situation is mismanagement and lack of accountability in state education departments. School education should go much beyond merely monitoring numbers – students enrolled, teachers appointed, textbooks distributed, mid-day meals supplied, buildings constructed and toilets built.

While these are essential, they are the basic minimum inputs; school education should aim to do much more. Nor are marks and test scores the correct measure of the system's efficacy. The real goals of education are to enhance cognitive development and creative thinking.

The starting point to improve quality is a focus on meaningful learning. This requires school education departments to work closely with teachers, improve their pedagogic practices, and shift the focus from the rigid curriculum. For this, teachers should be given greater autonomy inside classrooms.

Would such recalibration further exacerbate the divide between children of poor and rich households? Superficially so. However, the Brazilian philosopher of education Paulo Freire, in his classic *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,

flipped mainstream pedagogy on its head by pointing out that knowledge and expertise already exist within children. Children from low-income families acquire complex and nuanced learning from their experiences and everyday environment. Conventional thinking presumes educators are experts, while students are empty and passive receptacles. According to Freire, this frame of thinking must be replaced by making teachers "liberating educators" who help children to build on their knowledge and understanding. One way to achieve this would be for each school to incorporate strong local elements within a common curriculum framework. Teachers need space for creativity and a freer classroom environment.

Besides curriculum reform, pedagogic practices must change. There are one million government schools and five million government school teachers in India. Training teachers to change pedagogic practices poses considerable challenges and requires enhanced budgets and well-trained faculty; quite unlike the present situation where budgets are modest and faculty are mostly drawn from the cadre of education administrators.

Alongside the above supply-side recommendations on instruction, pedagogy, curricular reform and training, there is a need to address the demand side. Parents from low-income families perceive government school education as offering little value, resulting in their sense of indifference and resignation. Further, as educated and well-off parents send their children to private schools, there is little societal pressure on the state to improve education quality. However, the perception of poor quality can be quickly changed – as has been shown in a few states, such as Kerala and Delhi, with equal equipment of government schools, and improved exam performance. An attractive physical school environment may not be adequate to change long-held perceptions.

Children will attend school and participate happily if, alongside the regular curriculum, it offers activities that enrich their school experience and make it fun. Even at the cost of reducing the time allocated to formal classroom teaching, it would be valuable to reorganise the school day with time devoted to activities such as art, music, and sports, along with the formal curriculum and the focus shifted to providing holistic education.

Not least of all, school governance reform and teacher motivation are vital factors to improve quality. As education officials are preoccupied with supply chain management issues, academic management and supervision require an exclusively dedicated cadre. The major pain point of government school teachers is in the manner of their posting to schools. Teachers are often constrained to use political influence or corruption to get themselves posted to locations of their preference. With rapidly increasing numbers of women working as primary school teachers, their safety and convenience must also become a priority. Transparency and fairness in postings and transfers are vital to motivate teachers and improve their performance.

Kaul is an ex-IAS officer and former secretary, school education, government of Karnataka. Mahadevan-Dasgupta is an IAS officer and former principal secretary, women and child development, government of Karnataka

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### INDIAN NEUTRALITY

THIS IS WITH reference to the article 'On Ukraine, speak up India' (IE, March 6). The author has made valid points regarding the humanitarian crisis arising from the Russia-Ukraine conflict. But from the point of view of international relations, India is right where she should be and must not budge from her position, despite the constant prodding from the Western countries. India's neutral stance and at the same time condemning the war-like situation is deft maneuvering of the diplomacy ship. I disagree with the author when she says that India should be on Ukraine's side. Right now, India is on neither side. And that's how it should be until Russia and Ukraine come to a common ground against the backdrop of this regional turmoil.

Manseet Swaroop, Delhi

### STAND UP, MEDIA

THIS REFERS TO the editorial 'Who Wants A Tough Leader?' (IE, March 6). Every country goes through a phase where it needs a tough leader to stand up and reorient the general direction for good because the nation is going haywire. However this does not in any way mean that there should be blind faith in the ruling leaders. The article is right in pointing out what is happening in UP and India at large, wherein a lot of random deci-

sions are not being questioned or even investigated. But for all this, we have to blame the Indian media which has failed to raise these issues time and again. It is the media's responsibility to keep questioning the ruling party's decisions which it has failed to deliver upon. History has been witness to the fact that whenever tough leaders arose, it was largely due to the support by local media, which repeatedly failed to highlight their follies at the right time.

Gaurav Gupta, Gurugram

### A DISAPPOINTMENT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'On the wrong foot' (IE, March 5). When one of the legends of the game, Sourav Ganguly, took charge at the BCCI, we all hoped that things will change for the better. But to our utter disappointment, the BCCI has not changed its way of working and by bullying lesser experienced former cricketers-turned-selectors, Ganguly has not done any good to his image. He should have set high standards on conflict of interest and other critical matters. After the Kohli captaincy row, now Ganguly has dragged himself into the Saha issue too. Ganguly the God of offside and a great captain and Ganguly the BCCI administrator are completely different avatars and cannot be spoken of in the same breath.

Bal Govind, Noida





MEANWHILE

N KOREA CONFIRMS TESTS ON SPY SATELLITE

North Korea performed data transmission and other key tests needed to develop a spy satellite, state media said Sunday, in the second such tests in about a week, indicating the country intends to conduct a prohibited long-range rocket launch soon. The moves come as North Korea has been carrying out a spate of ballistic missile launches.

UNDER RUSSIAN SHELLING, UKRAINE CITY RUNNING LOW ON FOOD, WATER

Dire conditions in besieged Mariupol, city becoming ‘unfit for human life’

THE NEW YORK TIMES  
MARCH 6

STAGGERED BY blasts pummelling the city, cut off from heat through freezing nights, and running low on food and water, the people of Mariupol, Ukraine, have been trapped by Russia’s siege.

In interviews, residents and local officials in Mariupol, a port on the Sea of Azov, described nightmarish conditions after five days of shelling by Russian forces around the city. On Sunday, city officials said they would attempt to resume an evacuation effort that was called off a day earlier because of Russian attacks.

“There’s no electricity, no heating, no telephone connection. It is absolute horror,” said Petro Andriyushchenko, an adviser to the mayor of Mariupol. “People drink from puddles in the streets.”

The shelling has destroyed the city’s left bank district, he said, making it “unfit for human life”. The city had not been able to accurately count the dead or even help many of the wounded because of the barrage, he added.

“It just never stops,” he said. “Everyone who tries to go outside risks their life. That is why the mayor can’t ask people to do that, it would be like sending people to a certain death.”

Videos have shown explosions rocking Mariupol’s residential areas and starting fires, as well as the ruins of shops and cars around city.

“The shelling is constant and at random,” said a resident, Diana Berg. “When you’re on the street, at any moment, a rocket can land next to you.” She said that people were still braving the streets to make fires for warmth.

On Saturday, city leaders halted a planned evacuation because of the shelling, and accused Russian forces of violating a temporary ceasefire that was meant to allow some of the city’s nearly half-million residents to flee. President Vladimir Putin blamed Ukraine for sabotaging the humanitarian routes.

Another evacuation announced for Sunday was also cancelled after Ukrainian officials accused Russian troops of violating the ceasefire again.

Mikhail Vershinin, the head of the Donetsk Regional Patrol Police, said that several hundred cars had planned to form convoys to leave the city through the humanitarian corridor.

“As soon as we sent the cars back home, the offensive attacks in that region began,” he said. The city, he said, was facing “a humanitarian catastrophe.”

Andriyushchenko, the mayor’s adviser, said that city officials were wary of the Russian forces even as they gathered people for the planned evacuation, and could not send residents out because the route was too dangerous. “There was no ceasefire for the whole length of the corridor and Russian troops continued to attack our positions,” he said. “That is why we did not let the people board the buses.”



People on an improvised path under a bridge that was destroyed by a Russian strike, while fleeing the town of Irpin in Ukraine. AP

Russian forces fire on evacuees, leaving 3 people dead outside Kyiv

THE NEW YORK TIMES  
IRPIN, MARCH 6

A RUSSIAN force advancing on Kyiv fired mortar shells on Sunday at a battered bridge used by evacuees fleeing the fighting, sending panicked civilians running, kicking up a cloud of dust and leaving three members of a family dead on the pavement.

Crowds of hundreds have clustered around the damaged bridge over the Irpin River since Saturday. Ukrainian forces had blown up the bridge earlier to slow the Russian advance. Only a dozen or so Ukrainian soldiers were in the immediate area of the bridge on Sunday, not fighting but helping carry civilians’



A man helps an elderly woman to run for cover in Irpin, near Kyiv, on Sunday. Reuters

luggage and children.

To cross a hundred yards or so of exposed street on the side of the bridge closer to Kyiv, people seeking to flee to the capital formed small groups and made a run for it together. Soldiers ran, pulling children, trying to find a safe spot. But there was nothing to hide behind. A shell

The mortar shells fell first 100 or so yards from the bridge, then shifted in a series of thunderous blasts into a section of street where people were fleeing.

As the mortars got closer to the stream of civilians, people ran, pulling children, trying to find a safe spot. But there was nothing to hide behind. A shell

landed in the street, sending up a cloud of concrete dust and leaving one family — a mother, a father, a teenage son and a daughter who appeared about 8 years old — sprawled on the ground.

Soldiers rushed to help, but the woman and children were dead. The father still had a pulse but was unconscious and severely wounded.

Their luggage, a blue roller suitcase and some backpacks, was scattered about.

The shelling suggested either targeting of the evacuation routes from Irpin, something of which the Ukrainian authorities have accused the Russian army after a railroad track used for evacuations was hit on Saturday, or disregard for the risk of civilian casualties.

At noted art museum, race to protect heritage

BERNAT ARMANGUÉ  
LVIV, MARCH 6

THE DIRECTOR of Ukraine’s largest art museum walked its hallways, supervising as staff packed away its collections to protect their national heritage in case the Russian invasion advances west.

In one partially empty gallery of the Andrey Sheptytsky National Museum, employees placed carefully wrapped baroque pieces into cardboard boxes. A few meters away, a group walked down the majestic main staircase carrying a giant piece of sacred art, the 18th century Bohorodchany iconostasis.

“Sometimes the tears are coming because a lot of labour has been put in here. It takes



Workers prepare to move works of art, Andrey Sheptytsky National Museum in Lviv. AP



time, energy. You are doing something good, you feel pleased. Today you see empty walls, so it feels bitter, sad. We didn’t believe it till the last minute that this could happen,” museum General Director Ihor Kozhan said Friday.

The doors of the museum in

the western city of Lviv have been closed since Russia’s war on Ukraine began on February 24, and heritage sites across the country face danger as the fighting continues. Korzhan said he receives daily calls from other European cultural institutions offering to help as he and his staff race to pre-

serve the museum’s works.

Anna Naurobska, head of the rare manuscripts department, said she still doesn’t know where to safely store the collection of more than 12,000 items being packed into boxes. “This is our story; this is our life. It is very important to us,” she said.

AP

ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

New US envoy arrives in Beijing amid tense relations

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BEIJING, MARCH 6

NEW US Ambassador Nicholas Burns has arrived to take up his post in Beijing amid heightened tensions between China and the United States over Taiwan, trade, human rights and the war in Ukraine.

Burns arrived Friday with his wife Libby and a group of other US diplomats and their families and will undergo three weeks of quarantine at his official residence as China requires, according to a US Embassy spokesperson.

During his quarantine, the ambassador will virtually meet with US Mission staff, the spokesperson said.

The post had been empty since Terry Branstad departed in October 2020.



Nicholas Burns

Burns is a career diplomat, former State Department spokesperson, ambassador to NATO and leading academic, teaching most recently at the Harvard Kennedy School and serving as a foreign policy adviser to Joe Biden’s presidential campaign.

He has framed the US relationship with China as manageable, saying Americans should “have confidence in our strength” when dealing with the rise of China.

Putin says campaign will not stop until Ukraine stops fighting  
In call with Russian leader, Turkey’s Erdogan urges ceasefire

REUTERS  
LVIV, KYIV, MARCH 6

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin said on Sunday his campaign in Ukraine was going according to plan and would not end until Kyiv stopped fighting, as efforts to evacuate the heavily bombed city of Mariupol failed for a second day in a row.

He made the comments in a phone call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who appealed for a ceasefire in the conflict that the United Nations says has created the fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War Two.

Putin told Erdogan he was ready for dialogue with Ukraine and foreign partners but any at-



He said his campaign in Ukraine was going according to plan

tempt to draw out negotiation would fail, a Kremlin statement said.

The Turkish presidency said Erdogan told Putin that Turkey was ready to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

“President Erdogan, who said an immediate ceasefire will not only ease humanitarian concerns in the region but also give the search for a political solution an opportunity, renewed his call of ‘let’s pave the way for peace

Israel PM says will try to mediate even if prospect slim

DAN WILLIAMS  
JERUSALEM, MARCH 6

ISRAEL WILL continue trying to mediate between Russia and Ukraine even if success seems unlikely, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said on Sunday after returning from surprise talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ukraine has requested that Israel serve as intermediary, citing the Bennett government’s good relations with both Kyiv and Moscow. Bennett’s office said he spoke three times over the weekend with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In televised remarks to his cabinet, Bennett gave no details on his three-hour Kremlin meeting with Putin on Saturday, saying only that it had “the blessing and encouragement of all parties” — an allusion to the United States, among other powers. Bennett and Putin had discussed the mediation idea by phone last week.

“We will continue to assist wherever this is requested, even if the chances are not great,” Bennett said. “The moment there is even a small opening, and we have the access to all sides and the capability, I see it as a moral duty to make every attempt.”

Israel has condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine, expressed solidarity with Kyiv and sent humanitarian aid. But Bennett has not met Ukrainian requests for military assistance and has kept channels open to Russia, with which Israel coordinates operations against Iranian deployments in Syria.



Israel PM Naftali Bennett

Pope calls for peace: Rivers of blood, tears in Ukraine

Vatican City: Pope Francis on Sunday rejected Russia’s use of the term “special military operation” for its invasion of Ukraine, saying the country was being battered by war and urging an immediate end to the fighting.

“In Ukraine, rivers of blood and tears are flowing. This is not just a military operation but a war which sows death, destruction and misery,” the pope said in his weekly address to crowds gathered in St. Peter’s Square.



Pope Francis

“In that martyred country the need for humanitarian assistance is growing by the hour,” the pope said. “War is madness, please stop.”

The pope said he dispatched two cardinals to Ukraine, saying the Vatican would do everything it could to end the conflict.

REUTERS

IN BRIEF



Volunteers distribute warm drinks those crossing from Ukraine to Poland, at the border in Medyka on Sunday. Reuters

Radio Free Europe halts ops in Russia

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the US-funded media outlet founded in the Cold War to deliver news into Communist-controlled countries, announced that it would cease its operations in Russia as the country cracks down on information following their invasion of Ukraine. Jamie Fly, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, president and chief executive said in a statement on Sunday that the move was a result of “the Putin regime’s assault on the truth”. Since its invasion of Ukraine, Russia has moved swiftly to limit free speech and dissent, forcing Western companies to reassess. Bloomberg News, the BBC, CNN International and ABC News have also suspended their news reporting operations inside Russia. The Kremlin has blocked access to Facebook inside the country. NYT

Hundreds still line up to join army

Hundreds of men have been lining up in Kyiv to join the Ukrainian army. An order from Ukraine’s government prohibited men between the ages of 18 and 60 from leaving the country to keep them available for military conscription. But some like Volodymyr Onysko volunteered to fight. “We know why we are here. We know why we defend our country. And our guys that are actually standing there and fighting Russian military forces,” he told Britain’s Sky News. Others, like British Army veteran Mark Ayres, travelled to Ukraine to help. Ayres said the Ukrainian people have been inspiring and “it’s galvanised everybody”. AP

PESHAWAR

Officials say unearthed network of bombers responsible for blast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PESHAWAR, MARCH 6

PAKISTANI INVESTIGATION authorities on Sunday claimed to have unearthed the entire network of bombers responsible for the deadly suicide attack on a crowded Shia mosque in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province that killed 63 people and wounded 200 others, a senior official said.

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



At a funeral in Peshawar on Saturday. Reuters

dering Afghanistan.

Adviser to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Information Barister Muhammad Ali Saif along with Peshawar City Police Chief Ijaz Khan told reporters that a rickshaw driver and facilitator have been traced while

the police investigators are very close to family of the bombers as their identification process has been completed.

The development came a day after Pakistan’s Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed vowed to arrest the masterminds behind the deadly suicide attack.

According to the investigation team, they have found seven bullet shells and maintained that bomber used a 9 mm pistol before blowing himself.

The sketches of the bombers and two facilitators who have come on Tri Wheeler at the blast site have been completed.

City police chief Ijaz Khan said he did not agree to the assertions of some that police personnel did not play their role properly.



Members of the fire department after a long evening responding to emergency calls in Winterset, Iowa. AP

killed but said they were not all in the same location.

Wendy Burkett told the Des Moines Register she and two of her three daughters were in their house Saturday afternoon when

her husband, Tony, called her from a nearby shed where he was working and alerted her about a tornado warning.

Burkett said she came outside and joined him in front of the house, looking down their driveway toward the southwest. “And then we saw it. The tornado,” she said. “There was debris flying around and it was getting louder and louder.”

They hurried with their daughters to their basement as the tornado roared by within seconds. As they clung to each other, a window shattered outwards and water began spewing from the pipes, she said.

But within about a minute, the tornado passed by, and while the family was unhurt, their home was in ruins amid debris all around, even in the trees.



# 15 ECONOMY

**RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT, POSSIBLE US FED RATE HIKE MAJOR HEADWINDS**

## Re under pressure as FPIs rush to the exit door, pull out ₹2 lakh cr since Oct

**GEORGE MATHEW**  
MUMBAI, MARCH 6

THE ONGOING sell-off by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) has led to withdrawal of over Rs 2,00,000 crore from the domestic stock markets since October last year. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has added to the nervousness of FPIs, already bracing for interest rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve. The FPI pull-out has hit the rupee, with its exchange rate against the dollar falling below the 76 level to 76.16 despite heavy RBI intervention.

On March 4, FPIs pulled out Rs 7631 crore from the stock markets, taking the total outflows to Rs 18,614 crore in the last three sessions of March as Russia intensified the attack on Ukraine and oil prices soared. This outflow has come after withdrawals of Rs 45,720 crore in February and Rs 41,346 crore in January. With this, FPIs have pulled out

Rs 2,06,646 crore (excluding FPI investments in IPOs) since October 1, 2021.

If the situation in Ukraine worsens and FPI sales continue, the rupee will cross the 77 level against the dollar in the coming days, analysts said. While banks have been purchasing dollars to facilitate FPI pull-out, the RBI has been selling dollar from its forex kitty to salvage the rupee, said a banking source.

During the week ended February 25, India's foreign currency assets declined by \$ 2,228 billion. "The Russia-Ukraine conflict is hurting Indian rupee, bonds and equities via three channels: oil prices, US dollar Index and global equity prices," said a Kotak Securities report.

Analysts said there could be a further temporary shock if things worsen more in Europe or, for that matter, a new front opens up in Asia. While the rupee is likely to remain under pressure, the RBI with its forex kitty of \$631 billion



will be able to prevent a big slide in the currency.

However, domestic institutional investors (DII), led by LIC, mutual funds and insurance companies, have been stepping up their purchases, absorbing most of the FPI sales. "There is a tug-of-war going on between FPIs and DIIs," said VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

Countering the FPI strategy, DIIs have invested Rs 12,599 crore in March 1-4, adding to their total

investments of Rs 1,42,872 crore since October 2021. DIIs invested a record amount of Rs 42,084 crore in February, their highest monthly investment since they put Rs 55,595 crore in March 2020 when Covid pandemic hit the country.

Despite a correction of around 13 per cent from the peak in Nifty, FPIs continue to sell since market sentiments have been impacted globally by the uncertainty triggered by the war and the surge in crude prices. This is likely to impact the IPO market and LIC's plan for listing this fiscal and push up the current account deficit (CAD).

The Sensex has already fallen 5 per cent, or 2,899 points, to 54,333.81 since February 24 when the Russian invasion of Ukraine started. Global markets are spooked with the events happening in Europe, which are causing volatility. "FPIs have been sellers for almost 6 months now. Commodities are hitting highs across the board — oil, coal, metals

and agri-commodities," said Vineet Bagri, managing partner, TrustPlutus Wealth.

The FPI pull-out is dampening the sentiment in equity and forex markets. "Their impact on markets is visible, with increase in volatility and declining equity prices. However, the fact that this selling by foreign investors has been absorbed by domestic investors bodes well for the outlook of Indian markets," Bagri said.

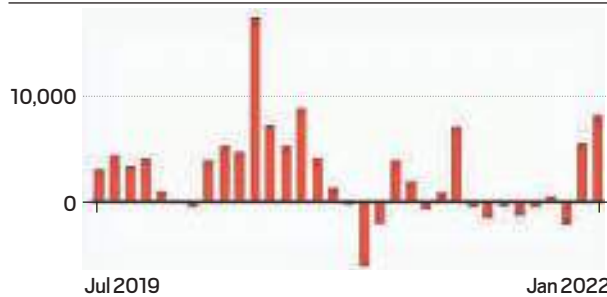
According to a Morgan Stanley report, supply constrained oil price rises are bad for India. Indeed, the recent 25 per cent jump in oil prices will expand the current account deficit by 75 bps and inflation by 100 bps on an annualised basis, it said.

US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell recently said he will back a quarter point rate increase when the Fed meets March 15-16, putting to rest debate over starting a post-pandemic round of rate hikes with a larger than usual half-point increase.

### Commodity funds in demand as investors try to hedge inflation

*Global commodity funds are attracting huge inflows as investors seek to cash in on the rally in metals, gas and grains after the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, as per a Reuters report*

#### COMMODITY FUNDS FLOW



Note: Amount in \$ mn

Source: Refinitiv Lipper

Source: Reuters

**\$7.9<sup>bn</sup>** drawn by commodity funds in February, the biggest since August 2020. In January, they received \$5.3 billion, as per Refinitiv Lipper

**\$84.2<sup>bn</sup>** net outflow seen by global bond funds last month

**Energy funds** have risen 24.7% this year, while precious metals and agriculture funds climbed 12.6% and 9.8%, respectively

**As higher inflation** hits bonds and equities, investors are favouring commodity funds as the underlying assets often act as a hedge

## Third party motor insurance premium to rise from Apr 1

**ENSECONOMICBUREAU**  
MUMBAI, MARCH 6

AFTER A two-year moratorium, third party motor insurance premium is set to rise.

The Union Road Transport Ministry has proposed an increase in the third-party motor insurance premium for various categories of vehicles from April 1.

According to the proposed revised rates, private cars with 1,000 cubic capacity (cc) will attract rates of Rs 2,094 compared to Rs 2,072 in 2019-20. Similarly, private cars with 1,000 cc to 1,500 cc will attract rates of Rs 3,416 compared to Rs 3,221, while owners of car above 1,500cc will see a premium of Rs 7,897 compared to Rs 7,890.

Two-wheelers over 150 cc but not exceeding 350 cc will attract a

premium of Rs 1,366 and for two-wheelers over 350 cc the revised premium will be Rs 2,804.

After remaining unchanged for two years due to Covid, the revised TP insurance premium will come into effect from April 1. Earlier, TP rates were notified by the insurance regulator Irda. This is also for the first time that the Ministry will notify the TP rates in consultation with the insurance regulator.

## Skoda looking to launch EVs in India

*New Delhi:* Skoda is mulling to drive in electric vehicles in the Indian market as it expects the green mobility segment to pick up significantly in the country over the next few years, according to a senior company official.

The automaker, which is witnessing a turnaround in its domestic business, however, has no plans to get into the CNG space in the immediate future. "We will have to (get into the EV segment) because we plan a long term future in India," Skoda Auto India brand director Zac Hollis told PTI when

asked if the company is looking to launch electric vehicles (EVs) in the country. "We estimate that by 2030, 25-30 per cent of the market would be electric cars and we need to make sure that we play our part, so we will bring EVs to the market," he added. PTI

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# India's difficult evacuation challenge in Sumy

Around 700 Indians are stranded in this Ukrainian city, 60 km from the Russian border, which has been facing continuous shelling.

**SHUBHAJIT ROY**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

SUMY, LYING about 350 km east of Kyiv and 180 km north-west of Kharkiv, is now at the centre of India's evacuation efforts from the war zone. About 700 Indians, mostly students of medical colleges at Sumy State University, are stranded in this city in Ukraine's northeast.

There has been no respite from shelling in the city. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday that Russian forces were trying to block and keep encircled Sumy, along with Kharkiv and several other cities, the Associated Press reported.

## Situation on the ground

Ukrainian media were reporting on Sunday that Russian forces had captured Trostyanets in Sumy oblast (province), south of the city of Sumy. "The city (Trostyanets) is

on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe," Dmytro Zhyvvytskyi, head of the Sumy Regional State Administration, said.

Residents are no longer able to go out to buy food and other essentials, shops are being looted, and snipers have been positioned across the city. The Russians are in control of the ambulance station, and are not allowing medical staff to leave except for emergency care of children.

Russian strikes on the evening of March 3 left Okhtyrka, another city in the oblast further to the south of Trostyanets, without water, electricity, and heating. With several other places in the province also without power, local authorities were looking at a general evacuation as homes turned into "cold, stone traps", according to Zhyvvytskyi.

## Challenges for evacuation

It is in this situation that several hundred Indian students — all in their late teens and early 20s — are trapped in their underground



shelters, waiting to be rescued.

The challenges are manifold.

First, Sumy is right in the middle of a conflict zone, with no break in the fighting. It's been 11 days since the war began.

It is very cold, snowy, and windy. (At 6 pm local time on Sunday, the temperature was -1°C.) It is a difficult situation for those who are stranded without proper heating and water.

The border with Russia is about 60 km

away, not easy to cover on foot in this weather even under normal circumstances. Right now, bombs and shells are falling in the region, and combatants are firing at each other.

"The main challenge remains the ongoing shelling there, violence, and the lack of transportation options. I think even more than transportation, it is about having a secure and safe way to get them (Indian students) out while they are not under threat," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said on Saturday.

## Ceasefire not holding

The Indian government is in touch with both the Russians and Ukrainians, seeking a halt to hostilities so that these Indians can be evacuated. There was a glimmer of hope after Russia and Ukraine announced a ceasefire on Saturday — they called it a "regime of silence" — and humanitarian corridors for civilians to leave the southern cities of Mariupol (on the Sea of Azov) and Volnovakha to its north in Donetsk oblast.

But that ceasefire was not observed on

the ground. The Russian embassy in New Delhi said the ceasefire was in effect from 10 am Moscow time (noon in India) on Sunday, but the Ukrainians said the Russians had violated the agreement, and the ongoing shelling made it "impossible to open humanitarian corridors for the safe evacuation of civilians, the delivery of medicines and food".

"Russia continues to launch missile and bomb strikes on Mariupol, Volnovakha and other Ukrainian cities," the Ukrainian foreign ministry said. "We call on the international community — states and international organisations — to immediately condemn Russia's gross violation of the agreements..."

## Shorter route not safer

Indians who were stranded in Kharkiv and nearby Pischyn have been able to move out and travel west, where the border is about 1,000 km away. The Russian border to the east is, by contrast, only 40 km away — however, the conflict is raging on the eastern side.

"The shortest route is not the safest," a top official told *The Indian Express* on Sunday.

Those stuck in Sumy, too, face a similar situation. The border to the east is 60 km away, but it is not safe for to venture out of their shelters until the guns fall silent at least for some time. Already, one Indian student has lost his life and another has been injured, and the government does not want to take any chances with the 700-odd Indians who remain in the war zone.

Officials said a team from the Indian embassy is stationed in Poltava city in central Ukraine to coordinate the safe passage of Indian students stranded in Sumy to Western borders via Poltava. The Indian students have been asked to be ready to leave at short notice.

Some 21,000 Indians have come out of Ukraine since the last week of January; about 16,000 of them have been evacuated on flights organised by the government under Operation Ganga. Partha Satpathy, India's ambassador to Ukraine, posted on Twitter that the government would leave "no stone unturned" to ensure the safe evacuation of students from Sumy.

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# How many tigers are too many

Reports suggest the Sunderbans' tiger population is pushing the reserve's carrying capacity. The optimal number of tigers in a forest is determined by physical and biological factors, and perceptions of conflict.

**JAY MAZOOMDAAR**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS of a study by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) suggest that the density of tigers in the Sunderbans may have reached the carrying capacity of the mangrove forests, leading to frequent dispersals and a surge in human-wildlife conflict.

## Prey, eat, breed

Availability of food and space is the primary factor that determines how many tigers a forest can hold. And often, food is space for the tiger.

While they are known to establish vast ranges — the male in particular strives to control multiple females with typically smaller ranges — how far a tiger will range is determined by the abundance of prey in its forest.

In the Terai and Shivalik hills habitat — think Corbett tiger reserve, for example — 10-16 tigers can survive in 100 sq km. This slides to 7-11 tigers per 100 sq km in the reserves of north-central Western Ghats such as Bandipur, and to 6-10 tigers per 100 sq km in the dry deciduous forests, such as Kanha, of central India.

The correlation between prey availability and tiger density is fairly established. There is even a simple linear regression explaining the relationship in the 2018 All-India Tiger report that put the carrying capacity in the Sunderbans "at around 4 tigers" per 100 sq km. A joint Indo-Bangla study in 2015 pegged the tiger density at 2.85 per 100 sq km after surveying eight blocks spanning 2,913 sq km across the international borders in the Sunderbans. "Low density of tigers in the Sundarbans is an inherent attribute of the hostile mangrove habitat that supports low tiger prey densities," it said.

The ongoing WII study indicates a density of 3-5 tigers in the Sunderbans. Given that 88 (86-90) tigers were estimated in 2,313 sq km of the Sunderbans in 2018, the population has been close to its so-called saturation point in the mangrove delta for some time.

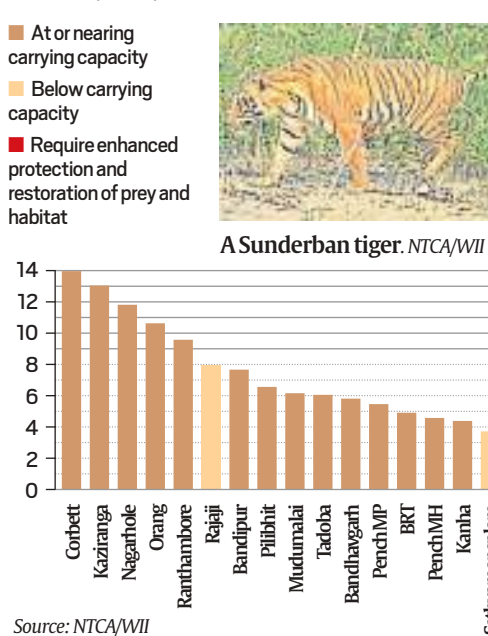
## Conflict: cause or effect

The consequence, as classical theories go, is frequent dispersal of tigers leading to higher levels of human-wildlife conflict in the reserve peripheries. But, experts say, carrying capacity and conflict may also pose a chicken-and-egg conundrum.

While physical (space) and biological (forest productivity) factors have an obvious influence on a reserve's carrying capacity of tigers,

## Tiger density in India

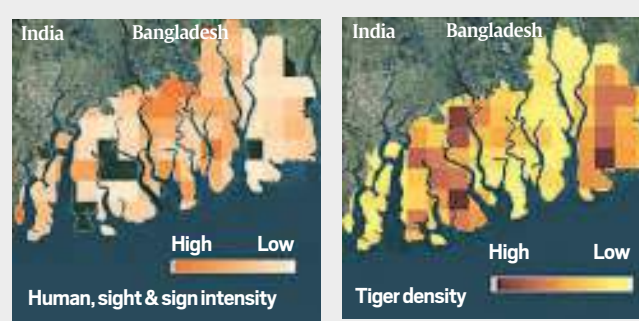
Per 100 sq km; top 45 reserves



## Tigers and humans in Sunderbans

A 100 sq km grid-view of tiger and human density in the Sunderbans. Human presence is higher near the edges of the forest and overall higher in Bangladesh Sunderbans where several river channels are used for commercial transportation.

Source: NTCA-WII-Bangladesh Forest Dept



what also plays a crucial role is how the dispersal of wildlife is tolerated by people — from the locals who live around them to policymakers who decide management strategies.

While this not-so-discussed social carrying capacity assumes wider significance for wildlife living outside protected forests, it is an equally important factor in human-dominated areas bordering reserves where periodic human-wildlife interface is inevitable. More so when different land uses overlap and a good number of people depend on forest resources for livelihood.

Imagine a 1,000 sq ft terrace apartment. In theory, it can accommodate, say, 20 people at 50 sq ft per person. Put in place some furniture — think roads, traffic, encroachment — and that capacity will fall. It will slide further if no one is allowed to step out in the common terrace where they are targeted by hostile neighbours who consider them a threat.

That's how potential carry capacity may shrink in a reserve. Perceived conflict can squeeze the tiger's domain, which the animal is bound to overstep from time to time, leading to further conflict with no immediate winners.

## The way ahead

Artificially boosting the prey base in a re-

serve is often an intuitive solution but it can be counter-productive. While tackling external factors, such as bushmeat hunting, is necessary to ease pressure on the tiger, the government's policies have discouraged reserve managers from striving to increase tiger densities by artificial management practices of habitat manipulation or prey augmentation.

To harness the umbrella effect of tigers for biodiversity conservation, experts say, it is more beneficial to increase areas occupied by tigers. For many, the prescription is to create safe connectivity among forests and allow tigers to disperse safely to new areas. But though vital for genes to travel and avoid a population bottleneck, wildlife corridors may not be the one-stop solution for conflict.

First, not all dispersing tigers will chance upon corridors simply because many will find territories of other tigers between them and such openings. Even the lucky few that may take those routes are likely to wander to the forest edges along the way. Worse, the corridors may not lead to viable forests in reserves such as Sunderbans, bounded by the sea and villages.

## Little choice

While it has never been easy to share space with wildlife, particularly carnivores,

the contours of conflict largely depend on the local perception of animals. It ranges from minding one's own business based on the assurance gathered over generations that, left alone, animals rarely pose physical danger, to mobilising demand for removal at sight.

However, as several studies have shown, removing tigers or any wildlife cannot eliminate the chances of future interface as another lot invariably turns up. The remedy, experts say, lies in smarter land use to minimise damage and adequate incentives to promote acceptance of wildlife.

Generous compensation policies can take care of the financial cost of losing livestock or crops, or wasted man hours when a workplace is avoided due to a passing tiger. Besides, the percolation of financial benefits of having charismatic wildlife in the neighbourhood can also nudge some towards better tolerance.

Ultimately, it is the people of the Sunderbans who will decide how many tigers can be accommodated in their neighbourhood. In a landscape squeezed in by climate change, rising sea level and salinity, their future is nearly as precarious as the tiger's. It is for the policymakers to give them enough reasons to make a balanced choice.

# Russia's ally Belarus and its role in Ukraine war

**SONAL GUPTA**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

A NUMBER of Western countries have slapped sanctions on Belarus, a long-time ally of Russia, for its role in the latter's war on Ukraine. Belarus has already been facing restrictions from the West since its President, Alexander Lukashenko cracked down on protesters following his re-election in 2020.

The Belarus-Ukraine border has been the site of two rounds of talks between Russia and Ukraine so far. Initially, Ukraine had refused to hold talks in Minsk, but later agreed. Historically, too, Belarus has been the site of negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. Two sets of agreements were signed in the Belarusian capital of Minsk in 2014 and 2015 to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

## Belarus in the war

While Lukashenko has denied that his country would be joining the war, it has al-

ready allowed Russian troops to use its territory for the invasion. CCTV footage has shown tanks with Russian markings crossing the border over to Ukraine on the day of the invasion.

Prior to the invasion, the United States had for months raised concerns over 30,000 Russian troops, fighter jets and defence missile systems being stationed in Belarus on the pretext of a military exercise. Last week, a top US official told *The Washington Post* that Belarus was preparing to send its soldiers to support Russia's invasion into Ukraine. The official handle of Defence of Ukraine, in fact, has tweeted that it has shot down a missile fired from Belarusian soil.

On February 27, a constitutional referendum in Belarus allowed the country to scrap its non-nuclear status, paving the way for Russia to potentially station its nuclear weapons on its territory. The Associated Press quoted Lukashenko as saying that if NATO and its allies deploy nuclear arms in its neighbouring countries, then Belarus has "agreed

with Putin to deploy such weapons here that will make Poles and Lithuanians lose any desire to go to war".

## Lukashenko and Putin

Lukashenko was elected President in 1994, shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union. In 2020, he declared victory for the sixth time, leading an uprising against the electoral process widely seen as rigged. Violent clashes broke out between citizens and the police, and over 30,000 were detained. Putin supplied Lukashenko with a loan of \$1.5 billion and offered to send in Russian troops to contain the protests.

Citing human rights violations and fraudulent elections, the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries have over the years imposed restrictions such as travel bans and frozen the assets of individuals and entities from Belarus, including of Lukashenko and his son Viktor. Restrictions were also imposed on trade of petroleum products and potash — of

which Belarus was the second-largest exporter in 2020, according to figures shared by the Canadian government.

Moscow values its alliance with Belarus as it forms a strategic land between Russia and the NATO-aligned Lithuania, Poland and Latvia. On the other hand, Belarus needs the alliance with Russia after it was effectively cut off by the West. Last November, Minsk and Moscow signed off on 28 programmes under a pact called the Union State to align on matters relating to taxes, business, energy, and agriculture.

Russia is Belarus's largest trading partner. In 2020, according to IMF data, Belarus exported over \$13,000 million worth of goods to Russia, and imported goods worth \$16,500 million, followed by imports from China worth over \$3,700 million.

Apart from this, Belarus also enjoys subsidies on oil and gas from Russia. In 2020, Reuters reported that Belarus owed Russia \$7.9 billion, accounting for 12-13% of its GDP at the time.

## TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

### DASHBOARD, AS ON MARCH 5

**734** DAYS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN

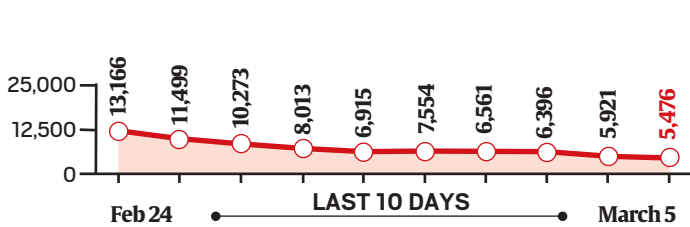
**New cases** **5,476**

**Active cases** **59,442**

**Deaths** **158**

Weekly CFR: **0.69%** | Overall CFR: **1.20%** | Total deaths: **5,15,036**

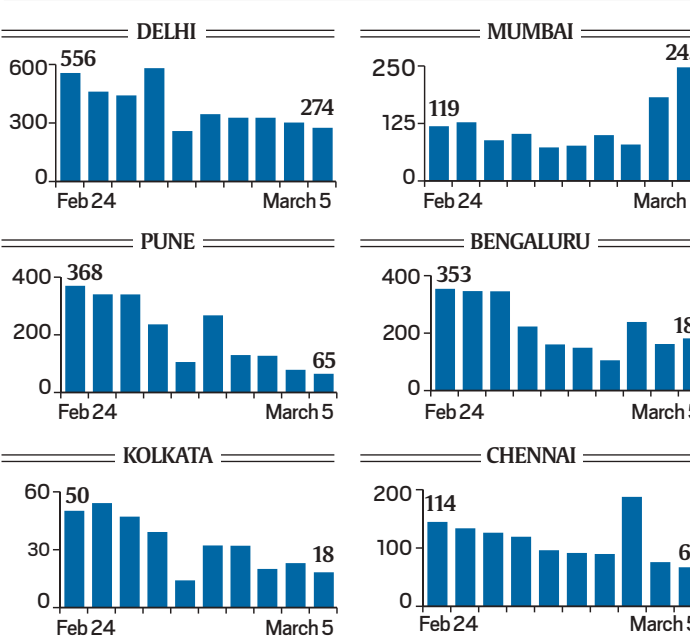
### NEW CASES, DAILY



### SURGE IN THE STATES

| State       | ON MARCH 5 |              |        | Weekly positivity |
|-------------|------------|--------------|--------|-------------------|
|             | New cases  | Active cases | Deaths |                   |
| Kerala      | 1,836      | 16,637       | 124    | 6.65%             |
| Mizoram     | 568        | 4,615        | 1      | 21.26%            |
| Maharashtra | 535        | 4,038        | 10     | 0.84%             |
| Karnataka   | 278        | 3,324        | 3      | 0.62%             |
| Rajasthan   | 278        | 2,940        | 2      | 1.47%             |

### CASES IN THE CITIES, LAST 10 DAYS



### TOTAL TESTS

**77,28,24,246**

### TESTS ON MARCH 5

**9,09,985**

### WEEKLY POSITIVITY

**0.77%**

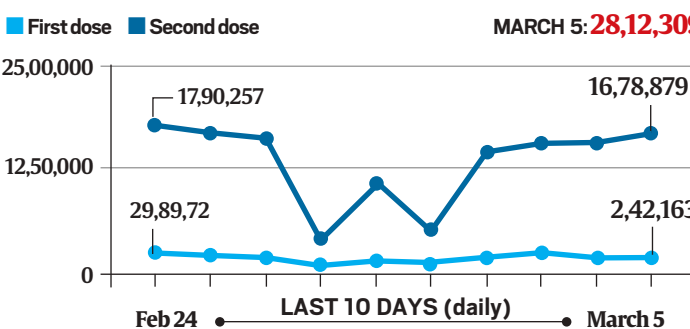
### OVERALL POSITIVITY

**5.56%**

### INDIA TOTAL DOSES

**178,83,79,249**

(Adults 1st dose: **91,02,71,445**; 2nd: **77,12,88,099**; 15-18 age group 1st dose: **5,53,77,120**; 2nd: **3,08,21,856**; Precautionary: **2,06,20,729**)



Chandigarh



Mumbai, Jharkhand, UP, Bengal win to make knockouts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MARCH 6

MUMBAI STORMED into the Ranji Trophy quarterfinals for the first time since 2017-18 after an innings-and-108-run win over Odisha in their Group D match in Ahmedabad on Sunday. Having conceded a 248-run first innings lead, Odisha resumed the final day on 84/5 before the Mumbai spin duo of Shams Mulani (5/64) and Tanush Kotian (3/31) ran through their lower order. With the bonus point victory, Mumbai ended with 16 points, three ahead of Saurashtra who failed to make the cut despite a 211-run win over Goa.

**At Guwahati:** Skipper Saurabh Tiwary struck a match-winning 93 while Kumar Kushagra made 50 to guide Jharkhand to the knockout stage with a two-wicket win over Tamil Nadu in their last Elite Group H match. Chasing 212 for victory, Jharkhand needed 104 runs on the final day with six wickets in hand to dislodge Chhattisgarh from the top of the group. Tiwary and Kushagra added 90 runs for the fifth wicket before a few wickets put some drama into proceedings.

**At Cuttack:** Bengal thrashed Chandigarh by 152 runs in their Elite Group B match to advance to the quarterfinals. Defending 413, Bengal bowled Chandigarh out for 260 on the final day with the pace troika of Ishan Porel (3/37), Mukesh Kumar (2/72) and Nilakantha Das (2/50) sharing seven wickets among them.

**At Sultanpur (Haryana):** Uttar Pradesh stunned Maharashtra by six wickets in their Elite Group C match to qualify for the knockouts. Maharashtra, who had the first innings lead, resumed final day on 84 for 4 and made a brave declaration at 211/5, with Rahul Tripathi remaining unbeaten on 123 off just 110 balls. Uttar Pradesh were thus set 357 for victory, but rode on hundreds from opener Almas Shaukat (100) and skipper Karan Sharma (116) to win the match. Rinku Singh also chipped in with an unbeaten 78 off just 60 balls.

**At Chennai:** Karnataka thrashed Puducherry by an innings and 20 runs in their Elite Group C match to qualify for the knockouts. With the win and seven points, Karnataka finished with 16 points.

**At Rajkot:** Madhya Pradesh made it to the knockouts despite their last Elite Group A match against Kerala ending in a draw. They qualified with a better quotient of 2.147 than Kerala (1.648). Madhya Pradesh came into the game on 13 points after beating Gujarat and Meghalaya. Kerala were also on 13 points before their match. Since, the match ended in a draw and the first innings - of Kerala - was not completed, both teams got one point each and their tally stood at 14 each.



Pooja Vastrakar (67), along with Sneha Rana (53 not out), put on a world record partnership of 122 runs for the 7th wicket. AP

Vastrakar's tale: From outplaying boys to helping win WC opener against Pakistan

PRATYUSH RAJ  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

LIKE ANY other budding cricketer, Pooja Vastrakar was fond of the gully version of the game. Among the first to notice her talent was Ashutosh Srivastava, a local cricket coach in Shahdol, a small town in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district. Srivastava saw a kid smoking sixes off bowlers double her size. At first, Srivastava thought Pooja was a boy because of her cropped locks. "It must be 2010. I used to work at a local cricket academy in Shahdol. I saw her playing at the Municipal ground in Shahdol. I saw a kid smacking sixes in tennis ball cricket. I asked one of the kids, who is this boy, the reply was 'sir ye toh ladki hai.' I was amazed by her power-hitting," Ashutosh Srivastava shared Vastrakar's early journey with *The Indian Express*.

Next day Srivastava asked a ten-year-old Pooja if she was interested in playing cricket. Pat came the reply, "Cricket mera passion hai." But Srivastava had a condition. He told his ward that she would only train with the boys and not play with girls. "She was way too good for the girls of her age. I put her in the boy's team. She used to play U-14 cricket with the boys. When she started playing with the boys, it turned out that she is the best among the boys of her age group as well," laughs Srivastava.

"What defines Pooja from others is her confidence. The energy is just next level. She is fearless," he adds. On Sunday against Pakistan in India's opening match against arch-rivals Pakistan, Pooja displayed her fearless cricket.

When Pooja Vastrakar walked in to bat at No 8, India was reeling at 114 for 6, losing five wickets for just 18 runs. The fearless youngster took on Pakistan. It felt like India's tail was set to wrap up quickly, but Pooja Vastrakar had other ideas. Vastrakar (67 off 59b; 8x4), along with Sneha Rana (53 not out off 48b; 4x4), put on a world record partnership of 122 runs for the seventh wicket and turned the tide in favour of India.

She took on the Pakistan bowlers from the word go. It was not only big shots, but the way Vastrakar and Rana ran, converted those ones into twos, and twos into threes that was praiseworthy. Back in Shahdol, Srivastava was not overawed with his ward's performance.

"I've seen her playing such innings so many times. For the Madhya Pradesh Under-19 side, she used to bat in the middle-order. Last year, in the JS Anand Trophy (Women's Senior Tournament), organised by MPCA, she smashed two double hundreds and one score of 150. She is ruthless with the bat," recalls Srivastava. Like any Indian athlete, Pooja had her share of struggles. Just a month after joining the academy in Shahdol, she lost her mother. A distraught Pooja would not visit the academy for a month. "I was not in Shahdol. When I came back, a fellow coach said that she is not coming to the academy for one month. I immediately went to her house. Usha (Vastrakar), one of her sisters, assured me that she will not miss a single training session ever," he says. Pooja is the youngest among the seven siblings (five daughters and two sons), and Usha, who was into athletics, made sure that she would never skip her training session ever.

"When our mother passed away, Pooja was only 10. she was devastated and when Ashutosh sir visited our house and told us that she is a gifted cricketer, I made up my decision she is going to pursue her passion. We are very proud of her achievements," says Usha.

Pooja's father, Bandhan Ram Vastrakar, a retired BSNL employee, is very happy with his daughter's performance but is worried about her injury. "I hope it won't be too serious and she will be fit for the next match. Since the age of 4, she has been into cricket. I never thought that she would go on to play for India one day, but she always knew it. Whenever she asks for money for cricket, I will tease her why is she wasting her time in cricket. She used to say, 'aap dekhna India khelungi' (One day, I will play for India)," says Bandhan Ram. "I hardly did anything for her. Initially, it was Ashutosh sir, who helped her out. Then when she was picked for the Madhya Pradesh Under-19 team, she started earning money and never asked anything from me. She even helped with money during her sister's marriage," says a proud father. Vastrakar was rightly named the Player of the Match for her excellent knock. "The plan was to somehow try and get to 200. I like to bat in pressure situations, even in domestic games. I told the same to Sneha (Rana), to keep the partnership going. The batters told us that the wicket was slow, so the target was 200, but we didn't bat differently," Vastrakar told the broadcasters after the match.

**BRIEF SCORES:** India 244/7 in 50 overs (Pooja Vastrakar 67, Sneha Rana 53 not out; Nashra Sandhu 2/36), bt Pakistan 137 in 43.0 overs (Sidra Ameen 30; Rajeshwari Gayakwad 4/31).

Baby's Day out: Pak captain's daughter wins Indian hearts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MARCH 6

THE INDIA-PAKISTAN World Cup game at Mount Maunganui, New Zealand, finished in oodles of love and toddler clucks showered upon eight-month-old Baby Fatima, daughter of the Pakistan captain Bismah Maroof by the Indian team. While post-match beers tend to be a tradition after a hard day's play in the men's game in these parts of the world, the cynosure of all eyes post the game on Sunday, was an infant donning a bright red bow ribbon and clad in a matching jumpsuit and red-black tartan check booties.

The Indians - including Harmanpreet Kaur, Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana - gathered around the young mother, who returned to captain Pakistan in December 2021, just four months after giving birth, and the Indians sought the quiet baby's attention.

Maroof, an Asian Games gold medallist from 2010 Guangzhou Games, has been Pakistan captain since 2017, and was Pakistan's first player to reach 1000 runs in ODI cricket. In April 2021, she had taken an indefinite break after announcing impending motherhood, but the cricket-crazy lady from Lahore, who has been playing since she was a teen, couldn't quite stay away from the game and returned to the field - baby and pram, in tow.

The ICC posted an image of the Indians

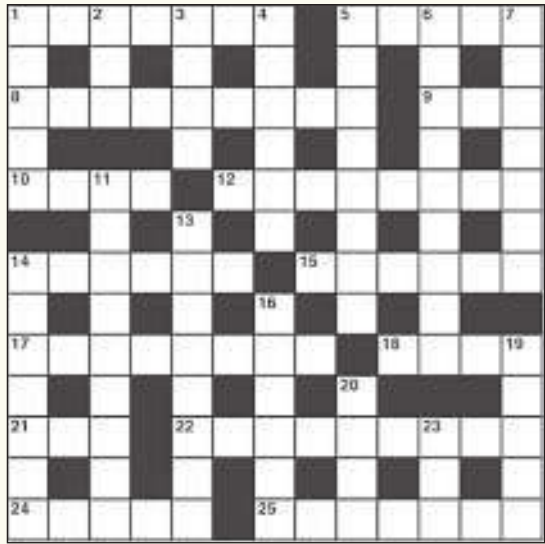
clicking a selfie with Maroof and baby Fatima in the centre and captioned it: "Little Fatima's first lesson in the spirit of cricket from India and Pakistan (with blue and green hearts) #CWC2022." The tweet had garnered close to 50K Likes. India cricketer Ekta Bisht was later clicked babbling gleefully with the baby. India started their Women's ODI World Cup campaign with a 107-run win on Sunday against Pakistan but the winners were bowled over by Bismah Maroof's daughter after the match, as the two teams interacted post the game and their video went viral. Earlier, Bismah had walked into the stadium in Mount Maunganui stadium, with Fatima in her arms.

While Pakistan had India under the pump, before a match-rebuilding partnership was forged, it had been a rough day in the end for Pakistan. Bismah said Pakistan could not capitalise on the strong start and let India off the hook. "We gave away easy runs to them, we were sloppy on the field, we didn't put them under pressure," she said. "Our batting has to improve, our shot selection wasn't good, we'll work on it ahead of the next game." India had prevailed in all 10 previous one-day matches between the two, but Bismah's team threatened to pull off an upset when they reduced Mithali Raj's side to 114-6 in the 34th over. "Relieved to have won the first game but there are a lot of things we have to work on," Mithali said of India's patchy batting.



Members of the Indian team flank Baby Fatima and mother, Pakistan captain Bismah Maroof after the game for a selfie. Courtesy: PCB

CROSSWORD 4681



ACROSS

- 1 I'm holding a number said to be corrupt (7)
- 5 She returns a valuable possession (5)
- 8 Mugs declare it avoids humiliation (4-5)
- 9 Backdated a leave? (3)
- 10 Uses the knuckles to fight back (4)
- 12 Newly arrived it is put back inside and reserved (8)
- 14 Radio reception problem which never goes away (6)
- 15 He helps the priest arrange a truce (6)
- 17 Pupil power? (8)
- 18 Temperature in the freezer ordinarily (4)
- 21 For each childless person (3)
- 22 Ballots to silence discord (9)
- 24 Drains topless pitchers (5)
- 25 A desert resort that is most expensive (7)

DOWN

- 1 What could be finer to conclude? (5)
- 2 Scottish mother figure (3)
- 3 Not considered a disfigurement (4)
- 4 Elsie is upset about a number of taxes (6)
- 5 The end of schooldays in the States (8)
- 6 Deadlock with an old friend (9)
- 7 After getting in the beer he went round preaching (7)
- 11 Does it supply wood for building aircraft? (5,4)
- 13 Insisted order is order (8)
- 14 Church eminence (7)
- 16 Delhi's defensive arrangement (6)
- 19 Notes wrong beginning (5)
- 20 Sicilian hothead (4)
- 23 Lionel loses Lil, now single (3)

**Solutions Crossword 4680:** Across: 1 Reverses, 5 Fold, 9 Ailed, 10 Airless, 11 Impersonator, 13 Assets, 14 Pilots, 17 Minor prophet, 20 Servant, 21 Elope, 22 Tied, 23 Deceased. Down: 1 Road, 2 Volumes, 3 Red-letter day, 4 Elapse, 6 Overt, 7 Distress, 8 Frontispiece, 12 Marmoset, 15 Onerous, 16 Writhe, 18 Nurse, 19 Weed.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Age wrinkles the body, \_\_\_\_\_ wrinkles the soul. - Douglas MacArthur (8)

STVII



BEEGNU



ABYTT



AHOUGQ

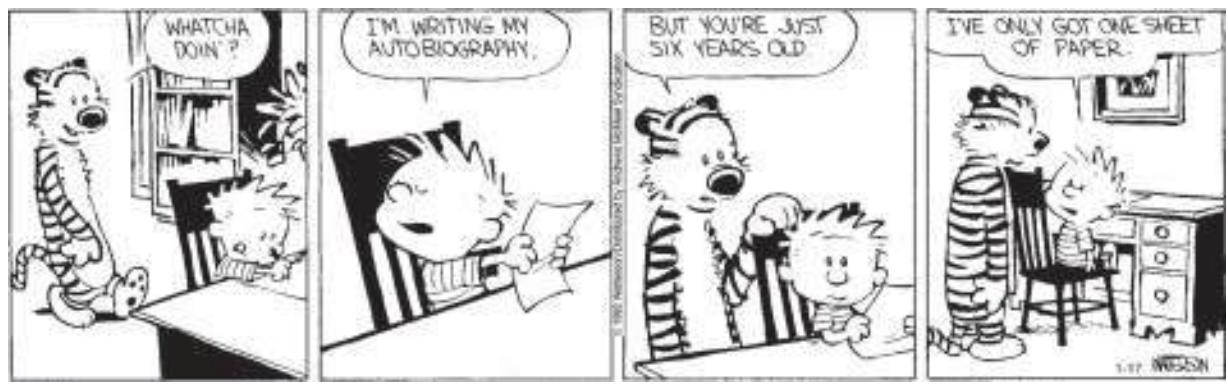


SOLUTION: Age wrinkles the body, BATTY, BUNCE, QUAKING wrinkles the soul. - Douglas MacArthur

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



Difficulty Level 4s

Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SUDOKU 4766



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4765



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

The future looks relatively optimistic at the moment. In fact that's an amazing understatement. The stars are emphasising peace rather than war, so they may bring sweetness and light to areas of your life from which they have been sadly lacking. Make sure that other people feel good as well, and your thoughtfulness will give you credit.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

The week begins and ends with significant domestic indications. How about formulating plans today and then waiting about four or five days before putting them into practice? One thing is certain: conditions can only get better. But it may take an almighty effort to see that improvements last.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Your skills as a peacemaker could be in demand at home over the coming days. One thing to remember is that disputes will arise as a result of the sheer range of different options, not from any ill-will. And that's the simple reason why you should give partners the benefit of the doubt.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

You've probably had enough big surprises, but fate may still have one or two tricks up its sleeve. The only complicating factor is that misunderstandings may periodically create an atmosphere of farce. A partner probably needs all the support you can give them.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

You're still unhappy about financial matters, and quite right too. If you weren't dissatisfied with the conditions of your life you'd never make the necessary improvements. Everything will work out if you realise that you have another two weeks before agreements will stick.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Your stars are splendid, as they often are at this time of year. Play social activities to the hilt but take it easy if firm agreement is required. You might find that close partners are impossible to pin down, but then what is new? Perhaps your demands are impossible to meet.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

You are generally quite keen to dominate your environment, though in the nicest possible way. Yet, at the moment, I doubt if you are genuinely able to exert any sort of real or permanent control. You see, there are just too many powerful emotions.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

Your social planets really are exceptional, as you often find in the current season. Just don't get all huffy if promises are broken and arrangements forgotten, it's all in the stars. Or is it? By that I mean that the best place to start might be a long look at your own behaviour.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

The Moon is moving from one lively position to another. I'd say that you'd do well to keep your wits about you and pursue your affairs as conscientiously as possible. Your interests are served best at home if you keep talking. Pick the right words, choose the appropriate time and you should win partners over.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Try and get everything important done as soon as you can, before fresh information arrives and circumstances move on. That way you'll be able to enjoy pleasurable propositions when they arrive, and get ready for more significant developments, just in case.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

You may now have to do some quick thinking if you are to avoid personal complications. However, if at all possible, do bring in other people who can share any good fortune and stand with you in adversity. Also, do yourself a favour and keep a watchful eye on your cash.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You have a great deal to achieve. Don't allow arguments or conflicts to make you drop out of the race. You're not normally so competitive, but neither can you really afford to let partners treat you as a complete push-over. Frankly, the more support you've got from friends, the better.



