



#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
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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.

INDIA EXPOSITION MART LTD
CIN: U99990DL2001PLC10396
Regd. Office: Plot No. 1, 210 - Atlantic Plaza, 2nd Floor, Local Shopping Centre, Mayur Vihar Phase-I, Delhi - 110091 Tel.: +91-120-2328011-20, Fax: +91-120-2328010 Email id: cs@indiaexpocentre.com, Website : 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. 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, 2022 at 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.

- A person 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 or 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 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

March 07, 2022 Anupam Sharma
Delhi Company Secretary & Compliance Officer



JODHPUR PARK BRANCH
A/419A, Gariahat Road (South), Kolkata-700068
e-mail: jodcal@bankofbaroda.com

Appendix IV, Rule 8(1)
POSSESSION NOTICE
(For Immovable Property)

Whereas The undersigned being the authorised officer of the BANK OF BARODA, Jodhpur Park Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (Second) 1[Act], 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the to repay the amount mentioned in the notice, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice towards outstanding(s) of loan facilities. The borrower having failed to repay the amount due towards Loan within stipulated 60 days from the date of receipt of Notice.

Notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said 1[Act] read with rule 8 of the said rules on the date mentioned below.

The Borrower/Guarantors/Mortgagors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property detailed below and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the BANK OF BARODA, Jodhpur Park Branch for an amount plus additional charges as applicable and further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment.

The Borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Sl. No	Name of the Borrower / Guarantor	(1) Date of Demand Notice (2) Date of Possession (3) Outstanding Amount	Description of Immovable Properties
1	M/s. Florida Agrotech Proprietress: Mrs. Sananda Roy, 67/42 Strand Road, Cross Road No 10, Kolkata 700006 Guarantor: Mr. Koushik Ghosh, 2nd Floor, Block A, Prantik Abasan, Rajarhat Road Kolkata 700136	(1) 18.09.2021 (2) 02.03.2022 (3) Rs.99,79,991.51 (Rupees Ninety Nine Lacs Seventy nine Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety One Rupees and Fifty One Paise only) plus additional charges as applicable as on 13.09.2021 and further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment.	1. All that piece and parcel of self-contained residential flat in the name of Mr Kaushik Ghosh measuring about. 911.34 sq Ft being no C on the 2nd Floor Block A of PRANTIK ABASAN of G+ IV Storied building underneath of the proportionate share of land laying and situated at Mouza Salua P S Rajarhat (Old) Airport (New) J L No. 3 R S No 109 Touzi No. 1258/1 C S Dag Nos. 403,404 R S & L R Dag Nos 418,419 C S Khatian No 324 R S Khatian No 144 L R Khatian Nos Kri 313,394,392, 393,391,390 & 220/1 Ward No 8 Under Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation Dist North 24 Parganas Holding No RGM 4/1975, RGM 4/206, Block F and RGM 4/205, Block F Holding No RGM 4/207 Block F and RGM 8/206 Block F and RGM 8/205, Block F Near Rajarhat Road Kolkata 700136 and bounded of approved property as follows: On the North: By Road of 15 ft. On the South: By Jonaki apartment, On the East: By Property of Sunil roy & Adhir Baugh, On the West: By Property of Sri Narayan Sengupta, Sadhan Paul & Basundhara Apartment 2. All that piece and parcel of self-contained residential flat/Unit No : 1 in the name of Mrs. Sananda Roy on the 1st Floor measuring an area 914 sq ft in Block - 3 of the multistoried building named " GOURAV GARDEN" underneath of the proportionate share of land laying and situated at Mouza Mondalpara in J L 6 Plot No 288 & 289 corresponding R S khatian No 878,877 & 147 within the local limits of Kolkata Municipal Corporation under Premises No 142A Raja Rammohan Roy Road in Ward No 121 under PS Behala Kolkata 700008 under South 24 Parganas which is butted and bounded of approved property as follows: On the North : By Premises No 41/15 & 41/23 Raja Rammohan Road, On the South : By Raja Rammohan Road, On the East : By KMC Road, On the West : By Premises No 94A & 94/1 Raja Rammohan Road
Date : 02.03.2022, Place : Kolkata			Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda



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

No. A1M1B3/Fly Ash/BTPS/Mar 2022 Dated: 07.03.2022

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. Ultra Tech 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,Hn 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, III Floor, Race Course Road, Bengaluru-560001.** e-mail: cefuelskpcl@karnataka.gov.in / sefuels@gmail.com Website: www.karnatakapower.com e-Portal/ HP Helpdesk : 080-22234115 / 22230960.

NIQ No. SPC/KOL/REP/SLGANGA Dt. 7-3-2022

M/S SUBIR PAUL CHOWDHURY, 4/19, Poddar Nagar, 1st Floor, Kolkata 700068, invites sealed quotations from experienced, vessel repairers / Shipbuilders for Dry Dock repair of IVAL vessel **SL GANGA (O&M contract)** at Kolkata. Details and BOQ can be acquired from above address between **8th March 2022 to 10th March 2022** time **11:00 hrs. to 17:00 hrs.** Last date for submission of quotation **14th March 2022, 15:00 hrs.**



G.T. Road Burdwan Branch, Bhankathi, Near Life Line Nursing Home, 1st Floor, Bank of Baroda Regional Office, Burdwan - 713101

AUCTION SALE NOTICE

The under mentioned persons are hereby informed that they have failed to pay off the liability in the loan accounts. Notices sent to them by Registered Post have been returned undelivered to the Bank. They are therefore requested to pay off the liability and other charges and redeem the pledged securities on or before 10.03.2022 failing which the said securities will be sold by the Bank in public auction at the cost of the borrower at the Bank's premises at 11.00 A.M. on 10.03.2022 or on any other convenient date thereafter without further notice at the absolute discretion of the Bank.

SR. No.	Date of Loan	Loan Number	Name and Address of the borrower
1	09.10.2018	51190500000111	Kazi Abdul Hafiz, P.O. Rajbati, Burdwan 713104
2	18.11.2020	51190600000991	Sk Abdus Salam, Villi: Yusufabad , Burdwan - 713104
3	17.05.2019	51190500000219	Dibyendu Basu, Kaligram, Burdwan- 713141

Date : 07.03.2022
Place : Burdwan Branch Manager
G T Road Burdwan Branch

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक **punjab national bank**
...भारोमे का प्रतीक ! ...the name you can BANK upon !

SALE NOTICE
E- Auction
Dated: 16.04.2022

Head Office: Plot No. 4, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi - 110075

Circle Sastra Centre, Durgapur, Nachan Road, Benachity, Durgapur, Paschim Bardhaman, W.B. / e-mail : cs8222@pnbc.co.in

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

LAST DATE & TIME OF SUBMISSION OF EMD (Earnest Money Deposit) AND DOCUMENTS: 13.04.2022/ UP TO 4.00 PM

Sale of immovable property mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 (No.54 of 2002)

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) 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/ symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/ Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES [The Said Properties are under Constructive Possession/ Physical possession of the Secured Creditor]

Lot No.	Branch Name / Name & Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged, Owner's Name (Mortgagers of property(ies))	A) Date of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) B) Date of Possession C) Outstanding as on	A) Reserve Price B) EMD C) Bid Increase Amount	Date / Time of E-Auction	Details of encumbrances known to the secured creditors
1.	B/O- Panagarh, G. T. Road, P.O. Panagarh Bazar, Paschim Burdwan - 713148 Borrower: Amal Kumar Koyal, S/o Papitra Kr. Koyal, Vill. Bodhmati, P.O. Charicha, Birbhum, PIN-731127 Guarantor: i) Smt. Sujata Koyal Saha, W/o Amal Kr. Koyal, Vill. & P.O. Joka, Barui Para, Kolkata- 700104 ii) Sh Komal Koyal, S/o Papitra Kr. Koyal, Vill. & P.O. Joka, Barui Para, Kolkata- 700104	i) All that piece and parcel of the land, structure measuring 40 decimal lying and situated in CS & RS Kh No. 70, RS plot No. 357 & 358 in Mouza- Niraypur, Chikwi Suri, J.L. No. 110, Touzi No. 206, covered by Deed no. 5588 of 2006 in the name of Amal Kumar Koyal. Boundary: North- by a portion of RS dag No. 311 & 358, South- by a portion of RS dag No. 318 & 356, East- by a portion of RS dag no. 358, West- by a portion of RS dag no. 318 Possession-Constructive ii) All that piece And parcel of Flat No. 01 on the ground floor measuring 1210 sq. ft., more or less including super build up area consisting of 03 bed rooms, 1 drawing cum dining space, 1 kitchen, 2 toilets under Nalini Apartment five storied building together with undivided proportionate share of the landed property lying and situated of Mouza- Purba Barisha, P.S. Thakurpukur, J.L. No. 23, Plot No. 2591 within the limit of Joka Gram Panchayat in the name of Smt. Sujata Koyal and Kamal Koyal covered by Deed No. 4118/2007. Boundary: North- MG Road, South- land of Dag No. 2591, East- land of Mr. Das, West- Piyali Apartment. Possession-Constructive	1. 06.07.2021 2. 08.11.2021 3. Rs. 2,01,47,588.38 (Rupees two crore one lakh forty seven thousand five hundred eighty eight only) as on 30.06.2021 plus further interest thereon from 01.07.2021 and costs, Charges and Expenses incurred to be incurred and less amount recovered thereafter	A) Rs. 275.73 lakh B) Rs. 27.58 lakh C) Rs. 50,000.00	16.04.2022 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present
2.	B/O- Panagarh, G. T. Road, P.O. Panagarh Bazar, Paschim Burdwan - 713148 Borrower: Mimosa Trading, Prop. Sananda Roy, Vill. Budhmati, P.O. Charicha, P.S. Md. Bazar, Dist. Birbhum, West Bengal-731127 Sananda Roy, W/o Joydeep Roy, N76, Purba Putiary Dakshin Para, Kolkata-700093 Guarantor: i) Mrs. Oliveea Ghosh, W/o Kaushik Ghosh, Vill. Kali Park, P.O. Rajarhat Gopalpur, P.S. Airport, Kolkata-700136, ii) Mr. Saikat Kumar Roy, S/o Shri Swadesh Ranjan Roy, Purba Putiary Dakshin Para, House No. M/76, P.S. Regent Park, Kolkata-700093	i) All the piece and parcel of the residential land and building in the name of Saikat Kumar Roy S/o Sh. Swadesh Ranjan Roy, Mouza- Niraypur, J.L. No. 110, RS Khatian No. 112, 255, LR Khatian No. 61 & 489, at present Khatian No. 595, Plot No. 354 & 348, total area- 202 Decimal under Vill. Bodhmati, P.O. Charicha, P.S. Md. Bazar, ADJR Suri, Dist. Birbhum. Sale Deed No. 2279 of 2009. Bounded By: North- Plot No. 320, South- Plot No. 354, East- Plot No. 354, West- Plot Nos. 49, 352 & 30 Ft. Wide internal Rd. Possession-Constructive ii) All the piece and parcel of the flat situated at Prantik Abasan premises No. B, in 2nd Floor Under Mouza- Salua, P.S. Airport, J.L. No. 3, Dist. North 24 Parganas, having super built up area 1090 sq. ft. (more or less). Flat situated at Mouza- Salua, CS Plot No. 403, RS & LR Plot No. 418 & 419, J.L. No. 3, P.S. Alipur, Dist. North 24 Parganas in the name of Oliveea Ghosh covered by Deed No. 369/16. Bounded By: On the North- 18 Ft. Municipality Road, On the South- Jonaki Apartment, On the East- Property of Sunil Roy and Adhir Bagh, On the west- Property of Narayan Sengupta and Others. Possession-Constructive	1. 22.10.2021 2. 16.02.2022 3. Rs. 96,84,881.46 (Rupees Ninety Six Lakh Eighty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty One and Paise Forty Six only) as on 30.09.2021 plus further interest thereon from 01.10.2021 and costs, Charges and Expenses incurred to be incurred and less amount recovered thereafter.	A) Rs. 132.23 lakh B) Rs. 13.23 lakh C) Rs. 50,000.00	16.04.2022 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present
3.	B/O- Panagarh, G. T. Road, P.O. Panagarh Bazar, Paschim Burdwan - 713148 Borrower: Mrs. Sananda Roy (borrower), Mr. Saikat Kumar Roy, Mrs. Arati Roy & Mr. Joydeep Roy, N-76, Purba Putiary, Dakshinpara, P.S. Regent Park, Kolkata- 700093	All the piece and parcel of the Residential-cum-Industrial land and building in the name of Joydeep Roy, S/o Sh. Swadesh Ranjan Roy, Mouza- Niraypur, Khatian No. 6294, J.L. No. 110, Plot No. 354, 348, P.S. Md. Bazar, Dist. Birbhum admeasuring area 2.02 acres, being Deed No. 2941 of 2009. Boundary: On the North- Land of Amal Kumar Koyal, On the South- Land of Saikat Kumar Roy, On the East- Land of Amal Kumar Koyal, On the west- Road. Possession-Constructive	1. 22.10.2021 2. 14.02.2022 3. Rs. 64,29,844.45 (Rupees Sixty Four Lakh Twenty Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Forty Five only) as on 30.09.2021 plus further interest thereon from 01.10.2021 and costs, Charges and Expenses incurred to be incurred and less amount recovered thereafter.	A) Rs. 208.36 lakh B) Rs. 20.84 lakh C) Rs. 50,000.00	16.04.2022 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present
4.	B/O- Andalmore, Near Bharat Gas, Andalmore Andal-713321 Borrower: M/s Mahir Traders & Mahir Cloth Store, Prop. Nadir Khan, South Bazar, Andalmore, Andal-713321	All that piece and parcel of the land and building on Mouza- Ramprasadpur, J.L. No. 51, RS Khatian No. 496, LR No. 1523/3, Plot No. LR- 236, Present Khatian No. LR-11764, in the name of Md. Nadir Khan, S/o Late Md. Shafique Khan being Deed no. I-2455 of 2013. Area of the land is 270 Sq. ft. Boundary: On the North- 3.5 Ft. Gali, On the South- Shop, On the East- House of Md. Safique Khan, On the west- 10 ft. Road. Possession-Constructive	1. 22.11.2021 2. 28.01.2022 3. Rs. 7,28,208.62 (Rupees Seven Lakh Twenty Eight Thousand Two Hundred Eighty and Paisea Sixty Two Only) as on 31.10.2021 plus further interest thereon from 01.11.2021 and costs, Charges and Expenses incurred to be incurred and less amount recovered thereafter.	A) Rs. 6.65 lakh B) Rs. 0.67 lakh C) Rs. 10,000.00	16.04.2022 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present

Lot No.	Branch Name / Name & Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged, Owner's Name (Mortgagers of property(ies))	A) Date of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) B) Date of Possession C) Outstanding as on	A) Reserve Price B) EMD C) Bid Increase Amount	Date / Time of E-Auction	Details of encumbrances known to the secured creditors
5.	B/O- Nachan Road, City Centre, Durgapur-713216 Borrower: i) Sh Abani Mohan Panja, S/o Bansari Mohan Panja, Singh Para Road No. 42, Benachity, Durgapur-713213, ii) Sh Shatadal Panja, S/o Bansari Mohan Panja, Singh Para Road No. 42, Benachity, Durgapur-713213	All that piece and parcel of the land and building situated at Singh Para Road, 42, Benachity, Durgapur-713213, J.L. No. 67, RS Kh No. 49, LR Kh No. 90 & new renumbered as LR Kh No. 1493 & 1494, RS Plot No. 517(P), LR Plot No. 1105, Area- 4.26 decimal in the name of Abani Mohan Panja & Shatadal Panja. Covered by Deed No. 5934 of 2007. Boundary: On the North- Two storied building of Binoy Pal, On the South- Two storied building of Chhabi Rani Pal, On the East- House of Chandr Babu, On the west- 4 Ft. passage & then two storied building of Abani Das. Possession- Constructive	1. 22.11.2021 2. 21.02.2022 3. Rs.10,87,172.28 (Rupees Ten Lakh Eighty Seven Thousand One Hundred Seventy Two and Paisea Twenty Eight Only) as on 31.10.2021 plus further interest thereon from 01.11.2021 and costs, Charges and Expenses incurred/ to be incurred and less amount recovered thereafter	A)Rs.31.53lakh B)Rs. 3.16 lakh C)Rs.10,000.00	16.04.2022 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present
6.	B/O- Andalmore, Near Bharat Gas, Andalmore, Andal, PIN-713321 Borrower: Shaikh Imtiaz Alam, BF Mazhar Court Upper Chelidanga, UC Danga, Asansol, Pin-713304	All the piece and parcel of the land and a covered garage on Sunita Apartment, measuring area 195 Sq. ft., situated at J.L. No. 20, RS Khatian No. 9284 to 9297, Plot No. RS 3985, CS 2019 & 2020, Holding No. 889(N), Hill view north (near Hill View Church), Asansol-713304, Dist. Paschim Bardhaman, Ward No. 06/49, Deed No. 491 of 2018 in the name of Shaikh Imtiaz Alam. Boundary: North: Part of RS Plot No.3985, South: 13 Feet wide road, East: 23 feet wide road, West: Land of Ashish Bandhu Banerjee. Possession-Constructive	1. 08.09.2021 2. 09.12.2021 3. Rs.9,51,966.15 (Rupees Nine Lakh Fifty One Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Six and paisea Fifteen only) as on 31.08.2021 plus further interest thereon from 01.09.2021 and costs, Charges and Expenses incurred/ to be incurred and less amount recovered thereafter	A)Rs.4.88 lakh B)Rs. 0.49 lakh C)Rs.10,000.00	16.04.2022 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present
7.	B/O- Bhiringi, Nachan Road, Benachity, Durgapur-713213 Borrower: Mr. Chaina Chatterjee & Rathin Chatterjee, VITAR Vitar Kanika, Vivekananda Pally, Durgapur-713203	All that piece and parcel of the land and building situated at Mouza- Kururia under R.S. Khatian No. 933, LR Kh No. 2, RS Dag No. 361 LR dag No. 1554, 1606, 1552 measuring 05 decimal, SDO- Durgapur, P.S. Durgapur, Dist. Paschim Bardhaman, Bounded By: North: Dag No. 361, South: Property of Firod Dey, East: 10 feet road, West: Dag No. 360 Possession-Constructive	1. 18.08.2021 2. 19.10.2021 3. Rs.8,27,822.11 (Rupees Eight Lakh Twenty Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Two and Eleven paisea only) as on 17.08.2021 plus further interest thereon from 18.08.2021 and costs, Charges and Expenses incurred/ to be incurred and less amount recovered thereafter	A)Rs.17.64 lakh B)Rs. 1.77 lakh C)Rs.10,000.00	16.04.2022 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present
8.	B/O- Asansol, G T Road, 95, G. T. Road, Asansol – 713301 Borrower: Sh Joydeb Chowdhury, S/o Late Sambhunath Choudhury, S & T Staff Railway Qr No. E-12/C, Near Ramkanali Station, Purulia- 723142 Guarantor: Smt. Mangala Chowdhury, W/o Sh Joydeb Chowdhury, S & T Staff Railway Qr No. E-12/C, Near Ramkanali Station, Purulia- 723142	All the piece and parcel of the land and building situated at Mouza- Bundla, J.L. No. 160, LR Kh No. 5021, LR Plot No. 3767 under Raghunathpur Municipality, Dist. Purulia, Area- 2.00 decimal in the name of Joydeb Chowdhury covered by Deed No. I-0015 of 2018. Boundary: On the North- House of Budhu Sait, On the South- 15 Ft. wide concrete Road, On the East- 6 Ft. wide common passage, On the west- Vacant land of Khiribodh Shikdar Possession-Physical	1. 01.07.2019 2. 10.10.2019 3. Rs. 21,77,299.00 (Rupees twenty one lakh seventy seven thousand two hundred ninety nine only) as on 30.06.2019 plus further interest thereon from 01.07.2019 and costs, Charges and Expenses incurred/ to be incurred and less amount recovered thereafter.	A)Rs.17.82 lakh B)Rs. 1.79 lakh C)Rs.10,000.00	16.04.2022 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present
9.	B/O- Barakar, Barakar Begumia More, Disergarh Road, PIN-713324 Borrower: Moin Khan, Md. Shamsad Khan & Shamida Khatoon, Left Bank colony, Hadla Road, P.O. Kalyanewari, P.S. Salanpur, PIN-713369	All the piece and parcel of the land and building situated at Dist. Paschim Bardhaman, P.S. Salanpur, GP- Salanpur, Mouza- Haldia (Haldia), J.L. No. 23, Plot No. 523, Sub Plot No. 523A, Khatian No. 26 measuring 05 decimal or 03 cottah of land registered in the name of Shamida Khatoon, Deed No. I-1613 of 2010. Boundary: North: 15 feet wide road, South: land of Mouza Debipur, under P.S. Salanpur, East: land of Plot No. 523/B, West: Plot No. 525 Possession-Constructive	1. 16.11.2021 2. 28.01.2022 3. Rs.14,03,247.96 (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Three Thousand Two Hundred Forty Seven and Paisea Ninety Six only) as on 31.10.2021 plus further interest thereon from 01.11.2021 and costs, Charges and Expenses incurred/ to be incurred and less amount recovered thereafter	A)Rs.35.55lakh B)Rs. 3.56 lakh C)Rs.10,000.00	16.04.2022 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present
10.	B/O- Bidhan Nagar (eUNI), Bank Colony More, Sec-2B, Bidhanagar, Dgp-713212 Borrower: Das Construction & Co., Prop. Mr. Prabir Das, Rajbandh Chati, Rajbandh, Durgapur, Pin-713212 Guarantor: Mrs. Shubhra Das, W/o Prabir Das, Rajbandh Chati, Rajbandh, Durgapur, Pin-713212	All that piece & parcel of leasehold property situated at Mouza- Gopinathpur, CS Plot No. 219(P), J.L. No. 85, Touzi No. 1, Khatian No. 147, 151, 163, Plot No. D110 at Sector 2(a), area of land 2.591 cottah 1865.52 sq. ft. or 0.042 acre in the name of Sri Prabir Kumar Das, Son of Sri Saran Chandra Das, Hritwik Ghatak path, Ward No. C/ 27, Bidhan Nagar, Durgapur-12, West Bengal. Lease Deed No. I-3027 at 22.05.2009 in the name of Sri Prabir Kumar Das. Boundary: North: Layout plot No. C-83 of Sec 2(a), Bidhan Nagar, South: 9 meter wide ADDA road at sec 2(a), Bidhan Nagar, East: 9 meter wide ADDA road at sec 2(a), Bidhan Nagar, West: Layout plot No. D-109 at Sec 2(a), Bidhan Nagar. Possession-Constructive	1. 09.11.2021 2. 03.02.2022 3. Rs.24,50,522.50 (Rupees Twenty Four Lakh Fifty Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Two and paisea Fifty only) as on 31.10.2021 plus further interest thereon from 01.11.2021 and costs, Charges and Expenses incurred/ to be incurred and less amount recovered thereafter.	A)Rs.62.84lakh B)Rs. 6.29 lakh C)Rs.10,000.00	16.04.2022 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present

**DECISION 2022**UP PHASE VII TODAY
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RESULT: MARCH 10

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNNY



BSF man opens fire on colleagues, kills five

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
AMRITSAR, MARCH 6

FIVE BSF personnel were killed on Sunday at a battalion headquarters near the Pakistan border in Punjab's Amritsar after one of them allegedly opened fire at his colleagues with his service weapon before succumbing to bullet injuries himself.

The BSF described the incident at the 144 Battalion HQ in Khasa as a case of fratricide and ordered a court of inquiry while the local police registered a case.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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



A worker pastes roll numbers of students on benches as part of preparation for the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education examinations, in Kolkata on Sunday. PTI

MADHYAMIK BEGINS TODAY

To curb cheating in Board exams, Bengal to suspend Internet in some areas

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, MARCH 6

TO CHECK cheating, the West Bengal government has decided to temporarily suspend internet services for a few hours in some areas on the days of the class 10 state board examination starting from Monday.

However, there will be no restriction on phone calls and SMS services anywhere.

The move comes after question papers were allegedly leaked on social media platforms within an hour of commencement of exams in 2019 and 2020.

The question papers were purportedly leaked mostly from exam centres in Malda and Murshidabad districts. Last year, the class 10 exams were not held in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Intelligence reports suggested that internet transmission and voice over Internet Protocol may be used for unlawful activities in certain areas over the next few days. "As assessment of the inputs gives

reason to believe that such unlawful activities are likely to occur in the absence of preventive measures," a statement read.

Although the order did not specifically mention 'Madhyamik' (class 10), examination, the area-specific clamp on the transmission of texts, images and videos will be in force from 11am to 3:15pm on March 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 — the dates of the class 10 exams.

A senior government official said the places where the internet will be suspended would be decided as per requirement.

An estimated 6.21 lakh girls and 4.96 lakh boys will appear in the class 10 examination this year.

West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) president Kalyanmoy Ganguly said, "The board has no role in this issue. It is purely an administrative decision taken by the state secretariat."

Ganguly, however, claimed that no question paper leak had taken place in the Madhyamik examinations in 2019 and 2020

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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

INSIDE

ANIS KHAN DEATH A CONSPIRACY: BENGAL CONGRESS CHIEF**UAPA INVOKED IN BAJRANG DAL WORKER KILLING**
PAGE 5

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 12

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
ANCHORRITUSHARMA
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
GUJARATexcitedly 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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5 WEST BENGAL

Nirmal Majhi elected IMA's state unit president

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, MARCH 6

DR NIRMAL Majhi was elected the state president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Sunday, pipping his rival Dr Prashant Bhattacharya by nine votes.

The results were declared after counting of votes which continued for more than 12 hours.

While Amitabh Dutta was elected as Vice President, Dr Anirban Dalui, a public health expert, won the post of treasurer. Elections were held for 34 posts of IMA. The two factions alleged irregularities in the voting process.

Majhi accused the BJP of trying to sabotage the poll process by bringing in outsiders. They were from Murshidabad and Malda areas. Most of them had no connection with IMA. I will file FIR against them," said Majhi.

"The BJP has no involvement in the IMA polling. The fight is between two lobbies of the TMC," said BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar.

State logs 2 new Covid-19 deaths

Kolkata: Bengal on Sunday logged 90 new Covid-19 cases, including 18 in North 24 Paraganas. In the past 24 hours, the state also saw 138 recoveries and two deaths, both in Kolkata. With two more deaths, the toll reached 21,180.

Meanwhile, the state recorded a drop in the number of active cases by 50 to 1,653. The positivity rate stands at 0.42 per cent. In the past 24 hours, 21,210 samples have been tested in the state, taking the total number of clinical examinations to 2,43,52,392. **ENS**

Adhir: Anis death a conspiracy, will protest until justice delivered

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, MARCH 6

LED BY their West Bengal chief Adhir Chowdhury, Congress workers took to the streets here on Sunday, demanding justice for student leader Anis Khan, whose death in Howrah district on February 18 triggered state-wide protests.

Dr A Chellakumar, AICC Observer for Odisha and Bengal and Lok Sabha MP from Tamil Nadu, also participated in the rally that originated from the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee headquarters at Vidhan Bhavan and continued till Park Circus 7-Point Crossing.

"A CBI probe under judicial supervision is what we demand. We will also approach the National Human Rights Commission. We



Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (third from left) leads a Congress rally in Kolkata on Sunday. *Twitter*

extend our full support to the family, and if they want, we will also take them to the President of India," said Chowdhury.

Chowdhury said, "Anis was killed as part of a conspiracy. People from the state government

and police are involved. We want justice for him." Anis was killed under suspicious circumstances. Till now, the mystery of his murder remained unsolved. We will continue with our protest against the government, and we will con-

tinue to press the government till justice is provided to the victim and his family," said Chowdhury.

On Saturday afternoon, six members of an SIT probing the case had gone to Anis's house in Howrah's Amta Dakshin Khan Para, but his father Salem Khan reportedly refused to speak with them.

Chowdhury, too, met the family members of the student leader on Saturday and assured them of raising the matter in Parliament.

According to Anis's father, he died after being "pushed off the second floor of his house on the intervening night of February 18 and 19. Anis was found lying in a pool of blood minutes after four persons, including a man in khaki uniform, entered his house looking for him, Salem Khan claimed.

DHANKHAR SEEKS MEETING WITH CM

Governor writes to Mamata, blames her for 'dialogue stalemate'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, MARCH 6

WEST BENGAL Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday wrote to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, alleging that she was responsible for a "dialogue stalemate" between the two top constitutional functionaries of the state.

Dhankhar has called a meeting with the CM at Raj Bhavan next week to discuss the issues he flagged recently.

The move came in response to Banerjee's communication to the Governor wherein she said that she will meet him after the inaugural session of the Assembly on Monday.

"Since only one day is left before the inaugural session of the Assembly, we are ready to welcome you in the Assembly tomorrow," Banerjee wrote in a letter, a copy of which was attached to a press release issued by the Raj Bhavan. The release also referred to an earlier letter by the CM to



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar

which the governor had replied saying that he was "appalled" at her response.

"I am tied up due to various programmes. After the inaugural session of the Assembly I will definitely come to thank you and have a cup of tea with you," Banerjee had written in response to Dhankhar's call for a meeting.

The release issued by Raj Bhavan further said that the intent of communications by the Governor sent on February 15 and 22 to the chief minister was to effect response to all issues flagged and make it convenient for an interaction seemed to be lost.

The Governor said there was a need to end the "dialogue deadlock" which became a hurdle to a possible resolution of issues.

"Dialogue stalemate between the top constitutional functionaries in the state — the governor and the chief minister — is a serious cause of concern. It has thus become expedient to put in the public domain continual and sustained outreach efforts by the Governor to catalyse dialogue with the chief minister," wrote Dhankhar.

Dhankhar also held an hour-long meeting with Assembly speaker Biman Banerjee on the budget session starting Monday. The Governor had invited the Speaker for an interaction on live coverage of his address to the House on Monday. Dhankhar complained that his speeches in the Assembly were "blackened out" on earlier occasions.

The Assembly has been summoned by the governor on Monday following an impasse over the timing of the sitting of the House.

CIVIC POLL DEBACLE

Easy to pass blame: Dilip Ghosh slams section of state BJP leaders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, MARCH 6

BJP NATIONAL vice president Dilip Ghosh on Sunday criticised a section of party leaders, including MP Locket Chatterjee, for blaming the party's state leadership for the debacle in the recently concluded civic elections, instead of shouldering their responsibilities.

Ghosh's remark came a day after Chatterjee reportedly said that instead of holding TMC and its electoral malpractices responsible, the BJP state unit



BJP national vice president Dilip Ghosh

should introspect to find the reasons for its poor performance in elections after the Assembly polls last year. Chatterjee had reportedly said this at an internal meeting of the party on Saturday.

Speaking with media persons on Sunday, Ghosh, without naming anyone, said, "It is very easy

to make such comments and pass the blame to others. Those who went missing from the field during elections and did not shoulder their responsibilities are making such baseless comments. They are now blaming the party. But what have they done for the party, recently?"

Veteran BJP leader Tathagata Roy, who has been critical of his party's style of functioning in West Bengal, said in a tweet, "Reports I hv recvd abt ystrday's Chintan Baithak of West Bengal BJP say there were some small protests. Good. But too little, too late. There has to be a brutal dis-

section, including condemnation of the dealers of money and women. Ostrich-like conduct will seal W Bengal BJP's fate (sic)."

Out of 108 municipalities in the state that went to polls on February 27, the BJP failed to win even a single civic body. In terms of wards, BJP won only 63 compared to TMC's 1,870.

The saffron party's vote share stood at 13 per cent, just behind the Left's 14 per cent.

In a bid to introspect its poll debacle, the party had on Saturday held a 'Chintan Baithak' (brainstorming session) to discuss ways to revive its fate.

Two arrested for posing as doctor

Kolkata: Two persons were arrested by the Kolkata Police for allegedly impersonating a doctor and prescribing medicines to patients on his prescription pad.

Police identified the accused were identified as Rajib Sarkar of New Tollygunge and Suvo Nath of Bidhannagar South area. **ENS**

BAJRANG DAL WORKER MURDER

Police invoke UAPA against 10 suspects

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, MARCH 6

KARNATAKA POLICE have invoked sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 against 10 people arrested in connection with the February 20 murder of a Bajrang Dal worker in the Shivamogga region of the state.

Pressing charges under the UAPA against the accused in the murder of Harsha Hindu, 27, who had a criminal background, is being seen as a precursor to handing over the case to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

"There is suspicion of a larger conspiracy behind the murder," a senior state police official said. Provisions of the UAPA are gener-

ally invoked in cases where there is suspicion of a conspiracy to target national integrity. The UAPA gives the police custody of a suspect for 30 days, and 180 days to file charge sheet instead of 90 days in ordinary cases. The law also makes it difficult to get a bail.

Harsha was hacked to death by a group of men with whom he allegedly had a feud since 2016. One of the 10 people arrested for the crime, Mohammed Kashif, 30, was in prison with Harsha in 2017. Several other accused who allegedly assisted him have multiple cases of assault, burglary and robbery against them.

Sources said the murder could be an outcome of a clash between Harsha and one of his attackers on the premises of a

court around six months ago. However, police are looking into a larger conspiracy, especially considering that the crime took place in the midst of the hijab ban controversy. Harsha was allegedly involved in organising support for the ban on hijab at some colleges in Shivamogga.

"The accused are local criminals and there are serious doubts that they could have planned and executed the murder on their own," a senior police officer said.

Shivamogga MLA and minister KS Eshwarappa and the Union minister Shobha Karandlaje had demanded an NIA probe. On Friday, Karnataka Home Minister Araga Jnanendra, however, said the state police will continue with the probe. The state police had in-

voked provisions of the UAPA in a few murder cases of right-wing activists in the past.

In 2016, when the Congress was in power, UAPA was invoked in the murder case of RSS worker R Rudresh days after the arrest of Bengaluru district president of the Popular Front of India (PFI).

In 2015, the Mysuru police pressed charges under the UAPA against one Abid Pasha, who had links with the PFI, after finding his alleged involvement in six murders. In 2020, the UAPA was invoked in two of 67 cases registered in connection with rioting in Bengaluru over a social media post that hurt the sentiments of Muslims. The said cases where UAPA was invoked were later handed over to the NIA.

IUML chief Thangal passes away at 74

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 6

INDIAN UNION Muslim League (IUML) state president and prominent spiritual leader Panakkad Sayed Hyderali Shihab Thangal, 74, died at a private hospital in Angamali of Emakulam district on Sunday. Thangal has been indisposed for the last few months.

As the chief of IUML, Thangal was one of the faces of Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) of which IUML is a key constituent. He was serving as the vice-president of the Samastha Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulema, an influential body of Muslim scholars in Kerala. He was the senior-most member of the Malappuram-based Panakkad Thangal family, which traditionally has the final say in IUML politics.

Born as the third son of Sayyid Pookoya Thangal, who also had been president of IUML as well as Sunni scholars' body Samastha, Thangal started his career as a qazi in Malappuram. He had been the founder president of Sunni Yuvajana Sangam, a Sunni youth outfit. As an IUML leader, he had served as the party's Malappuram district president for 18 years.



Home Minister Amit Shah at the 53rd Raising Day ceremony of Central Industrial Security Force in Ghaziabad. *Gajendra Yadav*

CISF should develop hybrid model to train pvt agencies: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GHAZIABAD, MARCH 6

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah on Sunday pitched for a "hybrid" security model where the CISF could train and certify private security agencies so that they can take over the task of efficiently guarding industrial and manufacturing units in the country.

He said the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) worked like a silent "karmayogi" to ensure the country's industrial development and secured the

private manufacturing production units as India rode on to become a USD 2.5 trillion economy. He said many units in the manufacturing sector will be established and the CISF will face new scenarios. He said the 1.64-lakh-strong force could soon see an enhancement in its role.

He said: "The work of private security agencies is increasing... we have brought out rules for their functioning. Can the CISF take the responsibility of training these agencies?" he said.

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The Indian EXPRESS

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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.

THE IDEAS PAGE

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.

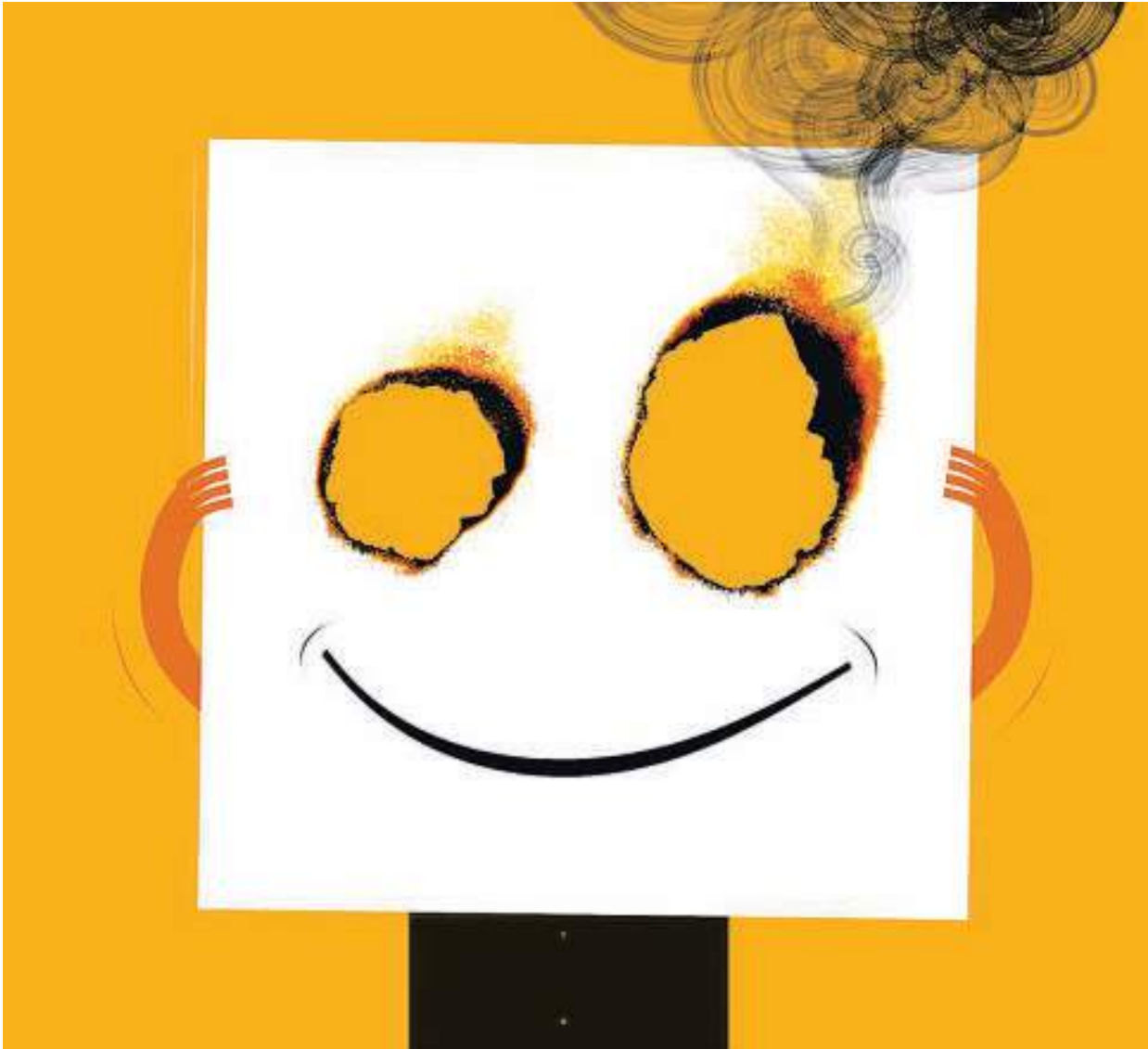
David Low did better homework than his own government on the man who started the war. Adolf Hitler ordered German troops to march into Poland from the west at daybreak on September 1, 1939. In just over a fortnight, in choreographed timing, Soviet troops entered Poland from the east. Three days later, 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 not 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 practises. 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 pre-occupied 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



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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

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.

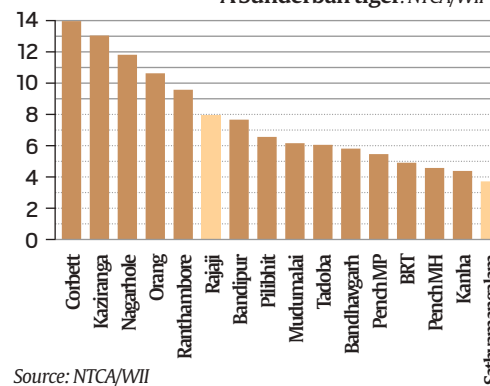
While physical (space) and biological (forest productivity) factors have an obvious influence on a reserve's carrying capacity of tigers,

Tiger density in India

Per 100 sq km; top 45 reserves



A Sunderban tiger. NTCA/WII

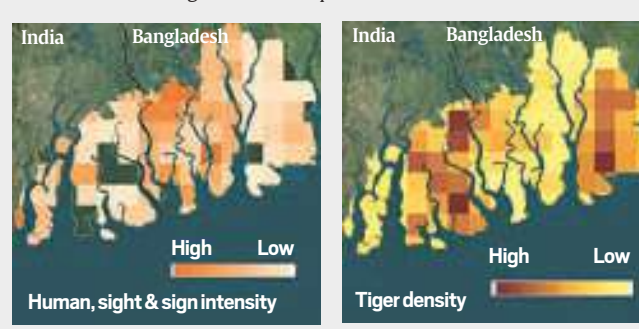


Source: NTCA/WII

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.

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

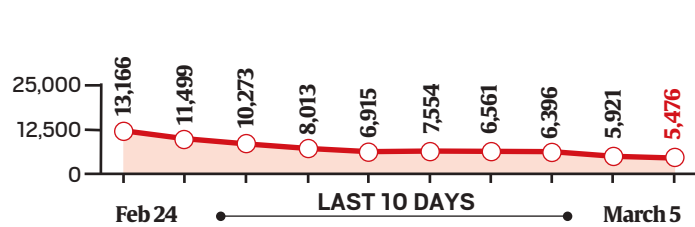
DASHBOARD, AS ON MARCH 5

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**

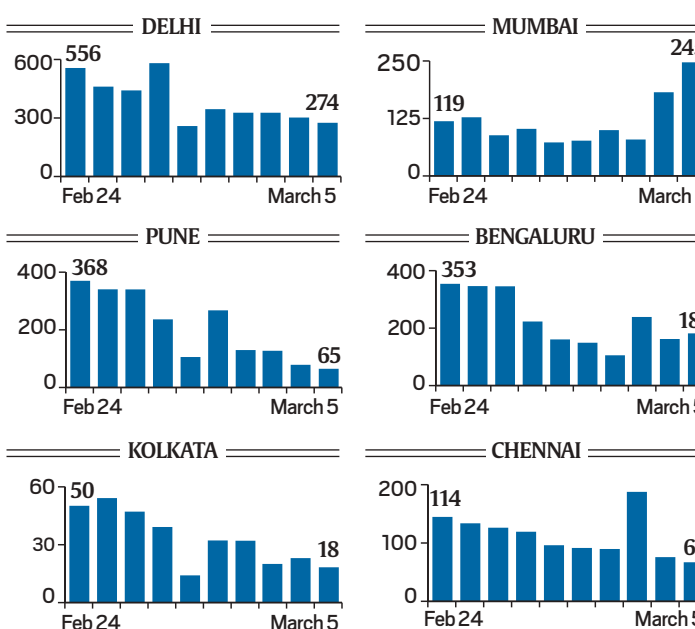
NEW CASES, DAILY



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

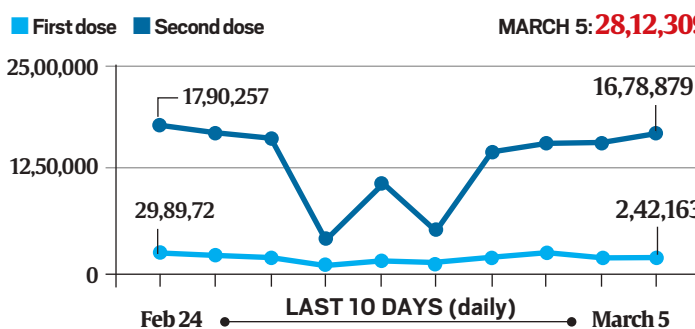
77,28,24,246

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**)



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.

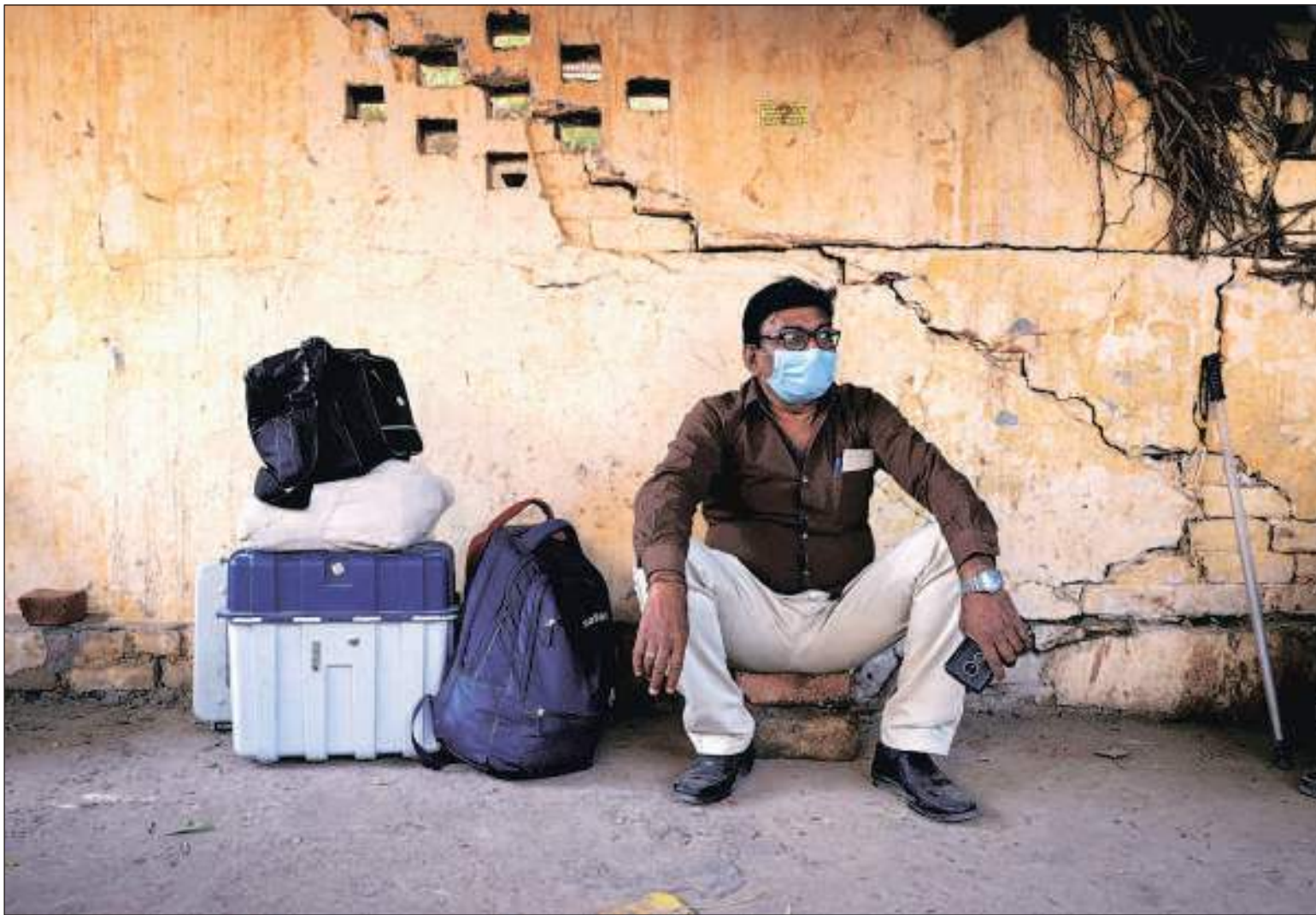
Citing human rights violations and fraudulent elections, the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries have over the years imposed restrictions such as travel bans and frozen the assets of individuals and entities from Belarus, including of Lukashenko and his son Viktor.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



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 FINAL 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 the polls

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, all eyes 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, reports 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 respec-

tive 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 Zahoorabad in alliance with BJP, is seeking re-election from the same seat, but this time in alliance with the Samajwadi Party.

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.

DUDDHI & OBRA

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

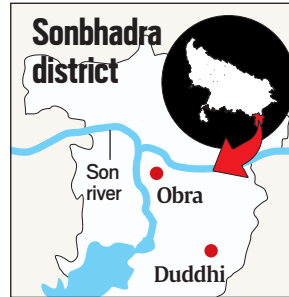
MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, MARCH 6

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, mean-



DUDDHI
2017 POLLS

Winner: Hariram, 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

while, 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 Hariram. But this election, the BJP has decided to contest the seat on its own and has chosen Ram Dular, a tribal leader.


A miffed Hariram has switched sides and is now the BSP candidate, but locals say much of the anger over unfulfilled promises is directed at Hariram 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.


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 BANGIYA GRAMIN VIKASH BANK (A GOVT. ENTERPRISE)		Uttar Dinajpur Regional Office Raiganj-Kaliaganj Road, Sudarshanpur, P.O. Raiganj Dist.: Uttar Dinajpur, Pin-733134		POSSESSION NOTICE
Whereas the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Bangiya Gramin Vikash Bank under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in the exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice on the date mentioned against calling upon the borrower / guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the Authorised Officer has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 9 on the dates mentioned against their names. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Bangiya Gramin Vikash Bank for the amounts and interest and charges thereon.				
Sl. No., Br Name, Phone no, Email	Name of Account / Borrower / Proprietor / Guarantor & Address	Description of the mortgaged Property	i) Date of 13(02) ii) Date of Possession iii) Claim amount	
(1) Suryapur bmsyp@bgvbank.co.in	ANANDA TIKADAR Borrower/Proprietor: Unit: Ananda Tikadar, S/O Ashutosh Tikadar, Vill. Jhitkia, P.O. S B Toli, Surjapur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209 Guarantors: 1. Sanjay Kumar Das, S/O Sunil Kumar Das, Vill. Jhitkia, P.O. S B Toli, Surjapur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209 2. Basudeb Mondal, S/O Late Mukunda Mondal, Vill. Jhitkia, P.O. S B Toli, Surjapur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209.	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Land and Building at 1) Mouza: Konal, JL No: 92, Khatian No: LR-225(old) LR-869(new), Plot No: LR-195, Area: 0.07 acre classified as BASTU at Jhitkia, P.O. S B Toli, Surjapur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur in the name of Ananda Tikadar, S/O Ashutosh Tikadar, Vill. Jhitkia, P.O. S B Toli, Surjapur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209, (Borrower) contained in the deed no 16815 of 2013 2) Mouza: Konal, JL No: 92, Khatian No: RS-112(old) LR-869(new), Plot No: LR-195, Area: 0.06 acre classified as BASTU at Jhitkia, P.O. S B Toli, Surjapur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur in the name of Ananda Tikadar, S/O Ashutosh Tikadar, Vill. Jhitkia, P.O. S B Toli, Surjapur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209, (Borrower) contained in the deed no 1378 of 2014	i) 13-04-2021 ii) 04-03-2022 iii) Rs.17,34,452.60 (Rupees seventeen lakh thirty-four thousand four hundred fifty-two and paise sixty) only along with unbooked interest and incidental charges, costs etc. w.e.f 25.03.2021.	
(2) Rasakhwa bmrkh@bgvbank.co.in	DAS MOBILE CENTRE Borrower/Proprietor: Unit: Kankan Das, Vill. & P.O. Rasakhwa, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212 Proprietor: 1. Kankan Das, S/O Late Subhas Chandra Das, Vill. & P.O. Rasakhwa, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212 Guarantors: 1. Manoj Choudhury, S/O Nikhil Chowdhury, Vill. Hospitalpara, P.O. Rasakhwa, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212, 2. Bappaditya Kundu, S/O Sushil Kundu, Vill. Hospitalpara, P.O. Rasakhwa, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Land and Building at Mouza: Khanta, JL No: 101, Khatian No: RS-174, LR-1366, LR-1798, Plot No: RS-1244, LR-1369, Area: 0.10 acre classified as BASTU at Vill. & P.O. Rasakhwa, P.S. Karandighi, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212 in the name of Kankan Das, S/O Late Subhas Chandra Das, Vill. & P.O. Rasakhwa, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212, (Proprietor-Borrower) contained in the deed no. 11858 of 2013	i) 12-04-2021 ii) 04-03-2022 iii) Rs.13,29,637.80 (Rupees Thirteen Lakh Twenty-Nine Thousand Six Hundred Thirty-Seven And Paise Eighty) only along with unbooked interest and incidental charges, costs etc w.e.f. 26.03.2021	
(3) Rasakhwa bmrkh@bgvbank.co.in	M/S GUPTA STORES Borrower/Proprietor: Unit: Rajesh Gupta, S/O Manik Gupta, Vill. & P.O. Rasakhwa, P.S. Karandighi, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212 Proprietor: 1. Rajesh Gupta, S/O Manik Gupta, Vill. & P.O. Rasakhwa, P.S. Karandighi, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212 Guarantors: 1. Reena Gupta, W/O Sri Rajesh Gupta, Rudel Debnathpara, P.O. Rasakhwa, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212 2. Subin Karmakar, S/O Rabin Karmakar, Vill. & P.O. Rasakhwa, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212 3. Sagar Swamakar, S/O Sushil Swamakar, Vill. & P.O. Rasakhwa, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Land and Building at Mouza: Rudel, JL No: 102, Khatian No: RS-59, LR-221, LR-1181, LR-1340, Plot No: RS-294, LR-319, LR-317, Area: 0.09 acre classified as BASTU at Vill. & P.O. Rudel Debnathpara, P.S. Karandighi, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212 in the name of Reena Gupta, W/O Sri Rajesh Gupta, Rudel Debnathpara, P.O. Rasakhwa, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733212, (Guarantor) contained in the deed no. 10497 of 2017	i) 18-06-2021 ii) 04-03-2022 iii) Rs.19,91,389.43 (Rupees Nineteen Lakh Ninety-one Thousand Three Hundred Eighty-Nine And Paise forty-three) only along with unbooked interest and incidental charges, costs etc w.e.f. 18.06.2021	
(4) Kanki bmkki@bgvbank.co.in	M/S LUDHIYANA LOVELY FASHION Borrower/Proprietor: Unit: Sajjad Alam, S/O MD Yasin, Vill. & P.O. Nizampur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209 Proprietor: 1. Sajjad Alam, S/O MD Yasin, Vill. & P.O. Nizampur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209 Guarantors: 1. Anjar Alam, S/O MD Yasin, Vill. & P.O. Nizampur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209. 2. Naurej Alam, S/O MD Yasin, Vill. & P.O. Nizampur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209 3. Azad Alam, S/O MD Yasin, Vill. & P.O. Nizampur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209 4. Parvez Alam, S/O MD Yasin, Vill. & P.O. Nizampur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Land and Building at Mouza: Nizampur, JL No: 25, Khatian No: LR-377, LR-2717, 2718, 2719, 2720, 2721, Plot No: RS-1611, LR-2063, Area: 0.13 acre classified as BASTU at Vill. & P.O. Nizampur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209 in the name of Sajjad Alam, Azad Alam, Anjar Alam, Naurej Alam & Parvej Alam, S/O MD Yasin, Vill. & P.O. Nizampur, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Uttar Dinajpur, PIN-733209, (Borrower-proprietor & Guarantors) contained in the deed no. 11820 of 1999	i) 29-06-2021 ii) 04-03-2022 iii) Rs.22,12,271.00 (Rupees Twenty-Two Lakh Twelve Thousand Two Hundred Seventy-One) only along with unbooked interest and incidental charges, costs etc w.e.f. 28.06.2021	
Date : 07.03.2022 Place: Sudarshanpur, Uttar Dinajpur		Authorised Officer, Bangiya Gramin Vikash Bank Uttar Dinajpur Regional Office, Sudarshanpur, Uttar Dinajpur		



बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा

Bank of Baroda



JODHPUR PARK BRANCH

A/419A, Gariahat Road (South), Kolkata-700068

e-mail: jodcal@bankofbaroda.com

E-AUCTION

SALE NOTICE

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

“APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6)]

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 6 (2) & 8 (6) 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, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on “As is where is”, “As is what is”, and “Whatever there is” for recovery of below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower/s/Guarantor/s/Secured Asset/s/Dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below -

Sr/ Lot No.	Name & address of Borrower/s/Guarantor/ s/ Mortgagor (s)	Detailed description of the immovable property with known encumbrances, if any	Total Dues.	Date & Time of E-auction	Reserve Price	Status of Possession (Constructive /Physical)	Property Inspection date & Time
					EMD amount		
1	Mr Tarok Seal (Borrower), 33 Nabanagar Jadavpur Kolkata 700032	All that piece and parcel of one self contained flat no 2 oh the Ground Floor North South Side measuring area 772 sqft super built up comprise bastu land measuring 3 cottahs 15 chittaks 30 sqft more or less situated at Mouza-Jadavpur, J.L No. 35 Part of C S Dag No 94, C S Khatian No 46 Ward No 96 Kolkata 700032, in the District South 24 Parganas	Rs 22,13,591.61/- (Outstanding in account Rs. 1,707,316.00/- + Uncharged Interest Rs 401,333.55+ Unserviced Interest Rs 36,909.06 + legal charges Rs. 68,031/-).	24.03.2022 from 2 p.m to 6 p.m	Rs. 19,70,395/-	Physical	Any Working Day with prior appointment (10.00 AM to 03.00 PM)
					Rs. 1,97,030/-		
					Rs. 10,000/-		

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm> and <https://ibapi.in>. Also, prospective bidders may contact the authorized officer on **Mobile 9831134536**.

Name: A.K. GUPTA
Authorised Officer
Bank of Baroda

Date: 07.03.2022, Place :- Kolkata

10

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.

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.

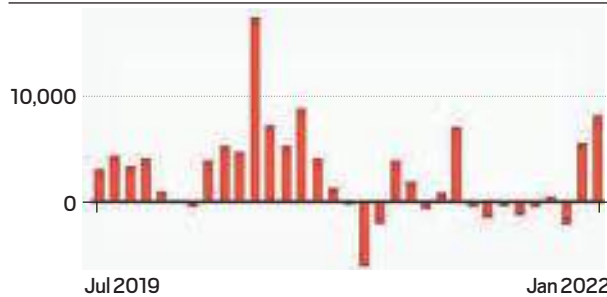
According to a Morgan Stanley report, supply constrained oil price rises are bad for India. Indeed, the recent 25 per cent jump in oil prices will expand the current account deficit by 75 bps and inflation by 100 bps on an annualised basis, it said.

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^{bn} drawn by commodity funds in February, the biggest since August 2020. In January, they received \$5.3 billion, as per Refinitiv Lipper

\$84.2^{bn} 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 Irdai. 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

‘Some Amazon shareholders call for tax transparency’

Bengaluru: Twenty-four Amazon investors are calling on the tech giant to increase transparency in tax disclosures and adopt a new reporting standard, the *Financial Times* reported on Sunday.

Investors are trying to get a shareholder resolution demanding a new tax reporting standard brought at the company's annual meeting this year, *FT* said, citing a letter which will be sent to the US SEC this week. **REUTERS**

Visa, Mastercard suspend Russia ops, disruptions to grow

REUTERS

NEW YORK, MARCH 6

US PAYMENTS firms Visa Inc and Mastercard Inc on Saturday said they were suspending operations in Russia over the invasion of Ukraine, and that they would work with clients and partners to cease all transactions there.

Within days, all transactions initiated with Visa cards issued in Russia will no longer work outside of the country and any Visa cards issued outside of Russia will no longer work within the country, the company said.

"We are compelled to act following Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, and the unacceptable events that we have witnessed," Al Kelly, chief executive officer of Visa, said in a statement.

US President Joe Biden, in a call with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, welcomed Visa's and Mastercard's decisions to suspend their operations in Russia, the White House said.

The move by the payments firms could mean more disruption for Russians who are bracing for an uncertain future of spiraling inflation, economic hardship and an even sharper squeeze on imported goods.

Russia has been taking steps to increase the independence of its financial system for years, particularly after ties with the West deteriorated over the country's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The country set up its own banking messaging system, known as SPFS, as an alternative to SWIFT and its own card payment system MIR began operating in 2015. They were part of Moscow's efforts to develop homegrown financial tools to mirror Western ones, to protect the country in case sanctions are broadened.



Empty shelves at a supermarket, in Bila Tserkva, Ukraine. *Reuters*

Chinese UnionPay card system to the rescue

REUTERS

LONDON, MARCH 6

SEVERAL RUSSIAN banks said on Sunday they would soon start issuing cards using the Chinese UnionPay card operator's system coupled with Russia's own Mir network, after Visa and MasterCard said they were suspending operations in Russia.

Credit cards issued by Russian banks using the Visa and Mastercard payment systems will stop functioning overseas after March 9, Russia's central bank said on Sunday, adding that some local lenders would look to use China's UnionPay system instead.

Russian-issued Mastercard and Visa cards would be accepted within Russia until their expiry, the bank said. The overseas ban also applies to cards issued by local subsidiaries of foreign banks, the bank said. Its announcement came after US payments firms Visa Inc and Mastercard Inc said they were

Awaiting govt, RBI guidelines on SWIFT: PNB

New Delhi: Punjab National Bank (PNB) said it was awaiting advisory from the Finance Ministry and the Reserve Bank with regard to SWIFT-related transactions with Russian entities. **PTI**

suspending operations in Russia, joining the list of companies that are severing business links with Russia. The central bank added that many Russian banks plan to issue cards using UnionPay, a system it said was enabled in 180 countries.

While several Russian banks already use UnionPay, others including Sberbank and Tinkoff could start issuing cards co-badging Russia's domestic Mir payments system with UnionPay.

\$137 mn fundraise: CredAvenue turns 11th unicorn of '22

SOUAMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

DEBT MARKETPLACE CredAvenue has raised \$137 million to become the latest entrant to the unicorn club. It is the eleventh unicorn of 2022, joining the list of startups like Livspace, Xpressbees and ElasticRun, among others.

The round was led by Insight Partners, B Capital Group and Dragoneer Investment Group, and propelled the startup's valuation to \$1.3 billion from \$410 million in September, making it India's fastest fintech unicorn — a private billion dollar company — within 18 months of being established.

The company, which has also received funding from Sequoia Capital and Lightspeed Ventures, provides digital technology solutions for all stages of the debt cycle, from disbursement to collections. The startup claims to work with over 2,300 corporates and has a loan book of over Rs 90,000 crore.

CredAvenue plans to use the funds to expand in India and into key global markets as well as make

INDIA'S FASTEST FINTECH UNICORN

■ The round was led by Insight Partners, B Capital Group and Dragoneer Investment Group, and propelled the startup's valuation to \$1.3 billion from \$410 million in September, making it India's fastest fintech unicorn

acquisitions. The company had recently acquired digital collection solution provider Spocto. The fresh funds would also be used to expand Spocto's international presence beyond Middle East Asia and India organically and inorganically.

"Debt in India is still underpenetrated as a percentage of GDP at about 60%," said Kabir Narang, founding general partner at B Capital Group. "At \$1.9 trillion, the Indian debt market is still underserved, he said, adding that it "creates a massive opportunity."

‘GST Council may consider proposal to raise lowest slab to 8%’

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

THE GST Council in its next meeting may look at raising the lowest tax slab to 8 per cent, from 5 per cent, and prune the exemption list in the Goods and Services Tax regime as it looks to increase revenues and do away with states' dependence on Centre for compensation, sources said on Sunday.

A panel of state finance ministers is likely to submit its report by this month end to the Council suggesting various steps to raise revenue, including hiking the lowest slab and rationalising the slab.

Currently, GST is a four-tier structure attracting a tax rate of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent. As per sources, the GoM is likely to propose raising the 5 per cent slab to 8 per cent, which may yield an additional Rs 1,500 lakh crore annual revenues. As part of rationalisation, the GoM is also looking at a 3-tier GST structure, with rates at 8, 18 and 28 per cent. **PTI**

BRIEFLY

India at WTO

New Delhi: India has suggested to convene a meeting under the aegis of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to discuss the role of e-commerce during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Maruti on SUVs

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki needs to bolster its presence in the SUV segment to maintain its dominance in the domestic PV segment, said senior executive director (marketing and sales) Shashank Srivastava. **PTI**

ADITYA KALRA & ABHIRUP ROY
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, MARCH 6

AT A large Future Retail supermarket in Mumbai last week, workers were unloading hundreds of bright blue grocery crates belonging to the country's biggest retailer Reliance.

Prospective customers were turned back by security, disappointed at the closed state of the store that still carries the signage of Future's biggest brand, Big Bazaar, but which will likely soon be rebranded as a Reliance outlet.

Across India, similar scenes are being played out as Reliance Industries (RIL) presses ahead with

a shock de facto takeover of prized retail real estate that Amazon.com Inc has been keen to take part-ownership of.

Reliance's takeover began with utmost stealth on the night of February 25 when its staff began arriving at Future stores. Many in Future's management were in the dark about the plans as store employees from all over the country frantically began to call, according to people with direct knowledge of the matter.

"It was tense, everybody was panicking. We didn't know who they were. They wanted access and seniors didn't know about it," a New Delhi Big Bazaar store employee said, describing what happened around 8 pm that day.



A closed Big Bazaar, Ahmedabad. *Reuters file*

At a Future store in Sonipat, announcements were made asking customers to leave as Reliance seized control, one source said. In Vadodara, Future employees arriv-

ing for work the next morning were asked to go back home with no explanation, said another source.

Citing unpaid payments by

Future, Reliance has taken control of operations of some 200 Big Bazaar stores and has plans to seize another 250 of Future's retail outlets. Combined, they represent the crown jewels of Future's retail network and around a third of all Future outlets.

Although Reliance had not played a large public role in the legal dispute, it had, according to sources, for some months assumed many of the leases held by cash-strapped Future, India's No. 2 retailer and Amazon's estranged business partner.

Reliance's sudden possession of the stores appears to have landed what some analysts are calling a coup de grace that spoils Amazon's chances of untangling

the transfer of Future's assets to Reliance. That's despite a series of legal battles won by the US e-commerce giant to date blocking the 2020 deal announced between the two Indian companies.

"What will Amazon fight for now?" said a source close to the US company with knowledge of the legal dispute. "The shops are gone." Representatives for Reliance, Amazon and Future did not respond to *Reuters* queries for this article. Future Retail said on February 26 it was "scaling down its operations" to cut losses although it made no mention of Reliance in its statement. Future Group as a whole has over \$4 billion in debt.

Reliance plans to retain Future's employees at the stores it

takes over, sources have said.

Amazon, which has a stake in a separate Future Group unit that it argues prevents Future from selling retail assets without its permission, has called the supermarkets and other stores an "irreplaceable" network in a sector worth \$900 billion in revenues annually.

Last Thursday, six days after Reliance's move, Amazon at a Supreme Court hearing unexpectedly called for cordial talks to end the dispute — a proposal Future agreed to.

"People have taken over shops ... let's at least have a conversation," Amazon's lawyer Gopal Subramaniam said.

Discussions are expected to begin soon. **REUTERS**

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2022

12 THE WORLD

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' luggage and children.

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



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 over, picked up children or luggage, and ran for cover behind a cinder block wall.

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.



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.

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

together,'" his office said.

Russian media said Putin also held almost two hours of talks on Sunday with French President Emmanuel Macron, who has stayed in regular contact but, as with other international efforts, has yet to persuade Moscow to call off a campaign now in an 11th day.

Kyiv renewed its appeal to the West to toughen sanctions beyond existing efforts that have hammered Russia's economy. It also requested more weapons, including a plea for Russian-made planes.

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said Washington was considering how it could backfill aircraft for Poland, if Warsaw decided to supply its warplanes to Ukraine, speaking on a trip to neighbouring Moldova.

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, bordering Afghanistan.



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.

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



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

Official: 6 dead as large tornado roars through central Iowa

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DES MOINES, MARCH 6

SIX PEOPLE were killed Saturday when a tornado swept through central Iowa, knocking down trees and power lines, authorities said.

Emergency management officials in Madison County said four were injured in addition to those killed when the tornado touched down in the area southwest of Des Moines at about 4.30 pm Among those killed were children and adults.

Madison County Emergency Management Director Diogenes Ayala said 25 to 30 homes were badly damaged by the tornado.

"This is the worst anyone has seen in a very long time," he said. Officials didn't identify those



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.

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 G 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," recollects 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 Madya 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

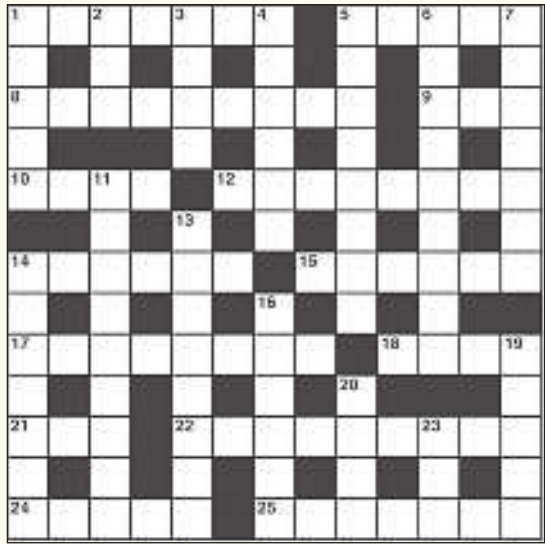
clicking a selfie with Maroof and baby Fatima in the centre and captioned it: "Little Fatima's first lesson in the spirit of cricket from India and Pakistan (with blue and green hearts) #CWC2022." The tweet had garnered close to 50K Likes. India cricketer Ekta Bisht was later clicked babbling gleefully 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



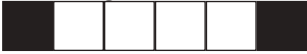
BEEGNU



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.

