

REVERBERATION

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A weekly echoing the mood of the people, comes to you on every Monday

Challenges like pandemic, Ukraine war make it important for nation to be self-reliant, says PM

PTI, AHMEDABAD:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said challenges faced by the world like the Russia-Ukraine war and the coronavirus pandemic make it all the more important for the country to become self-reliant, and urged people to promote products made in India.

Modi was virtually addressed. *contd. page-6*



MP requests Chief Secretary to solve the low voltage and power fluctuation problems of Kadamtala and Baratang regions

Port Blair, 20 Mar:

The Member of Parliament of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Chief Secretary of Andaman and Nicobar Administration to issue necessary directions to the Electricity Department to solve the low voltage and power fluctuation problems of

Kadamtala and Baratang regions.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Secretary the Member of Parliament mentioned that Kadamtala and Baratang regions are facing serious issues of low voltage because of which Islanders are suffering heavily.

He pointed out that Islanders of Kadamtala and Baratang

regions are unable to properly operate electronic appliances at home and motors for agriculture and other purposes due to low voltage issues.

He added that due to voltage fluctuation issues many equipments are also often getting damaged, causing financial loss to the public.

MESSAGE

I am pleased to know that the "International Day of Forests" is being observed on 21st March, 2022 in these Islands on the theme "Forests and sustainable production and consumption".

Forests are not merely our prized possession - they guarantee life on mother earth by providing proper life-supporting environment. Many inter-dependent species of

plants and animals dwell beneath the forest canopy which plays a critical role in maintaining the balance in nature. Though we are fortunate enough to be blessed with rich forests, we should also understand that the ecosystem of our Islands is very fragile. We are committed to safeguard the forest wealth of our Islands for sustainable development and a healthy livable environment for prosperity.

I urge the people of these Islands to realize the importance of forests, and trees outside forests, for the benefit of future generations.

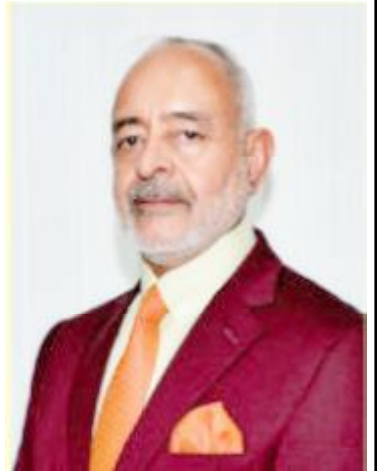
I appeal to all the people of these Islands to protect and preserve the forests and rich biodiversity of our islands and to support the Administration in this endeavor.

(Admiral D K Joshi)

PVSM, AVSM, YSM, NM, VSM (Retd.)

Lt. Governor, A & N Islands &

Vice Chairman, Islands Development Agency



Preparedness to mitigate the effects of cyclone Asani

Port Blair, 20 Mar:

As per the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) the cyclone ASANI is likely to intensify into a deep depression and cyclonic storm on 21st March 2022. The District

Administration along with all line departments is working 24 x 7 to mitigate the impacts of the impending cyclone.

In this connection the Deputy Commissioner (SA), *contd. page-6*

New term of ZPSA (2022-2027) commences Smt. Pramila Kumari and Shri Abdul Bashir of BJP elected as Adhyaksha & Up Adhyaksh of ZPSA

Port Blair, 20 Mar:

Under the provisions contained in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Panchayats) Regulation, 1994 on the re-constitution of Zilla Parishad, South Andaman, a Special Meeting was scheduled by the Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman for administering Oath of Allegiance and subsequent Election of Adhyaksha and the Up-Adyaksh, South Andaman Zilla Parishad today in the conference hall of Zilla Parishad.

Shri. Suneel Anchipaka, IAS, *contd. page-6*



All Govt. / Govt.-Aided / Local Body/ Private Un- Aided schools to remain closed on March 21 as precautionary measure

Port Blair, Mar 20:

The Indian Meteorological Department has issued weather warning stating that heavy to very heavy rainfall, thunderstorms and gusty winds are likely to occur in and around A & N Islands from March 19 to 22. The situation persists and yet to be im-

proved.

In view of this, all Govt. / Govt.-Aided / Local Body/ Private Un-Aided Schools under the Department of Education shall remain closed on March 21 as a precautionary measure, a press release from Directorate of Education said.



EDITORIAL

Kerala must shed its public sector obsession

Turning the state-owned public sector enterprises in Kerala profitable was one of the achievements proudly claimed by the CPM-led LDF during the campaign for the 2021 Assembly elections that it won. However, the Review of Public Enterprises in Kerala 2020–21 tabled in the Assembly last week presented a picture contrary to that claim. During 2020–21, 63 of the 116 active PSEs were in loss and the cumulative loss incurred by all PSEs grew 250%.

Though the audited year can be marked as an exception considering the onslaught of Covid, the fact that 64 PSEs incurred losses in the previous year too negates the possibility of any such rationalisation. In fact, the net return of investment and net profit after tax of PSEs were in the negative for the last three years. The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) and Kerala Water Authority (KWA) count among the top loss-making PSEs. A surprise new entrant is the Beverages Corporation, which enjoys a monopoly in liquor sales.

Romanticisation of the public sector has been a salient feature of Kerala politics for long. Successive governments infused more capital and provided budgetary assistance to ailing units in the guise of supporting their employees, numbering around 1.33 lakh. While it is understandable that public utility services like KSRTC, KSEB, and KWA need budgetary support to bridge the operational gap, there is no logic in the state trying to support companies that make cement, autorickshaws and soaps and vie with professionally managed private companies in the market. Disinvestment of the public sector companies, initiated by the Centre two decades ago, is still a taboo for Kerala's politicians.

While the CPM's agenda for 'New Kerala', accepted at the party's state conference, involves attracting large-scale private investments, the Assembly recently passed a resolution against divestment of LIC. After buying the BHEL-EML unit in Kasaragod and Hindustan Newsprint Limited in Vellore, the government has now set its eyes on HLL Lifecare, another PSU put up for sale by the Centre. The attempt to add more PSEs to its kitty when it is struggling to run those it has makes no economic sense. If the government is serious about building a New Kerala, it must shed the obsession with PSEs.

Scheduled sailing of vessels in Foreshore Sector cancelled

Port Blair, Mar 20:

The commuters/general public have been informed that due to cyclonic alert, the Directorate of Shipping Services keeping in view the safety of the passengers and the vessels has been cancelled the sailing schedule in the Foreshore Sector i.e. Swaraj Dweep & Shaheed Dweep from March 20 to 22, 2022.

Similarly, in view of the adverse weather condition, operation of Harbour/Vehicle ferry services in Port Blair Harbour and at out stations are also likely to get suspended. Passengers may get an update/status from the Information Counter at Phoenix Bay by using Helpline Numbers 03192-245555/232714 & Toll Free Number 18003452714.

CBI arrests senior GST intelligence officer for taking Rs 60 lakh bribe

PTI, NEW DELHI:

The CBI has arrested a senior intelligence officer, working in the office of the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) in Ghaziabad, for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 60 lakh, officials said on Sunday.

A businessman had complained to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) about an alleged demand of Rs 1 crore by the officer to show favour to his father in an ongoing case against him, they said.

Following the complaint,

the CBI registered a case against officer Mohit Dhankar for allegedly demanding the bribe, the officials said.

"It was further alleged that the accused demanded bribe of Rs 1 crore through private persons/touts for showing official favour to the complainant's father in a case at the DGGI, Ghaziabad," CBI Spokesperson RC Joshi said.

He said the agency laid a trap and caught a private person, Rakesh Sharma, accepting the bribe of Rs 60 lakh as



first instalment on behalf of a public servant.

Later, Dhankar was also caught, the officials said. "Searches are being conducted today at the premises of the accused," Joshi said.

Oath of Allegiance to all the newly elected members of the Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj Tehsil

Port Blair, 20 Mar:

Under the provisions contained in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Panchayats) Regulation, 1994, on the re-constitution of Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj a Special Meeting was scheduled by the Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman for administering Oath of Allegiance and subsequent Election of Pramukh and the Up-Pramukh, Ferrargunj Panchayat Samiti on 20.03.2022.

As scheduled, Shri. Suneel Anchipaka, IAS chaired the special meeting on 20/03/2022 at 1100 Hrs. in the Conference Hall of Panchayat Samiti Bhawan, Ferrargunj during which all the newly elected members of the Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj Tehsil were present and subsequently Oath of Allegiance was administered to all the 19 newly elected members of Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj for the tenure (2022-2027) as provided under section 115 (1) of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Panchayats) Regulation, 1994.

After Administering of Oath to all the elected 19 members, the Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman initiated the process for election to the Office of the Pramukh and Up-Pramukh of Ferrargunj Panchayat Samiti as provided under section 112 (1) of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Panchayats) Regulation, 1994.

It was informed by the Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman that as per notification of the Election Commission of India (UTs), the office of the Pramukh, Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj shall be reserved for



women for the tenure (2022-2027).

The election to the Office of Pramukh, Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj for the term (2022-2027) was contested between Ms. Kavita Devi (BJP) from Humphrygunj Constituency and Ms. D. Padmawathi (INC) from Shore Point Constituency by a secret Ballot Paper.

After Polling and Counting of the votes, the Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman declared Ms. D. Padmawathi (INC) from Shore Point Constituency as Pramukh, Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj for the term (2022-2027) commencing from 20th March, 2022 who won against Ms. Kavita Devi (BJP).

Ms. D. Padmawathi (INC) secured 12 votes against Ms. Kavita Devi (BJP) who secured 07 votes.

Simultaneously, the election to the Office of Up-Pramukh, Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj for the term (2022-2027) was contested between Shri. Bharat Kumar Sharma (BJP) from Wandoor Constituency and Shri. Simson (INC) from Namunaghar Constituency by a secret Ballot Paper.

After Polling and Count-



ing of the votes, the Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman declared Shri. Simson (INC) from Namunaghar Constituency as Up-Pramukh, Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj for the term (2022-2027) commencing from 20th March, 2022 who won against Shri. Bharat Kumar Sharma (BJP) from Wandoor Constituency. Shri. Simson (INC) secured 12 votes against Shri. Bharat Kumar Sharma (BJP) who secured 07 votes. Certificate of Election was handed over to Ms. D. Padmawathi and Shri. Simson and Oath of Office to the newly elected Pramukh and Up-Pramukh of Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj for the term (2022-2027) were administered by Shri. Suneel Anchipaka, Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman.

The Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman conveyed his gratitude for peaceful conduct of elections and congratulated all the newly elected Panchayat Samiti Members and the newly elected Pramukh and Up-Pramukh, Panchayat Samiti, Ferrargunj for the term (2022-2027).

Fumio Kishida’s Delhi visit: India apprises Japan about border standoff in Ladakh

PTI,NEW DELHI: India on Saturday briefed Japan about its border standoff with China in eastern Ladakh and conveyed that its ties with Beijing cannot be business as usual until peace and tranquillity are restored in the high-altitude region.

A plethora of issues including Chinese assertiveness in the South and East China seas also figured in the 14th India-Japan summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida.

At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said the Indian side informed the Japanese delegation about the situation in eastern Ladakh as well as China’s amassing of troops and earlier attempts of multiple transgressions in the region.

“We also made it clear that until and unless we had a resolution of the issues and peace and tranquillity in the border areas, we cannot consider the relationship to be business as usual. And normalcy in the relationship would depend on the progress on issues that we are discussing,” he said.

India and China have been holding military talks to resolve the eastern Ladakh standoff.

“In the discussions, the issue of China did come up. Both countries did inform each other about their perspective. We did inform the Japanese side about the situation in Ladakh, also the fact that we were holding talks with China on the border-related issues,” Shringla said.

A joint statement said the



two prime ministers emphasised that India and Japan, as two leading powers in the Indo-Pacific region, had a shared interest in the safety and security of the maritime domain, freedom of navigation and overflight and peaceful resolution of disputes.

“They reaffirmed their determination to continue prioritising the role of international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and facilitate collaboration, including in maritime security, to meet challenges against the rules-based maritime order in the East and South China Seas,” it said.

Japan has maritime disputes with China in the East China Sea while India has been concerned over Beijing’s increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea region.

The statement said Modi and Kishida emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint.

“They further called for the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and the early conclusion of a substantive and

effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea in accordance with international law, especially UNCLOS, without prejudice to the rights and interests of all nations including those not party to these negotiations,” it said.

For promoting peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, the prime ministers affirmed the importance of bilateral and plurilateral partnerships among like-minded countries of the region, including the quadrilateral cooperation among Australia, India, Japan, and the US.

“They welcomed the Quad Leaders’ Summits in March and September 2021 and renewed their commitment to delivering tangible outcomes on the Quad’s positive and constructive agenda, especially on Covid vaccines, critical and emerging technologies, climate action, infrastructure coordination, cybersecurity, space and education,” the joint statement said.

It said Modi and Kishida looked forward to advancing Quad cooperation through the next Quad Leaders’ Summit in Japan in the coming months.

877 newborns, 61 mothers died as women refused hospital delivery during COVID: Meghalaya to NHRC



PTI, SHILLONG: As many as 877 newborn babies and 61 mothers have died as pregnant women refused to get admitted to hospitals for institutional delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic due to fears of contracting the disease, the Meghalaya government has informed the NHRC.

The Meghalaya government has recently submitted the action taken report to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) after the latter registered a case over the high number of maternal and newborn deaths in the state during the pandemic.

“The causes of the newborn deaths had been looked into and it was found that the fatalities were due to the lack of medical attention and care because pregnant women refused to get themselves admitted to the health institutions due to fear and stigma of contracting COVID-19 and also the refusal

to test for COVID-19,” the report said.

During the time the deaths had taken place, it was mandatory to segregate COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients, hence testing was done to avoid the spread of the disease, especially in hospital wards, it said.

Even though women “abstained” from visiting health facilities, ANMs and ASHAs were regularly monitoring their health through home visits and counselling, urging them to visit hospitals during delivery, the report said.

Taking cognisance of the high number of deaths, the state government had launched a “rescue mission” and health teams were constituted to identify all pregnant women and register them on a mobile application to prevent such incidents, the state government said.

The state administration said that besides the pandemic, “the underlying and often unaddressed socio-economic and gender dimensions” added to the high number of maternal and child deaths in Meghalaya.

High-risk pregnant women were tracked and none of them are allowed to deliver at home and asked to get admitted to hospitals at least two weeks before their due dates, the report said.

The “rescue mission” was launched alongside COVID-19 management.

Districts were asked to ensure 100 per cent ANC (Ante Natal Care) registration for early treatment and prevention of maternal mortality, and several strategies were adopted, it added.

Pralhad Joshi suggests introducing Bhagavad Gita in schools across India

ANI, NEW DELHI: Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Saturday suggested that every state government can think about implementing the Gujarat government’s decision of introducing Bhagavad Gita in schools.

Talking to ANI, Joshi said, “Bhagwad Gita teaches us morality and ethics. It shows us the responsibility towards well being of society. Many moral stories are there that can inspire our students. Every state government can think about that.”

Earlier on Thursday, Gujarat

education minister Jitu Vaghani had said that Bhagavad Gita will be introduced as a part of the school syllabus for class 6 to class 12 students in Gujarat from the academic year 2022-23.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly during a discussion on budgetary allocation for the education department, Vaghani had said, “To include Indian culture and knowledge system in school education from the academic year 2022-23, In the first phase, values and principles contained in

Bhagavad Gita are being introduced in schools from classes 6-12 as per understanding and interest of children.”

“Bhagavad Gita should be introduced in the form of story and recitation in the textbooks in class 6 to 8. In class 9 to 12, Bhagavad Gita should be introduced in the form of story and recitation in the first language textbook,” the minister had said.

He had said that the 700-verse long Hindu scripture should also be included in the prayer program.

“Recitation of Bhagavad



Gita should be included in the prayer program. Various competitions and creative activities like Shlokgan, Shlokpurti, Vaktrutva, Nibandh, Natya, Chitra, Quiz etc based on Bhagavad Gita should be organized in schools,” he had said.

Canada-based man behind murder of international kabaddi player Sandeep Nangal Ambia: Police

PTI, CHANDIGARH: International kabaddi player Sandeep Nangal Ambia was murdered at the behest of Canada-based Snover Dhillon, who was running the National Kabaddi Federation of Ontario, over professional rivalry, the Punjab police claimed on Saturday.

Sandeep was shot dead by five unidentified assailants during an ongoing Kabaddi match in village Mallian in Jalandhar on March 14.

Nearly a dozen people including Dhillon have been booked in the case.

Police came to know about the alleged involvement of Dhillon after it brought four history-sheeters, who are facing over 20 criminal cases - mostly of murder and attempt to murder, on production warrants from different jails and questioned them.

The four - Fateh Singh alias Yuvraj, a resident of Sangrur; Kaushal Chaudhary of Naharpur Roopa in Gurugram, Haryana, Amit Dagar of village Maheshpur Palvan in Haryana and Simranjeet Singh alias Jujhar Singh - gangster of village Madhopur Pilibhit, Uttar

Pradesh- have been arrested in the case.

Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab VK Bhawra said during interrogation Fateh Singh disclosed that Snover Dhillon had tried to convince many players to join 'The National Kabaddi Federation of Ontario', but most of the renowned players were associated with 'Major League Kabaddi' being managed by Sandeep, rendering Dhillon's federation unsuccessful.

Senior Superintendent of Police Jalandhar Rural Satinder Singh told reporters that Fateh "confessed" that following instruction from Snover Dhillon, he along with Amit Dagar, Kaushal Chaudhary, Jagjit Singh, Lucky Patiyal and Sukha Duneke had arranged shooters to eliminate Sandeep.

Fateh also admitted to having pressured some players to join Snover's federation.

Snover Dhillon, a native of Amritsar, is currently residing in Brampton, Ontario, Canada and is a producer and director at Canadian Sath TV and radio show, said police.

Police also booked Sukhwinder Singh alias Sukha Duneke, a native of village



Duneke, Moga and residing in Canada for the last few years, and Jagjit Singh alias Gandhi, a native of Dehlon, Ludhiana and residing in Malaysia at present, for conspiring to kill the player.

He said Simranjeet alias Jujhar on the directions of Sukh Duneke had provided a hideout to the shooters at the house of his relative identified as Swaran Singh at Pritam Enclave in Amritsar.

The police recovered 18 live cartridges and a 12 bore rifle from Swaran's house.

Consequently, Swaran Singh, who is absconding, has also been named in the case.

The SSP said that the shooters have also been identified and will be arrested soon.

Japan's Suzuki Motor to invest USD 1.26 billion for manufacturing electric vehicles in India: Report



PTI, TOKYO/NEW DELHI: Japanese automaker Suzuki Motor Corporation plans to invest USD 1.26 billion for manufacturing electric vehicles and batteries in India, according to a media report.

The battery plant is proposed to be set up near Suzuki's automobile manufacturing unit in Gujarat and the total investment is estimated to be around 150 billion yen (USD 1.26 billion) on the new plant, and also in enhancing production of EVs in India, the Nikkei business daily reported.

The investment is part of an overall Japanese investment announced during the meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida, the report stated.

There was no immediate comment from Maruti Suzuki India, the subsidiary of Suzuki Motor Corporation (SMC), on the report.

In October 2019, Automotive Electronics Power Private Ltd (AEPPL) - a joint venture between Japan's TOSHIBA Corporation, Denso Corporation and SMC had signed an MoU with Gujarat government to invest Rs 4,930 crore in two phases to up a lithium-ion battery plant at Hansalpur in Ahmedabad district.

It is a part of the Suzuki group's plans to foray into the EV space, particularly in India.

Maruti Suzuki Chairman RC Bhargava has maintained that the company could launch its electric vehicle by 2025.

India and Japan on Saturday announced co-operation in the areas of electric vehicles, storage systems, including batteries, charging stations and development of solar energy as part of expansion of their bilateral partnership.

Under their clean Energy Partnership (CEP), the two countries announced cooperation in areas such as electric vehicles, storage systems including batteries, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, development of solar energy; hydrogen; ammonia; etc.

"The objective is to encourage manufacturing in India, creation of resilient and trustworthy supply chains in these areas as well as fostering collaboration in R&D. It will be implemented through the existing mechanism of Energy Dialogue," a joint statement said.

Japan on Saturday announced an investment target of five trillion yen (Rs 3,20,000 crore) in India in the next five years following talks between Modi and Kishida.

Entrance exam for admission to RIMC to be held on June 4

Port Blair, Mar. 20

The RIMC Entrance Examination for admission of Boys and Girls to Class VIII for the January 2023 term will be held at TGCE, Port Blair on June 4, 2022. The candidate should either be studying in Class VII or passed Class VII from any recognized school at the time of admission to the RIMC i.e. on January 1, 2023. Boys and Girls both are eligible to apply for admission to the RIMC, Dehradun. The candidate should be in the age bracket of 11½ to 13 years as on 01 Jan 2023, i.e. they should not be born earlier than January 2, 2010 and not later than July 1, 2011.

The Prospectus-cum-Application Form and Booklet of Old Question Papers can be obtained from The Rastriya Indian Military College, Garhi Cantt., Dehradun, Uttarakhand, Pin-248003 through online payment of

Rs.600/- for General Candidates & Rs.555/- for SC/ST candidates on RIMC website www.rimc.gov.in (on receipt of the payment, the Prospectus-cum-Application Form and Booklet of Old Question Papers will be dispatched by Speed Post only) or by sending Demand Draft of Rs.600/- for General Candidates & Rs.555/- for SC/ST candidates along with caste certificate in favour of 'the Commandant RIMC Dehradun' Drawee

Branch, State Bank of India, Tel. Bhavan, Dehradun, (Bank Code-01576), Uttarakhand.

Application form should reach the respective State Government (as given in Guidelines to Admission) by 25 April, 2022. Application Form must be sent to the State Government and not to the Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, a press release from Principal TGCE said.

Low-pressure area over Bay of Bengal & S/ Andaman Sea; likely to intensify into a depression and cyclonic storm

Port Blair, Mar. 20

Heavy to very heavy rain (7-20 cm) at few places with extremely heavy rain (>20 cm) at one or two places is very likely to occur over North Andaman Islands. Gale winds with speed reaching 65-75 kmph gusting to 85 kmph are very likely to prevail over

Andaman and Nicobar Islands on March 21. Squally winds with speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph is likely to prevail over North Andaman Islands on March 22.

Due to depression over Southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining South Andaman Sea

and its likely intensification to cyclonic storm, fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea till March 22. Local Cautionary Signal-III has been hoisted at Port Blair port.

For further enquiries / information contact helpline of State Emergency Operation

Centre at Helpline No. 1070 & District Emergency Operation Centre at Helpline No. 1077.

For any emergency/assistance at sea, call Coast Guard SAR Agency at Toll Free number 1554, a press release from Directorate of Disaster Management said.

Zelenskyy evokes Holocaust as he appeals to Israel for aid as Ukraine now becomes war of attrition



PTI, JERUSALEM: Ukraine’s president on Sunday called on Israel to take a stronger stand against Russia, delivering an emotional appeal that compared Russia’s invasion of his country to the actions of Nazi Germany. In a speech to Israeli lawmakers, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said it was time for Israel, which has emerged as a key mediator between Ukraine and Russia, to finally take sides. He said Israel should follow its Western allies by imposing sanctions and providing arms to Ukraine.

“One can ask for a long time why we can’t accept weapons from you or why Israel didn’t impose sanctions against Russia, why you are not putting pressure on Russian business,” he said.

“It is your choice, dear brothers and sisters.”

Zelenskyy, who has carefully catered a series of similar parliamentary speeches to his audiences, made frequent references to the Holocaust as he tried to rally support.

The comparisons drew an angry condemnation from Israel’s national Holocaust memorial, which said Zelenskyy was trivializing the Holocaust.

Zelenskyy accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of trying to carry out a “final solution” against Ukraine — using the Nazi term for its planned genocide of 6 million Jews during World War II.

Zelenskyy, who himself is Jewish, also noted that a Russian missile slammed into Babi Yar — the spot of a notorious Nazi massacre in 1941 that now hosts Ukraine’s main Holocaust memorial.

“The people of Israel, you saw how Russian rockets hit Babi Yar. You know what this place means, where the victims of the Holocaust are buried,” he said.

The use of such sensitive language was a clear attempt by Zelenskyy to connect with his audience.

Israel was founded in 1948 as a refugee for Jews in the wake of the Holocaust.

The country is home to tens of thousands of elderly survivors, and many of its leaders are children of survivors.

Putin has also has sought to paint his enemies in Ukraine as neo-Nazis as he tries to legitimize his war in Ukraine.

But historians, noting that Ukraine is a democracy led by a Jewish president, have condemned his use of such terminology as disinformation and a cynical ploy to further the Russian leader’s aims.

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair

Lapid, whose late father was a Holocaust survivor, thanked Zelenskyy for the speech.

“We will continue to assist the Ukrainian people as much as we can and we will never turn our backs to the plight of people who know the horrors of war,” Lapid said.

But Yad Vashem, Israel’s national Holocaust memorial, which had previously condemned Putin’s Nazi references, also harshly criticized Zelenskyy, without naming him.

“Propagandist discourse accompanying the current hostilities is saturated with irresponsible statements and completely inaccurate comparisons with Nazi ideology and actions before and during the Holocaust,” it said.

“Yad Vashem condemns this trivialization and distortion of the historical facts of the Holocaust.”

The Israeli public has been largely supportive of Ukraine since Russia invaded its western neighbor on Feb.24.

Several thousand people, many holding Ukrainian flags, gathered in a central Tel Aviv square to watch his speech on a large screen.

But Israel’s government has been much more cautious as it carves out a role as a mediator in the war.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett paid a surprise visit to Moscow to meet with Putin on March 5.

Since then, he has spoken to the Russian leader at least twice and to Zelenskyy at least six times, according to his office.

While Israel’s foreign minister has strongly condemned the invasion, Bennett has used more tepid language to maintain an air of neutrality.

With large Jewish populations in both Ukraine and Russia, Israel is wary of antagonizing either side.

Israel also has good working relations with the Russian military in neighboring Syria — where both sides maintain a special hotline to make sure their air forces do not come into conflict.

Israel has delivered tons of humanitarian aid to Ukraine and is set to open a special field hospital in western Ukraine later this week.

But it has rejected pleas to provide arms or impose sanctions against Russia or its oligarchs, some of whom are Jewish and have strong ties to Israel.

Zelenskyy said it was time for this to change.

“Everyone in Israel knows that your missile defense is the best, everyone knows that your weapons are strong, everyone knows that you are great and you know how to defend your national interests, interests of your people and you can definitely help defend ours,” he said.

Ukrainian authorities said Sunday that Russia’s military bombed an art school sheltering some 400 people in the port city of Mariupol, where heavy street fighting was underway weeks into a devastating Russian siege.

The fall of Mariupol would allow Russian forces in southern and eastern Ukraine to link up.

But Western military analysts say that even if the surrounded city is taken, the troops battling for control there a block at a time may be too depleted to help secure Russian breakthroughs on other fronts.

Three weeks into the invasion, Western governments and analysts see the conflict shifting to a war of attrition, with bogged down Russian forces launching long-range missiles at cities and military bases as Ukrainian forces carry out hit-and-run attacks and seek to sever their supply lines.

Ukrainians “have not greeted Russian soldiers with a bunch of flowers,” President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told CNN, but with “weapons in their hand.”

Moscow cannot hope to rule the country, he added, given Ukrainians’ enmity toward the Russian forces.

The strike on the art school was the second time in less than a week that officials reported an attack on a public building where Mariupol residents had taken shelter.

On Wednesday, a bomb hit a theater where more than 1,000 people were believed to be sheltering.

There was no immediate word on casualties at the school, which The Associated Press could not independently verify.

Ukrainian officials have not given an update on the search of the theater since Friday, when they said at least 130 people had been rescued and another 1,300 were trapped by rubble.

City officials and aid groups say food, water and electricity have run low in Mariupol and fighting has kept out humanitarian convoys.

Communications are severed, making it difficult to verify reports from there.

The strategic port on the Sea of Azov has been under bombardment for over three weeks and has seen some of the worst horrors of the war.

City officials said at least 2,300 people have died, with some buried in mass graves.

“To do this to a peaceful city, what the occupiers did, is a terror that will be remembered for centuries to come,” Zelenskyy said in a nightly video address to Ukraine.

“The more Russia uses terror against Ukraine, the worse the consequences for it.”

Unexpectedly strong Ukrainian resistance has dashed Russian President Vladimir Putin’s hopes for a fast victory after he ordered the Feb.24 invasion of his neighbor.

In recent days, Russian forces have entered Mariupol, cutting it off from the sea and devastating a massive steel plant.

But the city’s fall could prove a costly victory.

“The block-by-block fighting in Mariupol itself is costing the Russian military time, initiative, and combat power,” the Washing-

ton-based Institute for the Study of War said in a briefing.

In a blunt assessment of the war, the think tank concluded that Russia failed in its initial campaign to take the capital of Kyiv, and other major cities quickly and its stalled invasion is creating the conditions for a “very violent and bloody” stalemate.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Ukrainian resistance means Putin’s “forces on the ground are essentially stalled.”

“It’s had the effect of him moving his forces into a woodchipper,” Austin told CBS on Sunday.

In major cities across Ukraine, hundreds of men, women and children have already been killed in Russian bombardments, while millions have raced to underground shelters or fled the country.

At least 20 babies carried by Ukrainian surrogate mothers are stuck in a makeshift bomb shelter in Kyiv, waiting for parents to enter the war zone to pick them up.

The infants, some only days old, are being cared for by nurses trapped in the shelter by constant shelling from Russian troops trying to encircle the city.

In the hard-hit northeastern city of Sumy, authorities evacuated 71 orphaned babies through a humanitarian corridor, regional Gov.

Dmytro Zhyvetskyy said Sunday.

He said the orphans, most of whom need constant medical attention, would be taken out of the country.

Russian shelling killed at least five civilians, including a 9-year-old boy, in the eastern city of Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second-largest.

The British Defense Ministry said Russia’s failure to gain control of Ukrainian airspace “has significantly blunted their operational progress,” forcing them to rely on weapons launched from Russia.

A rocket attack on the Black Sea port city of Mykolaiv early Friday killed as many as 40 marines, a Ukrainian military official told The New York Times, in one of the deadliest single attacks on Ukrainian forces.

In a separate strike, the Russian Defense Ministry said a Kinzhal hypersonic missile hit a Ukrainian fuel depot in Kostiantynivka, a city near Mykolaiv.

The Russian military said Saturday that it used a Kinzhal for the first time in combat to destroy an ammunition depot in the Carpathian Mountains in western Ukraine.

Russia has said the Kinzhal, carried by MiG-31 fighter jets, has a range of up to 2,000 kilometers (about 1,250 miles) and flies at 10 times the speed of sound.

The Pentagon says it has not yet confirmed its use in Ukraine.

Konashenkov said Kalibr cruise missiles launched by Russian warships from the Caspian Sea were also involved in the strike on the Kostiantynivka fuel depot and destroyed an armour repair plant in northern Ukraine.

Western analysts have played down the hypersonic weapon’s significance, saying it did not give Moscow an extra advantage but was a tool the Krem-

lin could use to advertise its military might and warn other countries against intervening.

“It’s not a game-changer,” but rather a “message of intimidation and deterrence towards Ukraine and towards the West,” said Valeriy Akimenko, senior research associate at the Conflict Studies Research Centre in England.

U.N. bodies have confirmed more than 847 civilian deaths since the war began but concede the actual toll is likely much higher.

The U. N. says nearly 3.4 million people have fled Ukraine as refugees.

Estimates of Russian deaths vary, but even conservative figures are in the low thousands.

Ukrainian authorities reported that six Russian generals have died.

The death of one general was confirmed by his associate and an officers’ group in Russia, but the military has not confirmed any.

Russia would need 800,000 troops, almost its entire active-duty military, to control Ukraine for a prolonged period, according to Michael Clarke, former head of the British-based Royal United Services Institute, a defense think tank.

“Unless the Russians intend to be completely genocidal, they could flatten all the major cities, and Ukrainians will rise up against Russian occupation, there will be just constant guerrilla war,” Clarke said.

Ukraine and Russia have held several rounds of negotiations but remain divided over several issues.

Zelenskyy has said he is willing to drop Ukraine’s bid to join NATO but wants certain security guarantees from Russia.

Moscow is pressing for Ukraine’s complete demilitarization.

Mariupol authorities said Sunday that nearly 40,000 people had left the city in the last week, the vast majority in their own vehicles, despite ongoing bombardment.

That alone amounts to nearly 10% of the city’s prewar population of 430,000.

The Mariupol city council said Saturday that Russian soldiers had forcibly relocated several thousand residents, mostly women and children, to Russia.

AP could not confirm the claim.

Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine said Sunday that 2,973 people have been evacuated from Mariupol since March 5, including 541 in the last 24 hours.

Some Russians also have fled their country amid a widespread crackdown on dissent.

Russia has arrested thousands of antiwar protesters, muzzled independent media and cut access to social media sites like Facebook and Twitter.

In Ukraine, Zelenskyy ordered the activities of 11 political parties with links to Russia to be suspended during the period of martial law.

The largest of those parties has 44 out of 450 seats in parliament.

“Activities by politicians aimed at discord and collaboration will not succeed,” he said.

ICC rates Bengaluru pitch where India played second Test against Sri Lanka as 'below average'

PTI, DUBAI: The Chinnaswamy Stadium pitch in Bengaluru, which was used for the second Test between India and Sri Lanka earlier this month, was on Sunday rated "below average" by the ICC.

India had defeated Sri Lanka by 238 runs in the Test which began on March 12 and ended inside three days.

The venue thus received one demerit point under the ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process.

"The pitch offered a lot of turn on the first day itself and though it improved with every session, in my view, it was not an even contest between the bat and ball," match referee Javagal Srinath said in a statement issued by ICC.

Srinath's report has been forwarded to the BCCI.

In 2017, the Bangalore wicket was rated as below average by ICC match referee Chris Broad after the second Test between India and Australia.



According to the revised ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process, which was introduced on January 4, 2018, "if a pitch or outfield is rated as being substandard, that venue will be allocated a number of demerit points.

"One demerit point will be awarded to venues whose pitches are rated by the match referees as below average, while three and five demerit points will be awarded to venues whose pitches are marked as poor and unfit, respectively.

"No demerit point will be awarded when the outfield is rated as below average, but

two and five demerit points will be awarded to venues whose outfields are marked as poor and unfit, respectively.

"Demerit points will remain active for a rolling five-year period.

When a venue accumulates five demerit points (or crosses that threshold), it will be suspended from hosting any international cricket for a period of 12 months, the ICC said.

A venue will be suspended from staging any international cricket for 24 months when it reaches the threshold of 10 demerit points.

Challenges like.... from page-1

launch of six volumes of 'Shri Dharmajeevan Gatha', a biographical book on the life of Gurudev Shastriji Maharaj of the Swaminarayan Gurukul Vishwavidya Pratishthanam (SGVP).

The PM said his 'sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwaas' slogan was inspired by Shastriji Maharaj's call for 'sarvjan hitay (everybody's welfare)', and the book, authored by the latter's disciple, Madhavpriyadasji Swami, will serve as an inspiration for readers through his life and teachings.

"Looking at the condition of the world today, everybody is facing new challenges. We experienced coronavirus, and now the Ukraine-Russia war. In today's world, it is difficult to estimate when and what will happen, and how it will affect us," the prime minister said.

Modi, while stating that the world had become so small that a country cannot remain unaffected (by events), highlighted the importance of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and asked people associated with SGVP to promote it.

He urged them to be 'vocal for local,' and said this will

generate employment and make the country strong.

The PM asked SGVP members to contribute to the Clean India movement and promote natural farming as a way to serve mother earth.

"Shastriji Swami's life was one of dedication, and he lives among his followers in his divine form.

The books on his life, authored by his disciple Madhavpriyadasji Swami, will help recall his words and inspire the readers to act as per his teachings," the PM said.

'Shri Dharmajeevan Gatha', spread across six volumes and over four thousand pages, was launched in a grand ceremony by 108 delegates.

It deals with the life and works of Gurudev Shashriji Maharaj, the founder of the Gurukul-like education system, and also carries the history of Swaminarayan Gurukul Vishwavidya Pratishthanam (SGVP).

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, former state minister Bhupendrasinh Chudasama and Union minister Prashottam Rupala were present in the programme along with former chief justice of Delhi High Court DN Patel.

Smt. Pramila Kumari.....

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Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman chaired the special meeting during which all the newly elected members of the Zilla Parishad, South Andaman were present and subsequently Oath of Allegiance was administered to all the 18 newly elected members of Zilla Parishad for the tenure (2022-2027).

After administering of oath, the Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman initiated the process for election to the Office of the Adhyaksha and Up-Adhyaksha, Zilla Parishad, South Andaman as provided under section 150 (1) of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Panchayats) Regulation, 1994 wherein the Office of the Adhyaksha shall be reserved for women for the first year of the Zilla Parishad.

The election to the Office of Adhyaksha, Zilla Parishad, South Andaman for the first year term was contested between Smt. Pramila Kumari (BJP) from Chouldhari Constituency and Smt. Dhana Rekha (INC) from Shore Point Constituency by Secret Ballot Paper. After Polling and

Counting of the votes, the Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman declared Smti. Pramila Kumari (BJP) from Chouldhari Constituency, South Andaman (2022 - 2027) as Adhyaksha, Zilla Parishad, South Andaman for the first year term commencing from 19th March, 2022 who won against Smt. Dhana Rekha (INC). Smti. Pramila Kumari (BJP) secured 10 votes against Smt. Dhana Rekha (INC) who secured 8 votes.

Simultaneously, the election to the Office of Up-Adhyaksh, Zilla Parishad, South Andaman for the first year term was contested between Shri. Abdul Bashir (BJP) from Ferrargunj Constituency and Shri. P. A. Sharfuddin (INC) from Mithakhari Constituency by Secret Ballot Paper. After

Polling and Counting of the votes, the Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman declared Shri. Abdul Bashir (BJP) from Ferrargunj Constituency, South Andaman (2022 - 2027) as Up-Adhyaksh, Zilla Parishad, South Andaman for the first year term commencing from 19th March, 2022 who won against Shri. P. A. Sharfuddin (INC). Shri. Abdul Bashir (BJP) secured 10 votes while Shri. P. A. Sharfuddin (INC) got 8 votes.

Certificate of Election was handed over to Smti. Pramila Kumari and Shri. Abdul Bashir and Oath of Office to the newly elected Adhyaksha and Up-Adhyaksh, Zilla Parishad, South Andaman for the first year term were administered by Shri. Suneel Anchipaka, Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman.

The Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman conveyed his gratitude for peaceful conduct of elections and congratulated all the newly elected Zilla Parishad Members for the term (2022-2027) and the newly elected Adhyaksha and Up-Adhyaksh, Zilla Parishad, South Andaman for the First Year Term (2022).

Preparedness to.... from page-1



Shri Suneel Anchipaka, IAS, ADM(SA), AC(S) and the AC(U/T) made an inspection visit to Nayashahar and Guptapara area. They inspected the dangerously standing trees which may fall due to the effects of the cyclone and may cause danger to life and property. The team interacted with the family members of those houses near which these trees were standing dangerously and he instructed the Tehsildar and his team to attend to these problems on priority. The officials of the Forest, APWD and Fire were given instructions to co-operate in addressing these issues so that no loss to life

and property is caused.

Further he requested the general public to keep themselves away from trees which appear to be dangerous and likely to be uprooted in case of the cyclonic storm. He also advised them to evacuate to safer places or designated shelter homes in case of being located in low lying and flood prone areas and remain alert against flying debris during cyclonic conditions like loose tin sheets etc. Further in case of any emergency/queries the general public may contact the District Control Room operational 24 x 7 over 03192-240127/238881 or 1077 (toll free).