

OPINION 6

ANOTHER SURPRISE REGIME CHANGE IN NEIGHBOURHOOD

WORLD 8

ISRAEL RECOVERS BODIES OF 6 HOSTAGES FROM GAZA

MONEY 10

SENSEX REBOUNDS 370 POINTS

Published From DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol.21 Issue 230 *Air Surcharge Extra If Applicable

BHOPAL, WEDNESDAY AUGUST 21, 2024; PAGES 12 2

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SUPREME COURT HOLDS WOMEN SUPREME

Medical fraternity safety prime

HC rapped for sexist comments

RAJESH KUMAR n NEW DELHI

Termining the incident of the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata as "horrific and horrendous" and "a systemic failure of the State machinery", the Supreme Court on Tuesday constituted a 10-member National Task Force (NTF) to formulate a protocol for safety of doctors and healthcare workers at workplace.



A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud, Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra during hearing on a suo moto case related to the alleged sexual assault and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor in Kolkata, at Supreme Court in New Delhi on Tuesday PTI

The SC came down heavily on the Mamata Banerjee Government in West Bengal, slamming it for its "lackadaisical approach" to the case all through. The top court also directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is currently investigating the matter to submit a status report by August 22. The task force will submit its interim report within three weeks and the final report within two months. The top court also appealed to the medical community, including doctors protesting across the country, to call off the strike and resume work.

The nation cannot wait for another rape to happen for things to change on the ground. The bench said, "There are legislations to protect medical professionals but they do not address the systemic issues. Medical associations have consistently raised the issue," the court observed pointing out that medical professionals in the course of performance of their duties have been unfortunate targets of various forms of violence.

"The constitutional value of equality brooks no compromises on the health, well-being and safety of those who provide healthcare to others. The nation cannot await a rape or murder for real changes to happen on the ground," the bench said. The SC asked the NTF to formulate an action plan under two sub-heads — preventing violence, including gender-based violence against medical

"The NTF shall also suggest appropriate timelines by which the recommendations could be implemented based on the existing facilities in hospitals. The NTF is requested to consult all stake-holders," the bench said. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will provide all logistical support, including making arrangements for travel, stay and secretarial assistance and bear the expenses of the members of the NTF, it said. "All State Governments and UT Governments, through their Secretaries, in the Ministries of Health and Family Welfare and the Central Government, through the Secretary, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare must collate information from all hospitals run by the State and the Central Government, respectively on how many security personnel are employed at each hospital and each department. "Whether there is a baggage and person screening mechanism in place at the entrance of the medical establishment. The total number of resting/duty rooms in the hospital and specific details of the number in each department. The facilities provided in the resting/duty rooms," the bench said. The data as submitted shall be tabulated and filed with an affidavit by the Union Government within one month of this order, it said.

RAJESH KUMAR n NEW DELHI

Pulling up judges for expressing personal views and preaching, the Supreme Court on Tuesday set aside a Calcutta High Court judgment acquitting a man who had sex with a minor girl and also junked the High Court's controversial remarks advising "adolescent girls to control their sexual urges". The court ordered setting up of an independent committee of experts, including one from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, to ascertain the wish of the victim whether she intended to continue with the accused or was willing to be rehabilitated. The court also directed West Bengal Government to give details to the committee on the income and accommodation they would provide the victim and the child if she decides not to reside with the accused. "The impugned judgment of the High Court is set aside and the judgment of the Special Court is restored to the extent of the conviction of the accused for the offences punishable under sub-sections (2)(n) and (3) of Section 376 of the IPC and Section 6 of the POCSO Act. Accordingly, the accused stands convicted. The acquittal of the accused for the offences punishable under Sections 363 and 366 of the IPC is confirmed," a bench comprising justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said. The bench also directed the West Bengal Government to constitute a committee of three experts, including



a clinical psychologist and a social scientist. "The State Government may take the assistance of NIMHANS or TISS for constituting the committee. A child welfare officer shall be appointed to assist the committee as its coordinator and secretary; (c) The committee shall be formed within three weeks from today," it said. Holding the accused guilty of the offences punishable under sub-sections (2)(n) and (3) of Section 376 of the IPC and Section 6 of the POCSO Act, the bench said the issue regarding sentencing will be considered after the committee's report is received.

Badlapur seeks Badla



Police speak with protesters on Tuesday who blocked railway tracks at Badlapur station in Thane district after the alleged sexual assault of two four-year-old girls by the school sweeper in the washroom PTI

TN RAGHUNATHA n MUMBAI

Massive protests erupted at Badlapur in the adjoining Thane district of Maharashtra over the alleged sexual assault of two four-year-old girls by a sweeper in the toilet of a leading nursery school and the "delay" in police action.irate residents staged a "rail roko", agitation crippling suburban train services between Badlapur and Karjat and disrupting normal life in Mumbai's

satellite town. The citizens took to the street at Badlapur, after the news of the alleged sexual assault on girls in the kindergarten school run by Adarsh Vidya Prasarak Sanstha (AVPS) by a contractual sweeper on August 12 and 13 spread like wild fire in the satellite town, which is located 68 km away from south Mumbai. It was the delay on the part of the local police to initiate action in connection with the incident that sparked

protests. Based on the complaint of the parents of the victim girls, the police registered an FIR on August 16 — three days after the incident — under the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. A day after the registration of the incident, the accused — identified as one Akshay Shinde (23) — was arrested. The protesters laid siege to

the Badlapur railway station for ten-long hours — from 8 am to 6 pm. The protesters squatted on the railway tracks, disrupted train services. At one stage in the evening, the police resorted to lathi-charge to quell the protesters. "We will resume the train services between Badlapur and Karjat after the protesters disperse," a senior Central Railway official said. The protests spilled to Badlapur town, where people — including a large number of women — barged into the controversial school premises, by breaking the main gate of the school. They ransacked the premises, smashing the window panes and damaging the furniture and other items. Raising slogans against the school management for its failure to ensure safety to the girl children studying in its kinder-garten school, the protesters raided the classrooms and virtually went on a damaging spree. Elsewhere outside the school, the protesters blocked the roads and highway and hurled stones at the police personnel who tried to quell the angry citizens. The Badlapur town observed a spontaneous bandh, with shops, hotels and other business establishments remaining closed.

CAPITAL STRANDED



A traffic jam, waterlogged road amid monsoon rain, at ITO, New Delhi on Tuesday Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer



TRAI to crackdown on bogus telemarketers

PTI n NEW DELHI

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Tuesday hardened its stance on pesky telemarketers, as it directed telcos to take specific measures to curb misuse of messaging services and protect consumers from fraudulent practices. Continuing its offensive against unsolicited spam calls and messages, TRAI made it clear that from September 1, 2024, all access service providers will be prohibited from transmitting messages containing URLs, OTT links, or call back numbers which are not 'whitelisted' (authorised) by the senders. To enhance message traceability, TRAI has mandated that the trail of all messages from senders to recipients must be traceable from November 1, 2024. Any message with an undefined or mismatched telemarketer chain will be rejected. The latest move assumes significance as TRAI has cracked the whip on unauthorised telemarketers indulging in promotional calls and messages to telecom subscribers. Last week, TRAI directed telcos to disconnect all telecom resources of unregistered telemarketers found making spam calls, and to blacklist them for up to two years.

Centre asks UPSC to cancel "lateral entry" recruitment on 45 positions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n NEW DELHI

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Tuesday cancelled its advertisement for recruitment to bureaucracy through lateral entry following a directive to this effect from the Centre. The cancellation comes amid a political row erupting over the issue. The UPSC had on August 17 issued a notification for recruiting 45 Joint Secretaries, directors and Deputy Secretaries through lateral entry — referred to as appointment of specialists (including those from the private sector) in the Government departments. This move had drawn criticism from the Opposition parties, which

claimed it undermined the reservation rights of SCs, STs and OBCs. "It is for information of all concerned that the advertisement pertaining to lateral recruitment for 45 posts at the level of Joint Secretary/director/Deputy Secretary in different departments published in the Employment News, various newspapers and on the website of the Commission on August 17, 2024 stands cancelled as requested by the requisitioning authority," read a cancellation notice by the UPSC. Earlier in the day, Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh wrote to UPSC chairperson Preeti Sudan asking her to cancel the advertisement so that marginalised



FILE PHOTO

communities get their rightful representation in Government services. In the letter, Singh made it clear that for Prime Minister Narendra Modi reservation in public employment is a cornerstone of "our social justice framework" aimed at addressing historical injustices and promoting

inclusivity. "Since these positions have been treated as specialised and designated as single-cadre posts, there has been no provision for reservation in these appointments. This aspect needs to be reviewed and reformed in the context of the Prime Minister's focus on ensuring social justice,"

he said. "I urge the UPSC to cancel the advertisement for lateral entry recruitment issued on 17.8.2024," he said. Singh said this step would be a significant advance in the pursuit of social justice and empowerment. "It is well known that, as a principle, lateral entry was

endorsed by the Second Administrative Reforms Commission which was constituted in 2005 under Veerappa Moily as its Chairperson. The recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission in 2013 were also in the same direction," he points out. "However, both before and after that there have been many cases of high-profile lateral entry," Singh's letter mentioned. Under earlier Governments, posts as important as that of Secretary in various Ministries, leadership of UIDAI, etc, have been given to lateral entrants without following any process of reservations, Singh said. "Further, it is well known that the members of the infamous National Advisory Council used to run a super-

bureaucracy that controlled the Prime Minister's Office," he said. While most of the major lateral entries before 2014 were made in an ad hoc manner, including cases of alleged favouritism, "the efforts of our government have been to make the process an institutionally-driven one, transparent and open," the Minister said. Further, the Prime Minister is of the firm belief that the process of lateral entry must be aligned with the principles of equity and social justice enshrined in the Constitution, particularly concerning the provisions of reservation, Singh said. Meanwhile, reacting to the latest development, Union Minister Chirag Paswan asserted that the Modi

Government at the Centre "has reaffirmed its commitment towards the SCs, STs and OBCs" by asking the UPSC to withdraw the advertisement for "lateral entry" into the bureaucracy. Addressing a Press conference in Patna, Paswan also slammed the Congress-led Opposition for "selective criticism" of the ruling NDA and accused the previous Governments of failure to fill up posts reserved for the deprived castes. "I thank my Prime Minister for seeking cancellation of lateral entry on behalf of my Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas). This Government has set a precedent. We hope regimes of the future will show a similar sensitivity to public sentiments," Paswan said.

CM takes part in 23 Rakshabandhan programs in different distts

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

For the first time in Madhya Pradesh, all the festivals falling in the month of Savan were celebrated with enthusiasm this year. Rakshabandhan festival celebration continued throughout the month of Sawan. Spiritual colors enhanced the beauty of the state during Rakshabandhan. On the call of Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, a series of Rakshabandhan-Savan festivals started in the state from August 1, which ended with Rakshabandhan on August 19. Ministers, MPs and public representatives celebrated Rakshabandhan in their respective areas and got Rakhi tied by the sisters. Chief Minister Yadav himself

participated in 23 programs organized in different districts. It happened for the first time in the state that the Chief Minister along with the Cabinet members celebrated the festival by visiting urban and rural areas. The atmosphere kept resonating with the songs of Sawan for 19 consecutive days. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav started the Rakshabandhan Shraavan festival on August 1 from Chitrakoot, the city known by the name of Lord Shri Ram, and Chitrangi in Singrauli district. In the first celebration of Rakshabandhan, the Chief Minister had announced that in August, 1 crore 29 lakh Ladli Behnas of the state will be given Rs 250 in addition to Rs 1250. This announcement of Chief

Minister Yadav was fulfilled in a function organized on August 10 in Vijaypur of Sheopur district. The Chief Minister transferred Rs 1500 each simultaneously to the accounts of all the eligible Ladli Behnas through a single click. In the Ladli Behna Sannam organized in Chitrakoot, Chief Minister Yadav had said that the festivals of our country connect everyone. The whole world is amazed to see the festivals of India. The sages started the tradition of the festival thousands of years ago to maintain love and harmony in society. To maintain this tradition, the state government has decided that every festival in the state will be celebrated with full dignity and enthusiasm. This was started with the festi-

val of Rakshabandhan. Yadav celebrated Rakshabandhan at Jabera and Narsinghpur in Damoh district on August 03, Shajapur on 4th August, Balaghat on August 05 at Chief Minister's residence Bhopal on 9th August, Tikamgarh and Vijaypur in Sheopur district on 10th August, Rabindra Bhawan Bhopal and Mandla on August 11 at Chief Minister's residence and Bhainsdehi in Betul district on August 12, on August 13 at Kushabhau Thackeray Hall Bhopal, on August 16 at Dindori and Anuppur, on 18 August at Suman Garden, Shivvanjali Garden, Avantika University Ground and Hotel Solitaire in Ujjain and on 19 August at Khachrod and Nagda. During the festival celebra-

tions, Chief Minister Yadav interacted with the Behnas and informed them about the schemes and efforts run by the state government for their empowerment. Ladli Behnas of the state tied Rakhi to the Chief Minister and also symbolically presented a big Rakhi. Much enthusiasm was seen among them towards Rakshabandhan-Savan festival. The women self-help groups presented their ready products to the Chief Minister. Mehndi stalls and swings were also set up for the sisters during the festival. The Chief Minister also rocked them on the swings. The women were benefited from beneficiary-oriented schemes during Rakshabandhan-Savan festival.



Commuters travel on the road amid rain in Bhopal on Tuesday.

Pioneer photo

Doctors set up parallel OPD outside hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In Bhopal, junior doctors of Hamidia Hospital set up a parallel OPD outside the main building, where patients were attended. Doctors are protesting across the country against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata on August 8. The Junior Doctors Association (JUDA) said that we have withdrawn the strike respecting the High Court's order. But, we will continue our protest by running a parallel OPD. Earlier on Monday, junior doctors had protested against the Kolkata incident by taking out a bike rally. JUDA spokesperson Kuldeep Gupta said that after the court's order, junior doctors have returned to work, and we are attending patients by running our parallel OPD. If the patient is in an emergency condition, we are referring to specialist

doctors from all departments present here. More than 50 doctors are doing OPD. Our priority was earlier, is still there and will remain so in future that the patient does not suffer any kind of harm. We are constantly seeing that we are upset with the indifferent attitude of the Kolkata government, and are also demanding the Central Doctor Protection Act. Junior doctors ended the strike after the order of the High Court in Madhya Pradesh. Junior doctors had stopped work from 12 midnight on August 15. About 46 hours later, they announced the end of the strike. Actually, on August 9, a trainee doctor was raped and murdered in Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College. Violence took place in the same hospital late on the night of 14 August, after which IMA decided to protest across the country.

Earlier on August 17 afternoon, the High Court had ordered the junior doctors to end the strike. The court said that they should withdraw their strike by August 20. The bench of Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Sach Deva and Justice Vinay Saraf said that this method of strike is not right at all. If someone is dying, will you give them medicine after two days? The High Court had advised the doctors to return to work. Meanwhile, after the case of rape and murder of a junior doctor in Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued an advisory for all the hospitals in the country, in which it has been said that security arrangements in hospitals should be tightened further. Keeping in mind the security challenges in government hospitals, instructions have been issued to take several steps.

Rains start again in the State after one week's gap

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

After a break of about a week, the rainy season has started again in Madhya Pradesh. Heavy rains occurred in 14 districts including Bhopal and Indore. Water entered low-lying areas and houses in Chhindwara and Guna, 5 sluice gates of Tawa Dam were opened in Narmadapuram. The Meteorological Department has issued an alert for heavy rains in 11 districts. Sagar recorded the highest rainfall of 2.25 inches on Tuesday in the state. Indore received one and a half inches of rain. One and a quarter inches of rain was recorded in Bhopal,

Jabalpur and Ujjain. Rainfall was witnessed in Betul, Dhar, Guna, Chhindwara, Mandla, Narmadapuram and Malajkhad of Balaghat district. Heavy rains also occurred in Agar district. So far, 28.7 inches of rainfall has been recorded in the state. This is 76 percent of the season. Sheopur has received twice the normal rainfall. Mandla-Seoni are such districts where the rainfall figure has crossed 41 inches. Senior meteorologist said, "The low pressure area is still active. This system will move forward in the next 2 to 3 days. This will cause rain in many districts of the state. Activity of monsoon trough and cyclonic circulation will also continue. A strong system will be formed

from Wednesday.' The Meteorological Department has predicted heavy rains to continue in Shahdol, Amarkantak of Anuppur, Bhind, Morena, Agar-Malwa, Guna, Mandsaur, Betul, Rajgarh, Ujjain and Shivpuri. Also, there is a possibility of lightning with moderate thunder in Udaygiri of Vidisha, Sanchi of Raisen, Gwalior. Heavy rain started in almost the entire city of Indore from around 4 pm on Tuesday evening. About two and a quarter inches of rain fall was recorded here. Due to rain, waterlogging and traffic jams occurred at many major intersections. Apart from this, heavy waterlogging also occurred in many low-lying areas of the city and BRTS. Many

areas including Palasia, Guitar Tiraha, Scheme 140, Khajrana, Robot Chauraha were flooded up to knee level. Heavy rains occurred in some areas of Guna district on Tuesday. Heavy rains continued since morning. The drain in Ukawad village overflowed. Due to this, the entire village was flooded. Water filled up to two to three feet. Due to heavy rains in Parasia of Chhindwara district, low-lying areas were flooded. Due to rain, there was a jam in the under bridge of Parasia Pipariya Road. Here, the goods kept in front of the nearby shops were washed away due to the strong flow of water. Goods were also damaged due to water entering the houses.

Rains continue to lash the State capital

Bhopal: For the past 8 days Bhopal has witnessed rain and heavy rainfall was witnessed on Tuesday, 4.5 mm of rainfall was recorded in the past 9 hours. Before this, there was bright sunshine, but at 11 am the weather changed and it started raining. Heavy rain continued for an hour and the same amount has been recorded in 16 days. Two and a half inches of rainfall was witnessed on August 3. There was a break in monsoon for seven consecutive days. Due to this, the day temperature had crossed 33 degrees, but due to rain it came down to 30.6 degrees on Tuesday. Due to rain, the water level in Upper Lake increased. The level was 1666.40 feet on Monday, which reached 1666.45 feet by Tuesday evening. The gates of Bhadbhada Dam can be opened again as soon as there is a spell of heavy rain. Earlier the day temperature reached 33.3 degrees on Monday. This was the highest temperature in August. According to the Meteorological Department, there is a trend of 13 inches of rain in Bhopal in August, but this time only 9.8 inches of rainfall has been recorded, more than 33 inches of rain has been recorded in Bhopal so far, which is about 90 percent of the season, but the indifference of monsoon has also been seen in August. There was good rain in Bhopal for the first 4 days, but after that only light rain continued. Due to this, the quota could not be full till August. This time the sluice gates of all dams in Bhopal have also been opened. All 13 sluice gates of Kaliyasot dam have been opened. 4 out of 8 gates sluice of Kolar dam are open. Sluice gates of Bhadbhada and Kerwa dams were also opened. Sluice gates were closed after the rain stopped. Sluice gates are closed for the last 10 days. There is a trend of rain on an average of 14 days in the month of August in Bhopal, on an average 13 inches of rainfall is recorded in this month.



College students stage a protest demanding justice for a woman trainee doctor who was on duty allegedly raped and murdered at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, at Roshanpura square in Bhopal on Tuesday.

Pioneer photo

Police nab 2 for cheating Rs 1.97 lakh, after victim ended his life

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Berasia police have arrested two accused who cheated a 27-year-old victim to the tune of Rs 1.97 lakh. Harassed by the accused, the victim had committed suicide last year in the month of July; 6 mobile phones and more than 12 registered SIM cards were recovered in the action. The deceased identified as Dev Narayan Vishwakarma a resident of Berasia, Bhopal, was duped of Rs 1,97,491 in the name of a loan. He was harassed by agents to transfer the amount to different accounts for processing, fees and refund in the name of loan from Dhani app. Upset by this harassment, Dev Narayan committed suicide on July 31 last year. This disclosure has been made by Bairsia police in the investigation of the suicide case of the youth. Also, two accused in the case have been arrested from Nalanda, Bihar. Apart from fraud, the police have registered a case against the accused for forcing to commit suicide. The police said that Dev Narayan Vishwakarma was constantly receiving calls from agents for giving loans from the

Dhani app. The registered SIM of the phone number coming on the youth's mobile was issued fraudulently from West Bengal. After getting the mobile SIM from West Bengal, the accused were calling Dev Narayan from Sarabahi village in Nalanda district of Bihar. To arrest the accused Shatrughan Ravidas and Hardev Paswan police raided Sarabahi of Manpur police station area of Nalanda district in Bihar. Berasia police said that the accused Shatrughan Ravidas and Hardev Paswan arrested in the Dev Narayan Vishwakarma suicide case have been produced in the court and taken on remand. Both the accused are being questioned about other members of the gang and the method of cheating. According to the police, the arrested accused have confessed to cheating Dev Narayan of Rs 1.97491 lakh in the name of facilitating loan. It has also been said that they were pressurizing Devnarayan to transfer more money. Due to the fraud in the name of getting a loan, Devnarayan committed suicide at home on July 31, 2023 after being mentally harassed.

7 killed, six injured as autorickshaw hits truck

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

At least seven died and six others sustained injuries after an auto rickshaw carrying devotees collided with a truck in Chhatrapur district on Tuesday. The accident occurred near the Kadari area on National Highway (NH)-39 (Jhansi-Khajuraho highway) under the jurisdiction of the civil line police station in the district at around 5:30 am. The devotees were going to Bageshwar Dham, the police officer added. Superintendent of Police (SP) Agam Jain told, "An accident occurred on Tuesday morning on Jhansi-Khajuraho highway where an auto rickshaw collided with a truck in which seven persons died and six others sustained injuries, who are undergoing treatment." Hospital management and the district administration have kept a close eye on the arrangements and treatment of the injured passengers. Every possible help is being provided to the injured, the officer said. There were 13 passengers in the auto-rickshaw and they were going to Bageshwar Dham from Mahoba railway station, he added.

Services related to learning driving license in Transport Department faceless

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Most of the services related to learning driving license in the state have been started under the faceless process. Now the applicant does not need to come to the transport offices to avail these services. The applicant can obtain his learning license by applying online and completing the prescribed process. Pollution testing centers are operated to protect the environment from damage caused by harmful gases emitted from vehicles. In the state, pollution control certificates are issued online by integrating them on the vehicle portal. This system was initially completed as a pilot project in the Bhopal district. The Transport Department is now implementing this system throughout the state. In the last 6 months, Automated Testing Stations (ATS) have been established in Gwalior, Indore and Jabalpur in the state to conduct fitness tests in vehicles in a transparent manner without human inter-

Pollution testing centers are operated to protect the environment from damage caused by harmful gases emitted from vehicles

vention, to which registration certificates have been issued by the department. Primary registration certificate has been issued for the construction of 8 Automated Testing Stations and primary registration certificate has already been issued for the construction of another A.T.S. To provide public services related to the department to the general public, the Transport Department has taken 31 essential services of the department under the Public Service Guarantee Act 2010. Along with this, 7 services of the department have been included under the 'Samadhan Ek Diwas' scheme.

Medi-Caps varsity hosts workshop on POSH Act 2013

PNS ■ INDORE

Dr Kuber Datt Gautam, Professor In-Charge of Media at Medi-Caps University, Indore, announced that the Faculty of Forensic Sciences recently organized an insightful workshop on the "Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (POSH) Act, 2013," with the goal of educating participants on the Act's provisions and implementation, thereby fostering a safer and more inclusive workplace environment. Workshop emphasized the importance of understanding the law, which defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that hinders a woman's work performance or creates a hostile work environment. The POSH Act applies to all workplaces

across India, covering a wide range of employees, including apprentices, volunteers, and trainees. The workshop was honored by the distinguished presence of the University's Vice-Chancellor, Prof. (Dr.) D.K. Patnaik, Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) D.K. Panda, and Dr. Rekha Jain of the Gender Sensitization Cell, alongside notable guests Ms. Deepali Srivastava, Chairperson of the Legal Cell at NCW, New Delhi, and Jai Srivastava, Assistant Director at the Child and Women Development Department, Indore. A panel of distinguished speakers, including Hriday Narayan Pandey from the Ministry of MSME, Dr. Chandra Deep Yadav from PM College of Excellence, Ujjain, and Kirti Patwardhan, Advocate on Record at the Supreme Court of India, delivered in-depth sessions on the legal intricacies of the POSH Act, addressing procedural requirements, the role of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), and real-world case studies illustrating the law's application. The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks, recognizing the Faculty of Forensic Science for their pivotal role in the workshop's success.



Congress State President Jitu Patwari pays tributes to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his birth anniversary in Bhopal on Tuesday.

Pioneer photo

Party membership drive in 11000 Shakti Kendras, 65871 booths

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

BJP State President and Khajuraho MP Vishnudutt Sharma, while addressing a press conference at the State Office on Tuesday, said that in accordance with the democratic working system of the BJP, the membership campaign of the party, which is celebrated by the party workers as the Organisation Festival, is going to start soon.

It has started at the national level through a workshop held on 17 August, while a state level workshop is being organized in Madhya Pradesh on 21 August, in which the outline of the Organisation Festival will be prepared and senior party leaders including the National General Secretary of the party Arun Singh will

guide the workers regarding the campaign. A democratic system like the Organisation Festival of the BJP does not exist in the other approximately 1500 political parties of India.

The BJP is a vibrant organisation and only a vibrant organisation gives people a chance to decide on membership again. BJP State President Vishnudutt Sharma said that the party's national workshop regarding the Organisation Festival has been concluded in Delhi on 17 August. In this workshop, the party's national president JP Nadda, country's home minister and former national president Mr. Amit Shah and national organization general secretary B.L. Santosh gave guidance. After this, now the state level workshop will be organized in the

state office on Wednesday at about 11 thousand power centers of the state on 28 and 29 August. After this, workshops related to the organisation festival will be organised simultaneously at all the 64871 booths of the state on August 31.

BJP State President Vishnudutt Sharma said that for the organisation festival, teams are being formed at every level from the national level, which will take the responsibility of conducting this campaign. At the national level, the party's National General Secretary Vinod Tawde is in charge of this campaign.

In Madhya Pradesh, State General Secretary Bhagwandas Sabnani will be in charge of it. Apart from them, the party's State Vice President Jeetu Jirati, Chaudhary Mukesh Singh

Chaturvedi, State Government Minister Pratima Bagri, Rajya Sabha MP Sumer Singh Solanki, State Minister Rajneesh Agarwal will be included in this team. There will be one coordinator in the district level team and three workers will be members of the team.

At the Mandal level, one coordinator and two members will be included in the team. Coordinators of the membership campaign will be appointed at all the more than 11000 Shakti Kendras of the state. State President Sharma said that this campaign of the Bharatiya Janata Party will be all-encompassing, all-pervasive and all-inclusive. During this campaign, from the top level to the booth level, people from every geographical area of the state will be given the opportunity to join the party.

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BJP State President VD Sharma talking to media persons at BJP State headquarters in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo



Women perform rituals as they offer prayers on the occasion of Bhujaria festival in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

Alleged love jihad case in Chhatarpur

Bhopal: Once again a case of alleged love jihad has come to fore in Chhatarpur. A Muslim youth has been accused of trapping a girl by showing a Hindu name.

The girl's parents complained to the SP, while the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Chaurasia Samaj blocked the road in protest and submitted a memorandum to the SP. According to the information, the girl had gone to Sagar with her father to take an exam but did not return home. Her mother alleged that the youth is a bus conductor and he took the daughter away by luring her. At the same time, in this case of love jihad, the Hindu organization has caught the missing girl near the Nugaon court with the help of the police.

The girl and the youth had reached the court for marriage. The Hindu organization called the girl's family to Nugaon and made them sit in the police station. The police is currently interrogating the girl in front of her family.

In this case, a Muslim youth is accused of taking the girl with him by posing as a Hindu. According to the information received, the girl is a resident of Pipat village (Pipat Chowki) of Bijawar. The girl's parents approached Chhatarpur SP with a complaint about their daughter's disappearance, in which they called it a case of love jihad. The girl is a resident of Pipat village of Bijawar and had gone to Sagar with her father to take an exam, but did not return.

CM performs darshan-pujan at Valmiki Dham

Bhopal: Chief Minister Mohan Yadav visited Shri Valmiki Dham Siddhpeth in Ujjain today and had a darshan and performed worship of Anant Vibhushit 1008 Swami Sohan Das Ji Maharaj here.

After this, he also duly worshipped the Nishan flag of Jaharveer Gogadev Ji that arrived to Valmiki Dham from Jhansi (UP) and Akola (Maharashtra). During this, Rajya Sabha MP Umeshnath Ji Maharaj, MLA Anil Jain Kaluhera and other public representatives were present.

Change of Name

My old name was MOHAMMED YAWAR. Written in my previous passport. I have changed my name. My new name is MOHD. YAWAR S/O ABDUL HAFEEZ in all my present documents. Address A-172, Airport Road, Indravihar Colony Bhopal (M.P.) 462030

Change of Name

Before Marriage My name was ANUSHA ISLAM. After Marriage. I have changed my name. My new name is now known as ANUSHA YAWAR W/O MOHAMMAD YAWAR. Address A-172, Airport Road, Indravihar Colony, Bhopal (M.P.) 462030

BANK OF MAHARASHTRA

[Rule-8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Bank of Maharashtra under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-section (2) of Section 13 read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, Notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession symbolic of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with the Rule 8 of the said rules.

S. No.	Name & Address of Borrower & Guarantor	Amount due to the bank as per notice	Details of Immovable Property of which possession taken by the bank	Demand Notice Date Possession Date
1.	Borrower - Mr. Satish Pandey S/o Mr. Sadhu Ram Kumar Pandey Mrs. Shalini Pandey W/o Mr. Satish Pandey	Rs.1763825/- + Interest & Other Charges w.e.f. 10/06/2024	All those pieces & parcel of property with construction & fixture there being & lying at Mouza - Maharajpur, Jr. MIG-13, Subhash Nagar Housing board colony R.I Circle Maharajpur, Tehsil-Panagar, Dist: Jabalpur, Total Plot area- 1210 Sq.ft. Built up GF area Admeasuring 586 sq.ft. Bounded as - North - HIG Plots, South- Side Road, East:- Jr. MIG 12 West:- Jr. MIG 14 Owner of property: Mrs. Shalini Pandey W/O Mr. Satish Pandey	10/06/2024 17/08/2024

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Bank of Maharashtra for an amount hereinabove mentioned. The details of the properties mortgaged to the Bank and taken possession by the Bank are as above. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Place: Jabalpur, Date: 21/08/2024

CHIEF MANAGER & AUTHORIZED OFFICER
BANK OF MAHARASHTRA

CAN FIN HOMES LTD.

1st Floor, above central bank of India Gopalganj sagar-470001
Ph: 0755 -82220456,7625013262 E-mail:sagar@canfinhomes.com
CIN No -L85110KA1987PLC008699

POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property) (Rule 8(1))

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of the powers under the said Act and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice on the below mentioned dates calling upon the following borrower(s)/co-borrowers/guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice with further interest at contractual rates till date of realization within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below, against each borrower, in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on dates mentioned hereinafter.

No.	Name of the borrowers	Description of the property mortgaged	Date of Demand notice	Outstanding amount	Date of possession
1.	Borrower: Smt. SARITA KEWAT W/O ARVIND	H. No. 588, P.H. No 76, Deen Dayal Nagar Ward Mouja Gambhariya M.P. 470004 Boundaries: North-Plot No. 581, South-Road, East-Plot No. 589, West Plot No. 587	29/05/2024	24,28,960/-	17/08/2024
2.	Borrower: MR GORELAL AHIRWAR AND MRS SAVITRI AHIRWAR	H No C-8, Sagar Estate, Colony Kh No 232/1, 233/1 Ph No. 75 Sabri, Ward Mouja, Badtuma	29/05/2024	25,73,344/-	17/08/2024

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrowers 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 CFHL of the amount mentioned against each property along with further interest thereon till the date of realization.

Date: 17.08.2024
Place: Sagar

Sd/-
Authorised Officer
Can Fin Homes Ltd., Sagar

केनरा बँक Canara Bank

Regional office -1st Floor, Sai Baba Complex, Near GDA Building, Phool Bagh, Gwalior Ph. 0751-2423126

POSSESSION NOTICE (Rule 8 (1)) For Immovable Property

The Understanding being the Authorized officer of the Canara Bank Under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, in exercise of the power conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issues a demand notice on below mentioned date to the following Borrowers/Guarantors, calling upon them to repay the amount mentioned in the respective Notice with in 60 days from the date of receipt of said notices. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, Notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on dates mentioned below, the borrowers/Guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the properties will be subject to the charge of Canara Bank, for an amount herein below mentioned & Interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provision of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name and Address of Borrower/Property owner	Outstanding Amount (Rs.)	Description of the Property
Branch : Canara Bank, Khurai, Sagar Ph. 9450689083, E-mail : cb4257@canarabank.com		
Borrowers : Shri Gopal Ahirwar S/o Ashok Ahirwar Add : H.No.-103, Ward No 15, Bhagwan Ganj, Sagar (M.P.) Pin : 470001 Guarantor : Smt. Javitri Ahirwar C/o Gopal Ahirwar Add : Ghandhi Ward, Khurai, Sagar (M.P.), Pin : 470001	Rs. 28,63,281.52/- + Interest and Other Expenses - Recovery Demand Notice: 03.05.2024 Possession Date : 16.08.2024	Property Owner : Smt. Javitri Ahirwar C/o Gopal Ahirwar- Immoveable Property : Land and Building Situated at Plot Part of Khasra No. 34/41, Patwari Halka No. 25, Circle Khurai, Sahodra Bai Rai Ward No. 27, Nagar Palika Khurai, Teh. Khurai, Dist. Sagar (M.P.) Boundaries- East- Land Of Dhannal, West-Land Of Seller, North- Road Leave By Seller, South- Land Of Surendra.
Branch : Canara Bank, Garhakota, Sagar Ph. 7999051400, E-mail : cb6230@canarabank.com		
Borrower : M/s. Raikwar Enterprises Add : Plot No. 37 12, Kankera, Garhakota Garhakota, Distt. Sagar (M.P.) - 470229 Proprietor : Sh. Aravind Raikwar S/o Sh. Dhaneeram Add : Ram Ward, Garhakota, Distt. Sagar (M.P.) - 470229 Guarantor : Sh. Rajkumar Raikwar S/o Sh. Dhaneeram Add : 5, Ram Ward Garhakota, Distt. Sagar (M.P.) - 470229	Rs. 10,76,172.33/- + Interest and Other Expenses - Recovery Demand Notice: 06.05.2024 Possession Date : 16.08.2024	Property Owner : Sh. Rajkumar Raikwar S/o Sh. Dhaneeram- Immoveable Property : Property Situated at Part of Khasra 37/1/2/2, Patwari Halka No. 32/37, Village - Kenkar, Tehsil- Garhakota, Distt. Sagar (M.P.) Boundaries- East- Land of Owner, West- Land of Leela Patel, North- Sagar Damoh Road, South- Land of Shree Dev Jagdeesh Swami Temple.
Place: Gwalior Date : 20/08/2024 AUTHORIZED OFFICER CANARA BANK		

Administrative approval for irrigation project worth more than Rs 1,320 crore

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The State Cabinet has given administrative approval of Rs 1320.14 crore (irrigation area 32,125 hectares) for the Chitrangi pressurized micro irrigation project of Singrauli district. The approved project will benefit 132 villages (irrigation area 28,192 hectares) of Chitrangi tehsil and 10 villages (irrigation area 3,933 hectares) of Devsar tehsil of Singrauli district. The Cabinet approved to provide adequate staff for the Cyber Tehsil Project. For expansion in the entire state, approval was given to transfer the office to Cyber Tehsil for 10 posts of Tehsildar out of 619 posts sanctioned for the districts of Tehsildar cadre, 15 posts out of 55 posts of Naib Tehsildars reserved for deputation and 03 posts of Assistant Class-3 category employees including Chief Revenue Commissioner. Similarly, approval was given to appoint 02 peons through out-source.

Under Mission Shakti, the Council of Ministers approved to operate the Women Empowerment Center in all the districts of the state

included in the land acquired for the construction of the airport. With mutual consent, Collector Satna had wanted to allocate a compensation amount of Rs 87 lakh 50 thousand including 1 percent service tax for the purchase of land, which has been allotted to him. This was ratified in the Council of Ministers meeting today.

Ratification of amendment to the rules of Higher Judicial Service Rules 2017

The Chief Minister's order dated August 13, 2024, and the notification issued by the department in compliance with it were ratified regarding replacement of Rule-2, Rule-3, Rule-4, Rule-9 and Rule-11 and Schedule-1 respectively of Madhya Pradesh Higher Judicial Service (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2017 by the Council of Ministers.

Other decisions

The Council of Ministers approved relaxing the maximum limit of Index-1 for administrative/work order approval under 'Chief Minister's Village Roads and Infrastructure (Plan No. 6084)' for financial management of capital works by the Finance Department from 3 to 4.30. With this decision, infrastructure and construction work worth more than Rs 2135 crore can be done in rural areas.

Have night halt once in a month in districts of your charge, CM asks his Cabinet colleagues

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

During the State Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Yadav has said in his address before the meeting that the ministers must make night halt at least once in a month while touring the districts under their charge. He said that instructions have been issued by the School Education Department regarding the ban on the education of other religions in madarsas. As per the provision of Article 28 (3) of the Constitution, all government grants to madarsas which compel children studying there to receive education of other religions or attend worship contrary to the teachings of their religion will be stopped. Other appropriate legal action including due process to cancel the recognition of such madarsas will also be ensured.

Number of EOW and Lokayukta units will be increased

Yadav said that the state government is starting four missions underlining the importance of youth, farmers, women and poor. A brainstorming programme will be held soon for discussion in this regard, in which all the ministers will participate. He said that to enhance the system's effectiveness in combating corruption, the number of EOW and Lokayukta units will be increased in the state.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that the programme of Rakshabandhan was celebrated with enthusiasm and gaiety in the state. On the occasion of Janmashtami festival on August 26, programmes will be organised in the state centred on various aspects related to the life of Lord Shri Krishna. Also, town halls will be developed for organising cultural activities in urban areas.

Chief Minister Yadav said that a committee will be formed for Maa Narmada Mission for the purpose of overall Narmada

development. Under the mission, urban bodies and Panchayat Raj institutions from the origin of Narmada ji to the Gujarat border will work for the continuity of Narmada Ji's flow and the health of tributary rivers and water sources. Under the mission, along with the maintenance and upgradation of pilgrimage places and Dev Sthals, activities will also be conducted to provide basic facilities to those undertaking Narmada Parikrama. In the course of time, along with Narmada Ji, other rivers of the state will also be included in this campaign.

Yadav said that with the aim of strengthening the rural economy, instructions have been given to the departments to make plans on milk production, increasing income from crops, organic orchards etc. With the aim of environmental protection, a campaign focused on freedom from plastic will also be conducted in the state.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav pays tributes to Chintamani Mendola, father of BJP MLA Ramesh Mendola in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

CM expresses grief over Chhatarpur accident

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has expressed grief over the road accident on the Khajuraho-Jhansi highway in Chhatarpur district. He said that the news of the untimely death of seven people from Uttar Pradesh and six people getting injured in the accident is very painful. The seriously injured have been referred to Gwalior.

CM Yadav has prayed to Baba Mahakal for the peace of the departed souls and to give strength to the families to bear this grief and speedy recovery to the injured. It is noteworthy that 13 people travelling in

the auto met with a road accident while going from Mahoba railway station to Bageshwar Dham on the Khajuraho-Jhansi highway, out of which seven died and 6 people are injured.

The seriously injured persons have been referred to Gwalior Medical College. All the people are residents of Uttar Pradesh, assistance is being provided to the families of the deceased and the injured.



Regd Off.: No. 29/1, 1st Floor, Sir M N Krishna Rao Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru-560004 www.canfinhomes.com

WANTED OFFICE PREMISES

Can Fin Homes Limited, a Housing Finance Company require space of 800-1000 Sq.ft. in Ground / First Floor in a good locality on lease for 5 to 10 years at the following location:

Location	Contact Person Designation	Contact No.
Airport Road, Indore	Varsha Goswami (Branch Manager)	Mobile: 76250 79136

Interested Premises owners may send their offers in a closed envelope to CAN FIN HOMES LIMITED., 162, First Floor, Kuber House, Kanchan Bagh Main Road, Indore (M.P) 452001. as per our format in our website www.canfinhomes.com on or before 01.09.2024 addressed to the above mentioned contact person. Premises should be ready for occupation with all facilities / amenities. Offers from the brokers / Intermediaries will not be entertained. Can Fin Homes Limited reserves the right to reject any or all the offers without assigning any reason whatsoever. Canvassing in any form will disqualify the offer. No brokerage will be paid. SD/- Manager Place : Indore, Date : 21.08.2024

SC reveals why it took suo motu cognisance of Kolkata doctor rape-murder case

RAJESH KUMAR n NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday revealed why it took suo motu cognisance of the recent horrific rape and murder of a 31-year-old doctor in Kolkata at the RG Kar Hospital. Expressing concern over the lack of workplace safety in healthcare institutions, the court in order also took strong exception to the failure by the West Bengal government machinery to stop a large mob which on August 15 vandalised the emergency ward and other areas of the hospital after the crime. The court also expressed its deep concern over the name of the victim, her photographs and video clips showing her lifeless body having been splashed all over the media and ordered removal of name, photos, videos from media platforms. "Why we decided to take suo motu though high court was

hearing it because this is not just a case of a horrific murder in Kolkata hospital, but this is about systemic issue about safety of doctors across India," a bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said while hearing the matter. Terming the incident as "horrific", the bench excoriated the state government over the delay in filing the FIR and allowing thousands of miscreants to vandalise the state-run facility. Taking a serious note of mob violence in the hospital and the allegation that the Kolkata police fled the scene, the top court ordered deployment of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) at the hospital to enable doctors to resume work. "On 12:30 am on August 15, a large mob vandalised the emergency ward and other areas of the hospital. Following this, Indian

Medical Association (IMA) called for nationwide withdrawal of emergency services for 14 hours. The State was expected to deploy State machinery to maintain law and order and protect crime scene. We are unable to comprehend why the State could not do so," the Court said. It also asked the West Bengal government to not unleash the "power of the State" on peaceful protesters and to deal with them with "great sensitivity in this moment of national catharsis". The bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud criticised the ex-principal of RG Kar Medical College Dr Sandip Ghosh for trying to pass off the case as that of suicide and not letting the parents of the deceased to see her body for several hours. "What was the principal doing? Why was this inaction to first pass this as suicide and not registering an FIR. Body is handed to the



parents for cremation late in the night. On the next day, the doctors are on protest and a mob assembles at the hospital. The hospital is invaded and critical facilities are damaged. What was the police doing? A serious offence has taken place and the crime scene is within the hospital. The police should have protected the crime scene. How can the police allow vandals to enter the hospital. After the principal resigned, he is sent to another hospital. When his conduct was under scrutiny, how was he appointed to another college immediately," the bench, also comprising justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, observed.

The bench said what has taken place in Kolkata is not just a horrific murder but an incident which has raised systemic issues about the safety of doctors. "We are deeply concerned that there is a virtual absence of safe work conditions across the country, particularly in public hospitals. Most of the young doctors have to put in 36 hours of work. "We find that there are no duty rooms available, or separate restrooms for men and women doctors and nursing staff. We must evolve a national consensus that there must be a national standard protocol so that safe work conditions are provided," the bench said. If women cannot go to their place of work safely, then we are denying them equality, the apex court said. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the West Bengal government, refuted the observations and

submitted that Kolkata police took all necessary action. He said he will place on record all the facts. "Photos and videos were circulated before the police reached the crime scene. We didn't allow anything to happen and cordoned off the area. Inquest was done and a case of unnatural death was registered immediately. We caught the culprit who was a civic worker. This is not adversarial litigation," Sibal told the court. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said a mob of 7,000 people could not have assembled at the hospital without the knowledge and consent of the police. "Let West Bengal government not be in denial mode, there is complete failure of law and order in the state. A girl has lost her life due to a sexual pervert and an animal," Mehta said. Sibal said over 50 FIRs have been registered following

the vandalism incident and 37 people have already been arrested. The top court asked the West Bengal government to not take coercive action against people holding peaceful protests and speaking up on social media. "Let not the power of the State of West Bengal be unleashed upon peaceful protesters. Let us deal with them with great sensitivity. This is a moment for national catharsis," the apex court said. Sibal said a lot of misinformation is being spread in the media about the case and the state government is only taking action against those involved in it. The court then said, "We expect that West Bengal government shall observe necessary restraint in the face of peaceful protests being conducted by any quarter of the society bearing on the issues which form the subject matter of the incident in Kolkata."

SC observations raise questions on Mamata Govt's mindset, morality: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday said the Supreme Court's observations in the rape and murder case of a medic in Kolkata have raised serious questions on the "mindset and morality" of the Mamata Banerjee Government in West Bengal. The party asserted the Centre will leave "no stone unturned" to ensure justice to the victim. Making these assertions, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi also targeted the Congress and its allies, saying if the Constitution is under threat today, it is in West Bengal and the states ruled by the opposition INDIA bloc constituents. He also accused the Mamata Banerjee-led government of taking action against those seeking justice for the victim and asked people to imagine



what would have been the scenario in the country if any of the constituents of the INDIA bloc had been in power at the Centre. With Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal, who is also a senior Supreme Court lawyer, appearing on behalf of the West Bengal government in the Supreme Court, it becomes clear that all the INDIA bloc partners stand

together to protect each other's crime, Trivedi charged. The Supreme Court on Tuesday came down heavily on the West Bengal government over delay in filing FIR in the rape and murder case of a trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, terming the incident "horrific". Taking suo motu cognisance of the case, the top court said

this incident raises systemic issue regarding safety of doctor across India. "The questions that the Supreme Court has asked in connection with the case are serious questions on the mindset and morality of those running the government," the BJP spokesperson said at a press conference at the party headquarters. "We all know how efforts were made to suppress the incident... It has become clear that the TMC government is shamelessly engaged in protecting the criminals. In this episode, the role of INDIA alliance has also become clear," he added. Trivedi alleged the INDIA bloc partners are standing together to protect each other's crime with Sibal, former Congress leader elected to Rajya Sabha as an independent candidate with support of the Samajwadi Party, appearing in the Supreme

Court on behalf of the West Bengal government in the matter. "There is no if and but left now. They are all standing together to support each other's crimes. They are the same people who stood in support of every separatist and terrorist in the court. They have once again stood in support of a notorious criminal in the court today," he said. "It is now clear that the Constitution is under threat in the states ruled by INDI alliance partners. Not just the Constitution is under threat, but life and dignity as well," he added. Trivedi said the law will take its course in the Kolkata medic's rape and murder case as per the direction of the court now, "but we want to assure that the Central government will leave no stone unturned in ensuring justice to the victim and her family members".

BSF officer completes Ironman challenge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old Border Security Force (BSF) officer has become the first Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) officer to successfully complete the Ironman challenge, one of the toughest triathlon events across the globe. Assistant Commandant Harish Kajla joined the country's largest border-guarding force in 2012. He is currently on deputation posting to the counter-terrorist commando force National Security Guard (NSG). "Shri Harish Kajla, AC brings in laurels to the Nation and the Force by successfully completing Iron Man Challenge, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, becoming the first officer from CAPFs to successfully complete the challenge," the Border Security Force said in its official X handle on Monday. The officer, as per the BSF, was "able



to complete the event and achieve this historic feat in a time of 12:42:25." The Ironman challenge comprises three events which include 3.8 kilometres of swimming, 180 kilometres of cycling and 42.2 kilometres of full marathon. For the latest event, under the male 35-39 years of age category, the cut-off timing was 15:45:00, as per the BSF. The force, primarily tasked to

guard Indian fronts with Pakistan and Bangladesh, also posted pictures of Kajla holding the national flag as well as the flags of the BSF and NSG at the finish line in the Danish capital. The BSF is part of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) under the Ministry of Home Affairs which also includes the CRPF, ITBP, SSB and CISF.

Regulatory failures can cause long-term dent in investor confidence: Cong amid Sebi row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n NEW DELHI

Amid row over Hindenberg's allegations against Sebi chief Madhabi Buch, the Congress on Tuesday said regulatory failures and conflicts of interest may be brazened out briefly but they can cause long-term damage to the sentiment and confidence of investors. The Opposition party also said the Indian equity market has so far enjoyed fair weather due to well-regulated markets but any lapse risks destabilising them. Congress general secretary-in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said data released recently reveals that the unique registered investor base of the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) with unique PANs has crossed 10 crore. He said the immediate implication of this is that integrity and transparency in financial markets matter to a large and



growing number of Indians, particularly the youth. The median age of these investors is 32 years, and 40 per cent of all investors are below 30 years of age, Ramesh said, citing the NSE. Financial markets function on the assumption that regulators will regulate fairly and companies will play by the rules, he said. "But when it is revealed that the SEBI Chairperson has had a serious conflict of interest, and that too regarding investigations into alleged money laundering and round

tripping by the Adani Group, this becomes a serious matter involving the faith of crores of investors," Ramesh said in a social media post. Regulatory failures and conflicts of interest may be brazened out in the short term but these can cause long-term damage to sentiment and confidence, he asserted. The politician also claimed that faith in markets was also shaken by the Narendra Modi-made market volatility that followed the counting of votes on June 4, 2024.

India, Malaysia elevate ties to comprehensive strategic partnership

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n NEW DELHI

India and Malaysia on Tuesday elevated their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim here held extensive talks focusing on expanding cooperation in several sectors, including trade, investment and defence. A pact on promoting recruitment of Indian workers in Malaysia and protection of their interests was one of the at least eight agreements inked between the two sides. The pact on recruitment of Indian workers assumes significance as illegal immigration and human trafficking from India to Malaysia are among major concerns of the two governments. Ibrahim began his three-day visit to India on Monday night in his first trip to the country as the prime minister. "Today, we have decided that our partnership will be ele-



vated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," Modi said in his media statement. The prime minister said the agreement on employment of workers will promote the recruitment of Indians as well as the protection of their interests. Highlighting the importance of India-Malaysia economic engagement, Modi said bilateral trade is being done in Rupees and Malaysian currency Ringgit. "We believe that there is still a lot of potential in economic cooperation. Bilateral trade and investment should be expanded," he said.

"We should increase mutual cooperation in new technological areas, such as semiconductor, fintech, defence industry, artificial intelligence and quantum. We have emphasised on accelerating the review of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between India and Malaysia," he said. The prime minister said work will also be done to connect India's digital payment system UPI with Malaysia's PayNet. "We are also unanimous in the fight against terrorism and extremism," he said. Modi also described Malaysia

as an "important partner" of India in the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and Indo-Pacific region. "India gives priority to ASEAN centrality. We agree that the review of the FTA (free trade agreement) between India and ASEAN should be completed in a timely manner," he said. In an apparent reference to the situation in South China Sea that has been witnessing growing Chinese military muscle-flexing, Modi said, "We are committed to freedom of navigation and over flight in accordance with

international laws. And, we support the peaceful resolution of all disputes." The two sides also deliberated upon new possibilities of cooperation in the defence sector as well. Both sides also decided to establish a digital council for cooperation in digital technology, and to form a start-up alliance. In his remarks, Ibrahim said all issues, sensitive or otherwise, were discussed in reflection of the true meaning of friendship between the two countries. "India is a great nation with a great history and a great culture and civilisation. It is in many ways multi-cultural and multi-religious," he said. "Therefore, we have a lot of commonalities which extend beyond trade and investment," he added. In the Modi-Ibrahim talks, it was decided to set up an Ayurveda chair in Malaysia's University Tunku Abdul Rahman. Apart from this, a decision has also been taken to establish a Tiruvalluvar Chair in the University of Malaya.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh pays tributes to Indian Coast Guard DG Rakesh Pal at his residence in New Delhi on Tuesday

RSS, affiliates to discuss better cooperation at Palakkad meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n NEW DELHI

Senior office-bearers of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), its affiliates and the BJP are set to deliberate on various issues of national interest and discuss measures to enhance mutual cooperation at a three-day annual meeting in Kerala's Palakkad district that is scheduled to start from August 31. RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale, all six joint general secretaries and other senior office-bearers will participate in the meeting, the organisation's national media and publicity head Sunil Ambekar said in a statement on Tuesday. "Akhil Bharatiya Samanvay Baithak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) will be organised this year in Palakkad, Kerala, from August 31 to September 2, 2024.

Pujanija Sarsangchalak Dr Mohan Bhagwat ji, respected Sarkaryawah Shri Dattatreya Hosabale ji, all six Sah Sarkaryawah and other senior office-bearers will participate in this meeting," the statement said. The meeting will also be attended by top functionaries and key office-bears of 32 RSS-inspired organisations, including the Rashtira Sevika Samiti, Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Vishva Hindu Parishad, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, Bharatiya Janata Party, Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, Vidya Bharati and Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, it added. "During this meeting, volunteers of Sangh-inspired organisations will share information and exchange experiences about their respective work. In this meeting, there will be discussions on various issues of national interest in the present scenario, recent important

happenings and planning regarding the various dimensions of social change," Ambekar was quoted as saying in the statement. All these organisations will talk about measures for strengthening "mutual cooperation and coordination on various subjects", Ambekar said. This year's all-India coordination meet of the RSS assumes significance as it comes on the heels of top leaders of the organisation and the ruling BJP at the Centre discussing a host of issues, including strengthening coordination between the party and the Sangh as well as upcoming elections, at Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's residence last week. Hosabale, Arun Kumar, the RSS pointsman in the BJP, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP chief J P Nadda and Singh were present at the meeting.

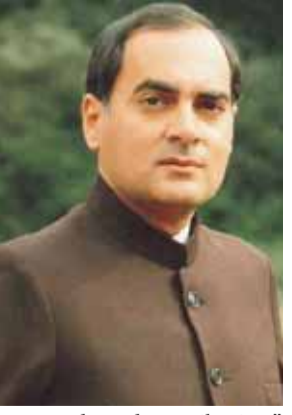
Modi pays tributes to Rajiv on 80th birth anniversary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 80th birth anniversary on Tuesday. India's youngest prime minister, Gandhi held office from 1984 to 1989. He was assassinated by a suicide bomber of the LTTE in 1991. "Tributes to our former Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi ji on his birth anniversary," Modi said in a social media post. The Congress paid rich tributes to Rajiv Gandhi with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge saying that he ignited hope in crores of Indians and brought India to the 21st century with his "unprecedented contribution". Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi paid floral tributes to his father at his memorial Veer Bhumi here. "A compassionate personality, a symbol of harmony and



goodwill... Papa, your teachings are my inspiration and your dreams for India are my own, I will fulfil them taking your memories with me," Rahul Gandhi said in a social media post in Hindi. In a social media post in Hindi, Kharge said today the country is celebrating 'Sadbhavana Diwas'. "Former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi was a great son of India. He ignited a ray of hope in crores of Indians and brought India to the 21st century with his



unprecedented contribution," Kharge said. "His many pleasant initiatives such as lowering the voting age to 18 years, strengthening Panchayati Raj, telecom and IT revolution, computerisation programme, peace accords, women empowerment, universal vaccination programme and new education policy with emphasis on inclusive education brought about transformational changes in the country," the Congress chief said.

Guv can't pick & choose: K'taka CM after prosecution sanction



PTI n BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said Governor Thawarchand Gehlot should function like a representative of the President of India and not the central government. He said the Governor should not 'pick and choose' and be selective in the matter of granting sanction for prosecution.

"Governor is a constitutional post and we respect it. What we say is that he should work as a representative of the President of India and not the Central government," Siddaramaiah told reporters here.

Gehlot on August 16 granted sanction permitting investigation against Siddaramaiah under 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act and prosecution under Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, in connection with the Mysuru Urban Development

Authority site allotment 'scam.'

The Chief Minister recalled that the Karnataka Lokayukta had sought Governor's approval to prosecute Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H D Kumaraswamy on November 23, 2023 in connection with Sri Sai Venkateshwara Minerals case but till now no permission has been granted. The state ombudsman on Monday again submitted a proposal to the Governor seeking his permission to file a charge-sheet against Kumaraswamy, who had allegedly granted mining lease to the private firm when he was the Chief Minister in 2007 in violation of law. Siddaramaiah also pointed out that the Governor did not give permission to the Lokayukta to prosecute former BJP Ministers Shashikala Jolle, Murugesh Nirani and G Janardhana Reddy.

"On the other hand, T J

BJP MP hits out at Cong leaders for targeting Guv

PTI n BENGALURU

BJP MP Lahar Singh Siroya on Tuesday hit out at Congress leaders for allegedly targeting Karnataka Governor Thawarchand Gehlot for granting sanction for prosecution of Minister Siddaramaiah on corruption charges.

"Revenue Minister (Krishna Byre Gowda) in the Siddaramaiah cabinet has called the Governor from a Dalit family 'Nalayak'. Another Congress MLC (Ivan D'Souza) has said he

will barge into Raj Bhavan and give the 'Bangladesh treatment' to the Governor," the Rajya Sabha member said.

"It is now beyond doubt that Congress is following Rahul Gandhi's anarchy formula," he said in a post on 'X'. Congress President M Mallikarjun Kharge, who is a Dalit, is also a 'Nalayak' ? he asked.

Congress, Siroya alleged, is made up of dynasts and elites who don't value anything or anybody except their self interest.

"Will Kharge Ji sack the Minister and MLC?"

Abraham lodged a (private) complaint against me with the Governor on July 26 at 11 am and 10 hours later I was served a show-cause notice. Isn't it discrimination? That's the reason that the Governor was not to use 'pick and choose' and should not do it selectively," Siddaramaiah said.

In his writ petition challenging the Governor's order in the High Court on Monday, the Chief Minister submitted that it was issued without due application of mind, in violation of statutory mandates, and contrary to constitutional principles, including the

advice of the Council of Ministers, which is binding under Article 163 of the Constitution of India. Siddaramaiah, who has vehemently denied any wrongdoing, said the Governor's decision is legally unsustainable, procedurally flawed, and motivated by extraneous considerations.

On the petition filed by him, the High Court passed interim orders directing the trial court to defer proceedings on complaints against him and further instructing that no precipitative action be taken pursuant to the sanction till August 29.

7 dead, 6 injured as auto-rickshaw rams into stationary truck in MP



PTI n CHHATARPUR (MP)

Seven persons, including a one-year-old child, were killed and six others injured after an auto-rickshaw rams into a stationary truck from behind in Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh early on Tuesday, officials said.

The accident took place under the Civil Line police station limits when the rickshaw was going towards Bageshwar on Khajuraho-Jhansi highway around 5 am, a police official said.

"Thirteen persons were travelling in the auto-rickshaw and seven of them were killed while six others injured after the vehicle collided with a truck on Jhansi-Khajuraho Road,"

Superintendent of Police (SP) Agam Jain said. The victims were going from Mahoba (in Uttar Pradesh) to Bageshwar Dham in Chhatarpur, he said. Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Akhil Rathore said that as per the initial information, the CNG-run auto-rickshaw rams into the stationary truck from behind.

Three seriously injured persons are being referred to Jhansi for further treatment, he said. The deceased were identified as autorickshaw driver Prem Narayan (46), one year-old Asma, Janardan Yadav (45), Manu Shrivastava (25), Govind Shrivastava (35) and Nanni Bua (42) and Lalu (age not known), the officials said.

Centre prioritising eastern India's export growth, says Pradhan



PTI n KOLKATA

Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday emphasised the need to enhance exports from eastern India and sought cooperation from the state governments in the region.

He also underscored the government's commitment to ensuring the region benefits from various free trade agreements under the export promotion policy.

In this year's budget, eastern India was highlighted as a priority area for development under the Purvodaya scheme, with matching infrastructure creation being a key focus, Pradhan said on the sidelines of an Exim Conference organised by the CII here.

"We have initiated long-term policy reforms, particularly in the mineral sector, which have already begun benefiting the eastern states," he said.

"The Centre is making efforts, but state governments must cooperate. Industrial growth and job opportunities are contingent on a stable environment," he said.

Three of family among 5 killed in landslides in Tripura

PTI n AGARTALA

At least five people, including three members of a family, were killed and one villager went missing after landslides triggered by incessant rain occurred at three places in Tripura, police said on Tuesday.

The three members of a family died at Debipur in South Tripura district when their house collapsed due to a massive landslide on Monday night, Santirbazar Sub Divisional Magistrate Abhedananda Baidya told PTI over phone.

The deceased were identified as Trisankar Chakma, his wife Rajini and his daughter Binita. Maui Reang, aged 52, was killed in a landslide in Gumati district's Karbook area on Monday, while another villager went missing. Additional District Magistrate (ADM) BB Das said.

A 14-year-old boy died when mounds of earth fell on his house in Champlai area in Khowai district on August 19, a police officer said.

Chief Minister Manik Saha on Tuesday instructed the district administrations to take appropriate action to prioritise public safety and mitigate the impact of the natural calamity.

Many low-lying areas of the Santirbazar subdivision have been submerged due to heavy rain, Baidya said.

West Bengal seeks SC stay on HC order striking down OBC status of many castes

PTI n NEW DELHI

The West Bengal government on Tuesday sought an urgent hearing by the Supreme Court of its appeal against the Calcutta High Court verdict striking down the OBC status of several castes, mostly Muslim groups, in the state for granting them reservation in public sector jobs and admissions in state-run educational institutions.

The top court said it will hear the pleas on the issue on August 27.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the state government, told a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra that the high court verdict needed to be stayed as it was affecting the admission of candidates who have cleared the NEET-UG, 2024.

"We need a stay of the high court's verdict... The issue of scholarships is pending and



on social and economic backwardness of fresh castes it has included in the OBC list and on their inadequate representation in public sector jobs.

While issuing notices to the private litigants on the plea of the state government against the high court verdict, it had asked West Bengal to file an affidavit giving details of the consultations, if any, made by it and the state's backward classes panel before including 37 castes, mostly Muslim groups, in the OBC list.

The high court had on May 22 struck down the OBC status of several castes in West Bengal granted since 2010, holding as illegal the reservation for them in public sector jobs and state-run educational institutions.

While striking down the OBC status of these castes, the high court had said, "Religion indeed appears to have been the sole criterion" for declaring these communities as OBCs.

several villages in Bihar's Bhagalpur district were flooded on Tuesday as a portion of the embankment was breached by river Ganga, officials said.

The officials said that the water of the river is receding and no casualty has been reported yet.

The affected villagers were shifted to safer places, they said.

According to a statement issued by the Water Resources Department (WRD), "continuous high-level of Ganga exerted pressure on protecting structures along its bank in Bhagalpur district. However, from August 19, the water level has started receding. As the water level started receding, the current of the river speeded up and damaged around 60 metres of the Ismailpur-Bindtoli embankment of the river Ganga."

Several Bhagalpur villages flooded after embankment breach

PTI n BHAGALPUR

The incident caused a flood-like situation in Karari Teentanga, Budhchak and other surrounding areas of Gopalpur division. No casualty has been reported yet and villagers of the affected areas shifted to safer places", it said.

Bihar Water Resources Department minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary said that following the breach in the embankment, necessary items have been brought from outside for immediate repair.

"Besides, two teams of senior WRD officials have also been sent to the spot for immediate repair and rescue measures", the minister said on Tuesday.

Officials said incessant rainfall in the state and in catchment areas of Nepal have led to the rivers flowing above danger level at several places. Most of the rivers are in spate and flood like situation has developed in the Kosi-Seemanchal region, they said.

Doctored audio clip of CM being circulated to derail peace process: Manipur Govt

PTI n Imphal

The Manipur government said a "doctored audio clip" of Chief Minister N Biren Singh is being circulated on social media platforms to incite communal violence and derail the peace process in the state.

A press release issued by Manipur government's Directorate of Information and Public Relations on Monday night appealed to general public to not rely on such unfounded contents circulating in social media and news reports and also to refrain from involvement in spreading such false and fabricated information through any media.

It warned that people shall be prosecuted under relevant provisions of laws if found involved in spreading such unfounded and baseless content or posting and sharing of such content.

An FIR has been registered in the Cyber police station on



disinformation through doctored clips as anti-national activities" for inciting hatred and mistrust and to derail the peace process started by state and central governments at multiple levels.

It claimed that the "law and order situation has improved in the last 3 to 4 months with relentless efforts of state and central governments with no large scale confrontation except for some low scale sporadic incidents."

The statement said that "incidents of shelling of rockets and bombs in fringe areas like Kangvai, areas bordering Bishnupur, Imphal East, Jiribam and Moreh have been reported from time to time and state police and security agencies have taken steps to book the culprits and deter them. Many FIRs have been registered and investigations are going on through agencies like NIA. Security agencies have been able to control such incidents to a great extent."

Mizoram receives ` 8 cr Central assistance for helping refugees

PTI n AIZWAL

The Mizoram government has received financial assistance amounting to Rs 8 crore from the Centre to provide relief to over 43,000 people from Myanmar, Manipur and Bangladesh, who have taken refuge in the state, the Assembly was informed on Tuesday.

Home Minister K Sapdanga said that Rs 3 crore was received from the Centre during the previous Mizo National Front (MNF) rule, while the state got Rs 5 crore during the current Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) administration.

He was replying to a question from opposition MNF member Ramthanmawia.

Sapdanga said that Rs 3 crore received during the previous government was used for providing amenities to refugee camps and other assistance to the people who came from Myanmar.

The remaining Rs 5 crore has not been used and it will be utilised for relief to the refugees, he said.

According to the state home department, a total of 43,737 refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh and internally displaced people (IDPs) from Manipur have taken shelter in different parts of the state



as of August 13. Refugees from Myanmar accounted for the highest number at 33,724, followed by IDPs from Manipur (7,999) and Bangladeshi refugees (2,014), it said.

East Mizoram's Champhai district hosted the highest number of refugees, mostly Myanmar, at nearly 14,000, the department said. The Myanmar people mostly from the Chin state, who share ethnic ties with the Mizos, have been taking shelter in Mizoram since May 2023 due to ethnic violence between Meiteis and the Kukis in the neighbouring state.

The Bawm people, one of the Mizo tribes, from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) migrated to the state in November 2022 due to the alleged military offensive by the Bangladesh army during its crackdown on an ethnic insurgent group in CHT.

The Kuki-Zo people from Manipur, who also share ethnic ties with the Mizos, have been taking shelter in Mizoram since May 2023 due to ethnic violence between Meiteis and the Kukis in the neighbouring state.

Coaching student found dead in 'suspicious' condition in Kota hostel, parents refuse probe



PTI n KOTA

An 18-year-old coaching student was found dead in a suspicious condition in the bathroom of his hostel room here, police said on Tuesday. A police team reached the hostel room upon information from the hostel's caretaker and collected evidence but did not proceed with registration of an FIR on the request of the teenagers' parents, they said.

The parents also refused to conduct a postmortem, following which the body was handed over to them for last rites, they added.

The deceased was identified as Kushagra Rastogi, a resident of Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, who was staying with his mother in the hostel in the Jawahar Nagar area, where his body was found on Monday, police said.

In April this year, Rastogi was enrolled at coaching institute

in Kota for admission to an engineering course and began living in the hostel, they said.

On Monday morning, the teenager as usual went to the bathroom to freshen up after he woke up, DSP of the area, Rajesh Taylor, said citing the deceased's mother.

When the boy did not come out even after 15-20 minutes, the woman knocked on the bathroom door and found it unbolted with her son lying unconscious on the floor inside, Taylor added.

Rastogi was rushed to a hospital, where doctors administered him CPR but on noticing no sign of revival, they declared him dead, Circle Inspector at Jawahar Nagar police station, Harinarayan Sharma said.

The deceased's parents refused a postmortem, so the body was handed over to them without lodging any case in the matter, Sharma said.

1992 Ajmer rapes: POC SO court sentences six to life term

PTI n JAIPUR

A POC SO court has sentenced six accused in the sensational Ajmer sex scandal of the early 1990s to life imprisonment.

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) court judge Ranjan Singh also slapped fines of Rs 5 lakh on each of the accused.

Nafees Chishti, Naseem alias Tarzan, Salim Chishti, Iqbal Bhati, Sohail Gani and Sayed Zameer Hussain were convicted of being involved in the crime, prosecution counsel Virendra Singh said. Bhati was brought to Ajmer from Delhi in an ambulance. The Ajmer sex scandal came to light in 1992.

More than 100 girls were victimised by a gang, whose members befriended them and shot their photographs in compromising situations, and later raped them.

While 18 people were accused in the case, a separate trial was conducted for these six accused. The other accused have either completed their term or been acquitted by the courts.

The girls, aged between 11 and 20 years, studied in a famous private school in Ajmer. They were called to a farmhouse, where they were raped.

Justice Hema panel report: Kerala Govt ought to be ashamed, says Tharoor

PTI n THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Congress Working Committee (CWC) member Shashi Tharoor on Tuesday came down heavily against the Kerala government for not acting on the Justice Hema Committee report, which according to him was a "smoking gun" that everyone ignored.

The Thiruvananthapuram MP, addressing the media after participating in the Birth Day commemoration of Rajiv Gandhi here at the District Congress Committee office, said that it is utterly shameful and shocking that the government sat on this report for nearly five years and now released it under duress.

"I saw a statement by the minister for cultural affairs, stating that these ladies could have come to the government and made a complaint, and they have only given a complaint to the commission. But the commission is appointed by the government. So, what kind of excuse is this?" Tharoor asked.

He said it was absolutely indispensable that action be taken on the basis of the report.



"The state government, frankly, ought to be ashamed of itself," Tharoor said. He said it is unforgivable to see the image of the Kerala film industry, which has a worldwide reputation, being tarnished this way after creating an unsafe working environment for women and perpetuating it through acts of intimidation, blackmail, and worse.

He wondered how a state that was the first in the world to educate girls at the primary level about 200 years ago, allowed this to happen. "And worse is how those who are in authority in the state refused to do anything about a report that is a smoking gun sitting on their desk, and they are just pretending not to see the smoke," Tharoor said.



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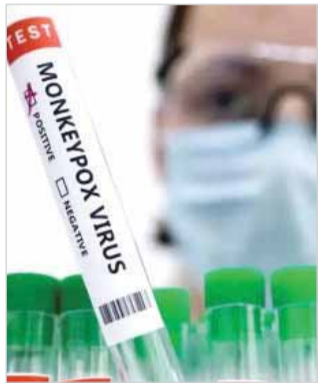
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Take no chances!

Mpox is becoming a global concern. While there is no need to push the panic button yet, it is important to remain watchful

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is now facing another significant health challenge: Mpox, previously known as monkeypox. This viral disease, which has traditionally been confined to certain regions of Africa, has seen a disturbing rise in cases across the globe, prompting widespread concern and action from health authorities. Mpox is caused by the monkeypox virus, a member of the Orthopoxvirus genus, which also includes the smallpox virus. The good news is that it is not fatal in most cases and is curable. There is no specific treatment for mpox but most people recover in a few weeks. Supportive care and pain control can help people with good immune systems while those with low immunity can recover with medical treatment. While it is less deadly than smallpox, Mpox can still cause severe illness, especially in those with compromised immune systems. The virus is primarily transmitted to humans from animals, but human-to-human transmission can also occur, particularly through direct contact, bodily fluids, respiratory droplets, or contaminated materials like bedding. Mpox's symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, chills, and a distinctive rash that often starts on the face and spreads to other parts of the body.



As they say, once bitten twice shy, we have just wriggled out of corona pandemic and cannot afford to have another pandemic. It is not an epidemic but can become one if preventive measures are not taken. After a surge in Mpox cases globally Indian airports have ramped up surveillance and precautionary measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued a nationwide advisory, urging airports to intensify screening processes and ensure that protocols for identifying and isolating potential cases are strictly followed. The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported an uptick in Mpox cases across several regions, with particular concern in areas where the virus had previously been under control. Travellers exhibiting symptoms such as fever, rash, or swollen lymph nodes are being referred for further medical evaluation. Major international airports in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru are at the forefront of these preventive measures. Special medical teams have been stationed at these hubs to conduct rapid assessments and ensure that any suspected cases of Mpox are swiftly isolated and treated. The focus is not just on inbound passengers; outbound travellers are also being advised to take precautions, particularly if they are heading to regions experiencing outbreaks. While India has not yet reported a significant number of Mpox cases, the proactive measures being implemented at airports are part of a broader strategy to prevent the virus from gaining a foothold in the country. Health experts emphasise that early detection and isolation are key to controlling the spread of Mpox, particularly in a densely populated country like India, where an outbreak could have severe consequences.

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PICTALK



Flowers in full bloom in Amrit Udyan at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi

RANJAN DIMRI

Cyber security: Reducing attack surfaces in the digital age

As cyber threats become more sophisticated, cybersecurity requires a proactive approach. Advancing security practices through Zero Trust principles is key

As cyber threats continue to evolve, it's important to remember cybersecurity is not a one-time task but an ongoing process. Advancing cybersecurity and Zero Trust maturity starts by focusing on three core practice areas: reducing the attack surface, detecting and responding to cyber threats and recovering from a cyberattack throughout the infrastructure, including edge, core and cloud. The attack surface refers to all potential areas in an environment that a cyber attacker can target or exploit. These points can include software vulnerabilities, misconfigurations, weak authentication mechanisms, unpatched systems, excessive user privileges, open network ports, poor physical security and more. This is achieved by minimizing the potential vulnerabilities and entry points that attackers can exploit to compromise a system, network or organization across various domains including the edge, the core or the cloud. Some ways we can strengthen our security posture: **Apply Zero Trust principles:** Zero Trust is a security



concept centred on the belief that organizations should not automatically trust anything inside or outside their perimeters and instead must verify everything trying to connect to their systems before granting access. Organizations can achieve a Zero Trust model by incorporating solutions like micro-segmentation, identity and access management (IAM), multi-factor authentication (MFA) and security analytics, to name a few. **Patch and update regularly:** Keeping operating systems, software and applications up to date with the latest security patches helps address known vulnerabilities and minimize the risk of exploitation. **Ensure secure configuration:** Systems, networks and

devices need to be correctly configured with security best practices, such as disabling unnecessary services, using strong passwords and enforcing access controls, to reduce the potential attack surface. **Apply the principle of least privilege:** Limit user and system accounts to only have the minimum access rights necessary to perform their tasks. **Use network segmentation:** Dividing a network into segments or zones with different security levels helps contain an attack and prevents lateral movement of a cyber threat by isolating critical assets and limiting access between different parts of the network. **Ensure application security:** Implementing secure coding practices, conducting regular security testing and code reviews and using web application firewalls (WAFs) help protect against common application-level attacks and reduce the attack surface of web applications. **Utilize AI/ML:** According to the Dell Technologies 2024 Innovation Catalyst report, 58% of Indian businesses feel GenAI will provide automation to help

with the efficiency and scale needed to deal with the influx of threats. We can leverage AI capabilities to help proactively identify and patch vulnerabilities, significantly shrinking the attack surface. **Work with suppliers who maintain a secure supply chain:** Ensure a trusted foundation with devices and infrastructure that are designed, manufactured and delivered with security in mind. Suppliers that provide a secure supply chain, secure development lifecycle and rigorous threat modeling keep you a step ahead of threat actors. **Educate users and promote awareness:** By proactively implementing these measures, organizations can effectively reduce the attack surface, helping to mitigate risks and making it more challenging for adversaries to exploit vulnerabilities, enhancing the overall defence posture against new and emerging threats. (The writer is Director and General Manager, Data Protection Solutions, Dell Technologies India; views are personal)



RIPU BAJWA

Another surprise regime change in neighbourhood



ASHOK K MEHTA

Amid economic distress and a coup, India's once strong alliance with Bangladesh teeters on uncertainty, as anti-India sentiment rises and strategic interests hang in the balance

Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned in his Independence Day speech that India is worried about developments in Bangladesh, especially about the safety of Hindus and other minorities there. Promptly Professor Yunus head of Caretaker Administration called Modi to reassure him of their safety. The soft coup in Dhaka, the fourth in 53 years is almost wholly student-driven following Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina losing touch with her people and mounting economic distress. The killing of 200 and more protesters, many students, was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. COAS Gen Waqur Uz Zaman was left with only one choice: order Hasina to flee giving her 45 minutes.



The General must have foreseen this contingency as "the day after" scenario. Otherwise, the speed and orderly nature of the transition could not have been possible. The sentiment on the street is anti-Hasina with the Sheikh Mujib legacy she nurtured of freedom from Pakistan through a liberation war aided by India would not have been so bitterly decimated. Anti-India feelings largely stem not only from India's blind support for Hasina despite the loss of democratic credentials but also some grievances that Bangladesh has nursed mainly like BSF firing on the border, not sharing Teesta waters and disallowing use of the Siliguri corridor. Most of all, they were peeved by Home Minister Amit Shah calling Bangladeshis 'insects' and loud advocacy of CAA/NRC. Giving refuge to Hasina indefinitely could increase the anger against India. Critical strategic interests are at stake. Much has been written about the events of July and August in Bangladesh. Astonishing is the importance attached to conspiracy theories: naming the US, and CIA coveting St Martin Island which is also claimed by Myanmar and other usual suspects, Pakistani, ISI and China. While some of these players will certainly fish in troubled water, it is the role of Islamists and jihadi organisations India must

fear. Even though a Nobel laureate, liberal democrat and regionalist, Mohammad Yunus is to lead the caretaker administration has said he will be guided by the students and their leaders Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud. The mystery in this drama is the extent to which Gen Zaman, a relative of Sheikh Hasina, was involved in the coup. No regime change has occurred in Bangladesh without the Army either facilitating or executing it. Sheikh Hasina's greatest achievement was transforming Bangladesh once a basket case into the fastest-growing economy in South Asia with human development indices surpassing all regional countries except Sri Lanka. Its garment industry was world-class till periodic protests and strikes over wages and COVID began to wreck it. Bangladesh grew at a steady 6.5 per cent for two decades with a per capita income of USD 2600, much higher than India's. But its growth story ended after it sought IMF assistance of USD 4.76 bn and inflation crossed 10 per cent. Trade with India had grown phenomenally to nearly USD 18 bn. An FTA in the works for a long, had it materialised, Bangladesh's exports would have risen 182 per cent. The largest tourist population comes from Bangladesh giving



INDIA IS FACED WITH A CHALLENGING CONUNDRUM IN THE COUNTRY IT HELPED IN ITS BIRTH. THE GOLDEN PERIOD IN BILATERAL RELATIONS WHEN INDIA'S INTERESTS WERE BEING SUITABLY ADDRESSED IS BOUND TO CHANGE

a filip to medical tourism. Defence relations have enhanced miraculously: it is a story of turning foe into friend. This is quite extraordinary, given that Bangladesh used to portray India as an enemy in its war games. India has granted a \$500bn LoC for defence purchases but in Bangladesh's layered defence procurement system controlled by Armed Forces Division once led by Gen Zaman, India is at the lowest level for consideration for hardware with China topping the list at A level. Aircraft, submarines, tanks, artillery and other equipment are mainly of Chinese origin. Bangladesh is a nation in disarray being led by student leaders whose wishes are being promulgated by the Caretaker Administration. India is faced with a challenging conundrum in the country it helped in its birth. The golden period in bilateral relations when India's interests were being suitably addressed is bound to change given the fact that the new regime is targeting Sheikh Hasina and everyone associated with her or the Awami League. That the Bangladesh Army will become the conduit for a near-normal relationship is what India must hope for. Geography and economic logic also suggest that for Bangladesh to meet the chal-

lenge of its economic distress India's assistance will be necessary. Dhaka will not forget how New Delhi bailed out Colombo after its default in 2022 and the student protest movement which could not transform Sri Lanka's polity. Former only Hindu Chief Justice of Bangladesh Surendra Kumar Sinha who was sacked by Hasina said last week that everything that has happened in Bangladesh in the last few days has been unconstitutional and he cited the various changes brought about by the Caretaker Administration. In a revolution or a coup the constitution is one of several casualties. The Administration has said that institutional reforms will include reviewing the constitution before any election can take place. All this will take time. It is the early days of regime change with the future clouded with uncertainty. India's new geo-political challenge is shaping and it must now begin engaging relevant stakeholders. What it will do about Sheikh Hasina and Awami League will be one of many challenges. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

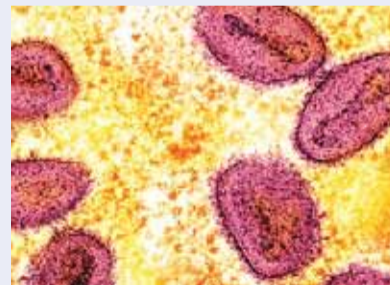
CHANKYA OF INDIAN POLITICS

Madam — As a doyen of literature and a great administrator, no one can come close to him for having used "Anna Arivalayam" as a treasure of knowledge center which paved the way for his glorious political career. The gesture from the Centre will be a welcoming one for the DMK to feel warmth that a commemorative coin of Rs.100 has been released by the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at Chennai to mark the Birth Centenary of Kalaingar Dr. M. Karunanidhi. As a prominent writer and politician, he served as the CM for over two decades. His tenure as CM was the longest in the State's history by the count of 6863 days. Whatever one can see as the light and shade in TN in state's progress, Karunanidhi was instrumental for the same. He has recorded 13 times unbeaten in all the contested assembly elections. He reaped what he sowed and the tall leader deserves the coin as an honor for his contributions. AP Thirvadi | Chennai

DOCTORS' SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT

Madam — I strongly condemn the recent horrific incident in West Bengal involving the heinous crime against an innocent 31 year old junior trainee female doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. My heartfelt condolences go to the victim's family. As a matter of fact, it is not for the first time that such horrific incidents take place in one corner or the other across the country. We have not forgotten the Nirbhaya case of Delhi. The other day, police have booked three persons, including two women, and detained two of them after a female doctor was allegedly assaulted at civic-run Sion hospital in the early hours of Sunday. Under the circumstances, resignations are not the solution and those who ask for resignation of the Chief Minister of West Bengal, will they ask for the resignation of the

M-pox is turning into a global threat



The risk of M-pox is turning as a global health emergency after its cases took a surge spike in the African continent particularly. The disease had reached western continent as well, recently Sweden too confirmed it's first ever M-pox infected case along with the USA. So far more than 1 lakh cases been reported from around 116 countries in total, however the ministry of health

and family welfare confirmed it's possible chances as low for India. But we just can't underestimate the risk from M-pox virus. Taking precautions from one's own self is the utmost way to avoid any disease coming to our body. Although there is no such designated cure and vaccine for it right now, but precautions like smallpox and cow pox can be adhere for it as well. The zoonotic diseases had turned common after their frequent transmission from the animals to the mankind, it is unfortunate that we our own self is responsible for creating this imbalance between our and animals habitat. Man is itself responsible for the tragic over exploitation of everything, the consequences are in front of us. The virus disease from squirrel and monkeys are now entered in human now, risk prevention and mitigation had to be implemented on early basis, to avoid another pandemic for the world. Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Maharashtra Chief Minister for this incident or in Uttarakhand where two days back a similar incident had happened? Instead of asking resignations, the grim situation warrants the urgent need for enhanced safety measures for health-care workers throughout the hospitals in the country. S K Khosla | Chandigarh

LATERAL ENTRY

Madam — The issue of lateral entry (Pioneer, 19th Aug. Pg.4) in the Government services politically assailed as deprivation to the reserved classes and through RSS instead of UPSC needs closer examination from administrative angle and technology gaps in the government services cadre. It is not a political issue. Neither it forfeits the interests of reserved classes in the services nor it encroaches their recruitment in the civil or subordinate services. Already several government controlled services relating to digitisation, advanced technological projects etc. have been outsourced to the

companies and entities having desired skills and resources. The patterns of recruitment of civil and subordinate services in the Central and State governments lacks appointment and engagement of specialised and skilled cadres. Presently all government services are being operated digitally through applications and online mechanisms. The traditional government services are red taped and have colonial essence which are not public oriented. In fact, UPSC must reform its recruitment systems for various services to facilitate appointments of a strong and robust cadre of technocrats highly specialised in latest technologies like cyber security, fintechs, block chain, metaverse, cloud, artificial intelligence etc. who can provide services to all government departments instead of lateral entries which will always be despised and envied within the government cadres. Vinod Johri | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

THE HIGH COST OF FAST FASHION

Sustainable clothing that is produced ethically should be our responsible fashion choice



SHAINY SHARMA

Fast fashion, which refers to the rapid production of inexpensive clothing based on the latest trends, has transformed the global fashion industry. Brands like Zara, H&M, and Forever 21 have led this movement, providing trendy, affordable clothing at an unprecedented speed. By turning runway designs into store-ready garments in just weeks, fast fashion has made the latest styles accessible to a wide audience, particularly young consumers. While this has democratized fashion, it comes with serious environmental, social, and economic consequences.

The fast fashion model thrives on its ability to meet consumer demand for low-cost, trendy clothing. The business strategy relies on efficient supply chains that quickly replicate popular styles, keeping consumers constantly engaged with new products. This approach fuels the desire for inexpensive, fashion-forward clothing, allowing consumers to experiment with various trends without spending much. For younger consumers, who often use fashion as a means of self-expression, this is particularly appealing. However, the lower quality and shorter lifespan of these clothes contribute to a cycle of overconsumption, waste, and environmental harm.

One of the biggest drawbacks of fast fashion is its environmental impact. The industry is energy-intensive, relying heavily on fossil fuels for textile production and transportation. It is estimated that the fashion industry is responsible for about 10% of global carbon emissions, surpassing the emissions from all international flights and maritime shipping combined. This is due to the widespread use of synthetic fibers, which are



derived from fossil fuels, and the energy required for manufacturing and global distribution. Furthermore, the production process consumes vast amounts of water, especially in the case of cotton, a commonly used fabric that requires thousands of liters to produce just one kilogram. Additionally, textile dyeing and finishing processes contribute significantly to water pollution. Fast fashion's environmental footprint extends beyond carbon emissions and water consumption.

Workers in fast fashion supply chains often endure poor working conditions and low wages. In many cases, these exploitative labor practices are linked to environmental degradation, as manufacturers in low-regulation regions cut costs by disregarding environmental standards. Thus, the social and environmental issues of fast fashion are intertwined. Despite these concerns, fast fashion remains popular due to its affordability and the constant influx of new styles. Many consumers, particularly those on tight budgets, are unaware of or choose to overlook the ethical and environmental implications of their purchases. However, there is a growing movement toward sustainable fashion, driven by increasing awareness of these issues. Sustainable fashion prioritizes quality over quantity, using eco-friendly materials and ethical production practices. Some brands are adopting circular economy principles, focusing on recycling, upcycling, and designing products for durability. Consumers must be educated about the environmental consequences of their choices, and governments should implement stricter regulations on textile production and promote recycling initiatives. Encouraging sustainable practices and fostering demand for eco-friendly products can push the industry toward more responsible production methods. The shift from fast fashion to sustainable alternatives is critical for reducing the industry's environmental and social toll.

In conclusion, while fast fashion has made high-fashion trends more accessible, its environmental and social costs are significant. Addressing these challenges will require concerted efforts from consumers, industry leaders, and policymakers to move toward more ethical and sustainable fashion practices.

(The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)

Gas pricing: Reforms turn into a control regime



UTTAM GUPTA

Government's decision to grant a 20 per cent premium on natural gas from the state owned new wells has added complexity to the gas pricing regime



The decision of the Union Government to grant a 20 per cent premium over the APM price (a jargon for administered or controlled price) for any natural gas (NG) that state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Limited (OIL) will produce from the 'new wells or well interventions' from their nominated fields has made the NG pricing more complicated. It is an outcome of a thought process that focuses on unshackling the oil and gas industry from price controls to start with but ends up exercising more controls.

Every year, India consumes 59.5 billion cubic metres (bcm) of NG. Of this, nearly 54 per cent or 32.13 bcm is produced domestically, and the balance is met from imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Of the domestic gas, around two-thirds is from blocks given on nomination to ONGC and OIL and from fields given under the New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP) (launched in 1999) as well as those given to private firms before the NELP. NG supplies from the aforementioned fields (known in common parlance as 'legacy fields') are governed by a particular pricing regime.

Before April 2023, under the pricing guidelines effective since November 2014, supplies from these fields used to be a weighted average (WA) of prices of NG at four international locations: Henry Hub (the USA), Alberta Gas (Canada), NBP (National Balancing Point) (the UK), and Russian Gas. The prices used for arriving at the WA were over twelve months. It was revised every six months in a financial year (FY). The four global hubs have fairly mature gas markets and the prices obtained there are pretty reasonable. Moreover, considering that the prices for twelve consecutive months were used for arriving at the WA, it smoothened out the month-to-month variations thereby ensuring that the price to the consumers was 'stable'. From April 1, 2023, the government changed the above system based on the recommendations of the Kirit Parikh committee (2022). Under the new formula, for any given month, the price expressed per million



EVERY YEAR, INDIA CONSUMES 59.5 BILLION CUBIC METRES (BCM) OF NG. OF THIS, NEARLY 54 PER CENT OR 32.13 BCM IS PRODUCED DOMESTICALLY, AND THE BALANCE IS MET FROM IMPORTS OF LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS

British thermal units (Btu) (energy units used globally for setting NG prices) is arrived at by taking 10 per cent of the monthly average of the basket of Indian crude oil in the preceding month. The price thus calculated is subject to a price band of US\$4 - 6.50 per Btu. The shift to link the price of NG with the crude oil price is flawed as natural gas is not a replacement for crude oil. The pricing of NG has to be on its own, especially when nearly half of the gas is used for urea production and power generation. Given the intimate connection of these sectors to food security and the need for affordable electricity (especially, for farmers and poor household consumers) and heavy subsidies are involved, the gas price has to be 'reasonable' and 'stable'. While the earlier formula met both these requirements, the new one effective from April 2023 doesn't as the volatility in crude prices and monthly revisions in NG price linked to crude can create uncertainties for both sectors. To avoid this, the government has put a price band.

What this means is even when the price determined based on crude linkage turns out to be higher (at the current Indian basket price of USD 77 per barrel, the NG price comes to US\$ 7.7 per Btu) than the ceiling of US\$ 6.50 per Btu, the price will be set at US\$ 6.50 per Btu. Given the movement in crude price since April 2023 and considering that in the near term, it will continue to rule well above US\$ 75 per barrel, the formula-based price will always be much more than US\$ 6.50 per Btu. So, the ceiling price will be the price to consumers thus rendering the formula redundant. Effectively, thus there is control on the gas price for two-thirds of domestic production and that too at a level,

the government wants. One wonders whether a premium of 20 per cent allowed on gas supplied from the so-called 'new wells' or 'well interventions' in the nomination fields of ONGC and OIL will make any difference to the situation on the ground.

Applying a 20 per cent premium to the formula-determined price of US\$ 7.7 per mBtu (77x0.1), we get US\$ 9.24 per mBtu. But, then there is a cap of US\$ 6.50 per mBtu. So, the price remains at US\$ 6.50 per Btu. The purpose of giving premiums is defeated. On the other hand, if the government intends to build a 20 per cent premium on the ceiling price and give US\$ 7.8 per mBtu then, it makes no sense to put a cap in the first place. The moot point is: if anyway ONGC and OIL are to be given a good price, let this be driven solely by the formula and putting a cap is unwarranted.

At least, there is an element of 'predictability'; firms on their own can calculate as to what price they will be getting. But, here we have an APM price namely US\$ 6.50 per mBtu (call it base price) that is arrived solely at the discretion of the bureaucrat. And, yet another price for supplies from the so-called 'new wells' or 'well interventions' which is arrived at by adding 20 per cent to this. This too is at the discretion of the bureaucrat. Moreover, which fields get the benefit of interventions will also be at his discretion.

Even the pricing of the remaining one-third of domestic NG supplied from the so-called deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature fields (KG-D6 operated by Reliance Industries and neighbouring KG-DWN-98/2 operated by ONGC in Krishna-Godavari basin off the Andhra Pradesh coast fall in this category) isn't free from 'discretion' and 'arbitrariness'.

Technically though, the firms can go for competitive bidding to determine the price for such supplies (referred to as a 'premium price'), this too is subject to a ceiling linked to the prices of alternate fuels including fuel oil, naphtha, and LNG. On taking charge in 2014, the Modi - government started the process of reforming gas pricing by introducing formula-based pricing for legacy gas and thereafter in 2016 by permitting market-based pricing for supplies from deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature fields. But, it has ended up exercising control of both. Meanwhile, the Kirit Parikh committee had recommended the de-regulation of difficult gas fields' prices by January 1, 2026, and the de-regulation of APM prices for gas supplies from the legacy fields by January 1, 2027. But, the government is silent on these recommendations. In fact, by adding more categories (read: 'new wells' and 'well interventions'), it has given a signal that the administered/controlled pricing regime for NG and attendant bureaucratic red tape is here to stay.

Delivering the 75th Independence Day address on August 15, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi set the country a target to achieve self-reliance in energy production by boosting the gas-based economy (besides giving a push to electric mobility and hydrogen production). He wanted the share of NG in the total energy mix to go up from the current around 6 per cent to 15 per cent. But, in the absence of a 'stable' and 'predictable' policy environment particularly when it comes to the most crucial aspect of pricing of gas, this won't be possible.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Healthcare under siege: Rising violence, gender disparity, and the fight for justice

The silent struggles of healthcare workers, often overlooked, reveal a disturbing reality of increasing violence in hospitals and clinics

During his Independence Day address, the Chief Justice of Telangana proudly announced that he had recommended a Protection of Advocates Act to the state government. The applause that followed made me think of the resident doctors marching through the rain in Delhi, gathering their courage to demand a law that protects healthcare professionals from the increasing violence in spaces that are supposed to be the safest.

In 2019, the draft Healthcare Service Personnel & Clinical Establishments Bill was introduced, seeking to penalise those who assault healthcare workers. However, the Home Ministry opposed it, stating that no separate law was nec-



SATENDRA SINGH

essary for doctors. A Right to Information (RTI) response from the Health Ministry later revealed that the draft Bill had been withdrawn. On July 26, 2024, the Health Minister further rejected the idea of a central law, asserting in the Lok Sabha that the newly enacted BNS and BNSS laws provided adequate protection for medical professionals. Despite this, healthcare professionals' anger is justified. Why

doesn't the public show the same solidarity as they did during the Nirbhaya case, where the horrific rape and murder of a physiotherapy student led to nationwide outrage? Even amid a national strike by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) over the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata, another tragedy was overlooked—the brutal killing of a nurse, a single mother, who went missing from a hospital in Rudrapur, Uttarakhand. Her body was found in Uttar Pradesh after she had been strangled and bludgeoned to death. Similarly, in Gujarat in 2020, an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) worker was raped while on duty. According to a study published in the

Journal of Global Health Reports, 32% of ASHA workers face sexual violence, while 88% experience emotional and economic abuse. Disturbingly, 12% report sexual violence from their husbands, and 64% from beneficiaries and their families. These incidents highlight the pervasive threat healthcare workers face. Last year, a doctor allegedly raped a nurse at a clinic in northeast Delhi. In another case, a Bhopal doctor was accused of confining and raping a 19-year-old patient. Just recently, at the same medical college in Bhopal, a resident doctor was suspended for inappropriate behavior with a cancer patient. Violence against healthcare workers also extends beyond sexual violence. Last month in Manipur, armed assailants



attacked a children's hospital, and two weeks later, a patient was shot dead at Delhi's GTB Hospital due to mistaken identity. These violent acts, whether committed against doctors, nurses, paramedics, or patients, must be addressed with the same urgency and seriousness. However, the IMA has yet to make a statement regarding the rape and murder of the nurse in Rudrapur.

Have they suspended the membership of the Principal of RG Kar Medical College, implicated in the Kolkata case? Has the Indian Orthopaedic Association (IOA) taken action against its accused member?

A journalist recently tweeted during a doctors' protest, asking where the female doctors were in leadership positions. This raises a crucial point. According to a study published in PLOS Global Public Health, out of 46 professional medical associations in India, only 9 (less than 20%) are headed by women. Neither the Academy of Hospital Administration (AHA) nor the IOA has ever had a female president. This is despite women demonstrating remarkable leadership in healthcare—both my hospital

and medical college are currently led by women doctors, and more than 50% of the heads of departments are women. Clearly, women are capable of leading in healthcare, but they remain under-represented in top positions. Of the 64 individuals currently serving as presidents and secretaries of the 32 state chapters of the IMA, only three are women.

It's time to move beyond token representation. Women doctors must be given more leadership opportunities. One of the most balanced and comprehensive statements on the issue of healthcare violence has come from Women in Global Health India. Their statement calls for an end to sexual violence in all healthcare settings, and it emphasizes that

anyone—whether doctor, nurse, paramedic, or even political party member—who commits such violence must face severe consequences. Eleanor Roosevelt, who played a key role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, once famously said that human rights begin in small, often overlooked places.

In the context of today's healthcare system, that means the seminar room of RG Kar Medical College or the private hospital in Rudrapur—spaces where violence has occurred, but which remain untouched by reforms.

(The writer is director-professor at the University College of Medical Sciences and a disability justice advocate. Views are personal)

Israel recovers bodies of 6 hostages from Gaza

AP n JERUSALEM

The Israeli military said Tuesday that it recovered the bodies of six hostages taken in Hamas' October 7 attack that started the war in Gaza, as US and Arab mediators tried to advance an agreement to halt the fighting and release scores of other militant captives.

The military said its forces recovered the bodies in an overnight operation in southern Gaza, without saying when or how the six died. A forum for hostage families said they were kidnapped alive. Hamas says some captives have been killed and wounded in Israeli airstrikes.

An Israeli airstrike on Tuesday killed at least 10 people at a school-turned-shelter in Gaza City, in what the military said was a precise strike on a Hamas command center. Another strike killed a mother and her five children in central Gaza. The recovery of the remains is



Protesters march to the Democratic National Convention after a rally at Union Park Monday, in Chicago. AP/PTI

a blow to Hamas, which hopes to exchange hostages for Palestinian prisoners, an Israeli withdrawal and a lasting cease-fire. But it was also likely to increase pressure on Israel's government to reach a deal to

free dozens of hostages who are still believed to be alive. The military said it had identified the remains of Chaim Perry, 80; Yoram Metzger, 80; Avraham Munder, 79; Alexander Dancyg, 76; Nadav

Popplewell, 51; and Yagev Buchstav, 35. Metzger, Munder, Popplewell and Buchstav had family members who were also abducted but freed during a November cease-fire. Munder's death was confirmed on Tuesday by Kibbutz Nir Oz, the farming community where he was among around 80 residents who were taken captive. It said he died "after enduring months of physical and mental torture." Israeli authorities had previously determined that the other five were deceased.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised the recovery effort and said "our hearts ache for the terrible loss." "The State of Israel will continue to make every effort to return all of our hostages — both alive and dead," he said in a statement.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant also praised the operation, which he said had been carried out inside Hamas' vast

tunnel network. There were no immediate reports of any casualties among Israelis or Palestinians in the recovery operation.

Hamas is still believed to be holding around 110 hostages captured in the October 7 attack. Israeli authorities estimate around a third of them are dead. Blinken, who is on his ninth visit to the region since the start of the war, said Monday that Netanyahu has accepted a proposal to bridge gaps in the cease-fire talks, which have dragged on for months, and called on Hamas to do the same.

Hamas has accused the United States of embracing Israeli demands and trying to impose them on the militant group. There still appear to be wide gaps between the two sides, including Israel's demand for lasting control over two strategic corridors in Gaza, which Hamas has rejected.

Hamas-led militants burst through Israel's defenses on

Biden backs Harris as 'historic President'



President Joe Biden embraces Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris during the first day of Democratic National Convention, Monday, in Chicago. AP

PTI n CHICAGO

Kamala Harris will be a "historic president", US President Joe Biden has said, as he passed the baton of the Democratic Party to her and made a strong pitch to American voters to vote for her to preserve democracy.

Biden, 81, received an emotional standing ovation when he came on stage at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on Monday night. Harris, 59, is scheduled to formally accept the Democratic Party's presidential nomination on Thursday to take on Republican rival Donald Trump, 78, in the November 5 election.

"Are you ready to elect Kamala Harris as the President of the United States of America," Biden said, amidst cheers from thousands of members and leaders of the Democratic Party at its national convention here in this windy city as he urged his countrymen to vote and elect his deputy of four years.

Biden said Harris would be a "historic president." "She'll be a president respected by world leaders because she already is. She'll be a president we can all be proud of, and she will be a historic president who puts her stamp on America's future," he said.

"We need to preserve our democracy. We need you to beat Donald Trump and elect Kamala and Tim as President

and Vice President of the United States," Biden said. He said Trump will find out women's power in 2024. Harris will soon serve as the 47th President of the United States, Biden said, amidst cheers from his party members and leaders.

"We saved democracy in 2020 and we must do it again in 2024," he said urging his countrymen that America's future is in their hands.

"Let me ask you: Are you ready to vote for freedom? Are you ready to vote for democracy and for America? And let me ask you: Are you ready to elect Kamala Harris and Tim Waltz as president and vice president?" he asked.

Biden appeared to wipe away a tear as he hugged his daughter Ashley Biden who introduced him at the four-day convention. Observing that the decisions that were being made now would determine the fate of the world and the country, Biden said he and Harris had four years of extraordinary progress in the United States.

Biden said Trump promised infrastructure week every week for four years. "He never built a damn thing," he alleged.

"Together, we are building a better America," he said as he listed out some of the key achievements of the Biden-Harris administration.

"You cannot say you love your country only when you win," he said.

Iran behind Trump campaign hack: US intelligence officials

AP n WASHINGTON

US intelligence officials said Monday that Iran is responsible for the hack of Donald Trump's presidential campaign. It was the first US government attribution of responsibility for a cyber intrusion that the Republican nominee had previously linked to Tehran.

The FBI and other federal agencies said Iran perceived this year's presidential election to be particularly consequential and was determined through the hacking operation and other activities to interfere in American politics and "to stoke discord and undermine confidence in our democratic institutions."

"We have observed increasingly aggressive Iranian activity during this election cycle, specifically involving influence operations targeting the American public and cyber operations targeting Presidential campaigns," said a



joint statement from the FBI, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. The statement said the Iranian hackers have "sought access to individuals with direct access to the Presidential campaigns of both political parties." The FBI has been investigating attempts to gain access to Democrat Kamala Harris' campaign.

Ex-Saudi official alleges Prince Mohammed forged king's signature on Yemen war decree

AP n DUBAI

A former Saudi official on Monday alleged that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman forged his father's signature on the royal decree that launched the kingdom's yearslong, stalemated war against Yemen's Houthi rebels. Saudi Arabia did not respond to questions over the allegations made without supporting evidence by Saad al-Jabri in a BBC interview first published Monday. Al-Jabri later acknowledged the allegations separately in detail in a statement to The Associated Press. The kingdom has described al-Jabri as "a discredited former government official." Al-Jabri, a former major general and intelligence official who lives in exile in Canada, has been in a long dispute with the kingdom as his two children have been imprisoned in a case he describes as an attempt to lure him back to Saudi Arabia. Al-Jabri also alleges that the crown prince wants him assassinated. "I am

not a dissident, nor did I put myself in this situation by choice," al-Jabri told the AP. "I was a high-ranking Saudi official who dedicated himself to safeguarding his country, recognized for saving thousands of Saudi and Western lives. Now I am a father doing everything possible to secure the release of his children."

His allegation comes as Prince Mohammed serves as Saudi Arabia's de facto leader, often meeting leaders in place of his father, 88-year-old King Salman.

Prince Mohammed's assertive behavior, particularly early in his ascension to power around the beginning of the Yemen war in 2015, has extended to a wider crackdown on any perceived dissent or power base that could challenge his rule.

Al-Jabri first told the BBC a "credible, reliable" official linked to the Saudi Interior Ministry confirmed to him that Prince Mohammed signed the decree declaring war in place of his father. Prince Mohammed was the defense

minister at the time. Later, al-Jabri told the AP that he had reached a deal with U.S. counterparts in the then-Obama administration for Saudi Arabia to launch "an aerial bombardment campaign to eliminate Houthi threats, establish deterrence and force a political process without a ground intervention."

His former boss, Saudi Arabia's then-Interior Minister Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, then chaired a meeting in Saudi Arabia formalizing that plan. Prince Mohammed bin Salman, however, responded with "visible displeasure" at that meeting and said he could beat the Houthis in two months in a ground offensive, al-Jabri claimed. "Surprisingly, a royal order was later issued, overriding the agreed plan and authorizing a ground operation — without the king's knowledge and with a forged signature," al-Jabri told the AP. The U.S. State Department declined to comment on al-Jabri's claims. The war against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in

Yemen, launched with public promises by the prince it would quickly be over, has ground on for nearly a decade. The war has killed more than 150,000 people and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters.

The Houthi since the start of the current Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip have launched attacks on shipping that have disrupted traffic through the Red Sea — and led to the most intense combat faced by the U.S. Navy since World War II. Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, who later served as a crown prince for King Salman, was a trusted confidant of the U.S. in the battle against al-Qaida militants in the kingdom after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. King Salman replaced the crown prince for his son in 2017, and Prince Mohammed bin Nayef is believed to have been held under house arrest. Al-Jabri sued Prince Mohammed bin Salman in U.S. federal court, alleging the crown prince sought to have him killed after he fled abroad.

Jury clears Texas student's parents of negligence in 2018 school shooting

Galveston (AP)

The parents of a former student accused of killing 10 people in a 2018 school shooting near Houston cannot be held responsible for what happened, a jury decided Monday.

The victims' lawsuit sought to hold Dimitrios Pagourtzis and his parents, Antonios Pagourtzis and Rose Marie Kosmetatos, financially liable for the shooting at Santa Fe High School on May 18, 2018. The lawsuit alleged the parents failed to provide necessary support for their son's mental health and didn't do enough to prevent him from accessing their guns.

Authorities say Pagourtzis fatally shot eight students and two teachers. He was 17 years old at the time.

Pagourtzis, now 23, has been charged with capital murder but the criminal case has been on hold since November 2019, when he was declared incompetent to stand trial. He is being held at a state mental health facility.

In April, Jennifer and James Crumbley were sentenced to at least 10 years in prison by a Michigan judge after becoming the first parents convicted in a US mass school shooting. Pagourtzis' parents are not accused of any crime.

The lawsuit was filed by relatives of seven of the people killed and four of the 13 who were wounded in the Santa Fe attack. The attorney representing Pagourtzis told jurors that while his client did plan the shooting, he was never in control of his actions because of his severe mental illness. Attorney Clint McGuire, representing some of the victims, said the parents knew their son was depressed, getting bad grades, isolating himself, and had taken weapons from their gun cabinet and safe. McGuire said Pagourtzis also wrote disturbing Facebook posts and ordered ammunition and other items online, such as a knife with a Nazi symbol and a T-shirt that said, "Born To Kill."

German court upholds conviction of 99-year-old ex-Nazi secretary

AP n BERLIN

A German court on Tuesday rejected an appeal by a 99-year-old woman who was convicted of being an accessory to more than 10,000 murders for her role as a secretary to the SS commander of the Nazis' Stutthof concentration camp during World War II.

The Federal Court of Justice upheld the conviction of Irmgard Furchner, who was given a two-year suspended sentence in December 2022 by a state court in Itzehoe in northern Germany.

She was accused of being part of the apparatus that helped the Polish city of Gdansk, function. She was convicted of being an accessory to murder in 10,505 cases and an accessory to attempted murder in five cases. At a federal court hearing in Leipzig last month, Furchner's lawyers cast doubt on whether she really was an accessory to

crimes committed by the commander and other senior camp officials, and on whether she had truly been aware of what was going on at Stutthof.

The Itzehoe court said that judges were convinced that Furchner "knew and, through her work as a stenographer in the commandant's office of the Stutthof concentration camp from June 1, 1943, to April 1, 1945, deliberately supported the fact that 10,505 prisoners were cruelly killed by gassings, by hostile conditions in the camp," by transportation to the Auschwitz death camp and by being sent on death marches at the end of the war.

Prosecutors said during the original proceedings that Furchner's trial may be the last of its kind. However, a special federal prosecutors' office in Ludwigsburg tasked with investigating Nazi-era war crimes says three more cases are pending with prosecutors or courts in various parts of Germany.

With any suspects now at a very advanced age, questions increasingly arise over suspects' fitness to stand trial.

Germany's main Jewish leader welcomed the ruling. "For Holocaust survivors, it is enormously important for a late form of justice to be attempted," Josef Schuster, the head of the Central Council of Jews, said in a statement.

"The legal system sent an important message today: even nearly 80 years after the Holocaust, no line can be drawn under Nazi crimes," he added.

The Furchner case is one of several in recent years that built on a precedent established in 2011 with the conviction of former Ohio autoworker John Demjanjuk as an accessory to murder on allegations that he served as a guard at the Sobibor death camp. Demjanjuk, who denied the allegations, died before his appeal could be heard.

German courts previously

required prosecutors to justify charges by presenting evidence of a former guard's participation in a specific killing, often a near-impossible task.

However, prosecutors successfully argued during Demjanjuk's trial in Munich that helping a camp function was enough to convict someone as an accessory to murders committed there.

A federal court subsequently upheld the 2015 conviction of former Auschwitz guard Oskar Groening on the same reasoning.

Furchner was tried in juvenile court because she was 18 and 19 at the time of the alleged crimes, and the court couldn't establish beyond a doubt her "maturity of mind" then.

In the ruling, presiding Judge Gabriele Cirenore wrote that the fact that Stutthof wasn't always a death camp that existed for the sole purpose of extermination, such as Auschwitz or Sobibor, wasn't legally relevant.

Students in UK organise protests, submit memo in Kolkata rape-murder case

PTI n LONDON

A UK-based Indian students' group organised a protest in Scotland and submitted a memorandum to the Indian mission in Edinburgh demanding urgent steps to address gender-based violence in the wake of the rape and murder case of a medic in Kolkata. The Students' Federation of India-United Kingdom (SFI-UK) held a peaceful demonstration outside India's Consulate in Edinburgh on Monday and a delegation submitted their memo to the Acting Consul General of India, strongly condemning the brutal rape and murder of the on-duty female doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.

The group is planning further protests, including a gathering in Liverpool on Wednesday, to continue to highlight their demand for justice in a case that has sent shockwaves across India and among the

diaspora.

"Instead of actively working towards redressing the problem of gender violence and social injustice in the state of West Bengal, we are seeing the state machinery led by Mamata Banerjee indulge in theatrics and the targeting of protesting voices," said Nikhil Mathew, a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh and one of the organisers of the protests as SFI-UK secretary.

"The government has clearly failed to provide a safe space for working women in the state," added Alakata Das, another PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh and one of the organisers as SFI's Edinburgh Subcommittee Member.

In their memo handed over to the Consulate General of India in Edinburgh, SFI-UK accused the state government of "severe laxity" in its response to the incident and demanded a "gender-just" workplace for all women. "This incident

is a symptom of the rising violence against women and the negligence of the state towards its citizens. The absence of investment in public infrastructure and safety measures has a disproportionate impact on women, who are already marginalised by the patriarchal social conditions," reads the memo.

It goes on to demand a thorough judicial inquiry into the incident and the implementation of adequate workplace security measures for all medical staff.

"We stand in absolute solidarity with all those who are engaged in a determined and resolute struggle against gendered violence and social injustice steeped in power disparities, and demand immediate justice for the victim of the RG Kar Medical College & Hospital," the memo concludes. The group had issued an open letter over the weekend following a peaceful protest staged outside India House in London.

Spanish woman, believed to be oldest person in world, dies at age 117

AP n SPAIN

Maria Brnyas, an American-born Spaniard considered the world's oldest person at 117 years old, has died, her family said on Tuesday. In a post on Brnyas' X account, her family wrote in Catalan: "Maria Brnyas has left us. She has gone the way she wanted: in her sleep, at peace, and without pain."

The Gerontology Research Group, which validates details of people thought to be 110 or older, listed Brnyas as the oldest known person in the world after the death of French nun Lucile Randon last year. The next oldest person listed by the Gerontology Research Group is now Japan's Tomiko Itooka, who is 116 years old.



she had memories of crossing the Atlantic Ocean during World War I.

Her X account is called "Super Catalan Grandma" and bears the description: "I am old, very old, but not an idiot."

At age 113, Brnyas tested positive for COVID-19 during the global pandemic, but avoided developing severe symptoms that claimed tens of thousands of older Spaniards.

At the time of her death she was living in a nursing home in Catalan town of Olot.

Her family wrote that Brnyas told them days before her death: "I don't know when, but very soon this long journey will come to an end. Death will find me worn down from having lived so much, but I want to meet it with a smile, feeling free and satisfied."

Brnyas was born in San Francisco on March 4, 1907. After living for some years in New Orleans, where her father founded a magazine, her family returned to Spain when she was young. Brnyas said that

Divers search for six missing, including Mike Lynch, after yacht sinks off Sicily

AP n PORTICELLO

Police divers resumed searching Tuesday for six people believed trapped in the hull of a superyacht that sank in a storm off Sicily, including a British tech magnate recently acquitted of fraud charges, his lawyer and a key defense witness at trial.

The resting place of the luxury sailboat, off Porticello, is some 50 meters (164 feet) underwater — a depth that requires special precautions: Rescue crews said they were working in 12-minute shifts, a measure that slowed down their work to reach the cramped inside of the wreck.

The Bayesian, a 56-meter British-flagged luxury yacht, was moored about a kilometer off Porticello when a storm rolled in before 4 am Monday.

Civil protection officials said they believed the ship was struck by a tornado over the water, known as a waterspout. Fifteen of the 22 people aboard survived, including a mother who reported holding her 1-year-old baby over the waves to save her. One body has been recovered, identified by officials as the on-board chef. Fire rescue officials have said the other six on board will be considered missing until they are located in the wreckage.

Karsten Borner, the captain of the Sir Robert Baden Powell, which rescued the survivors who managed to get into a lifeboat, said he was close enough to be able to see the Bayesian as the weather came in but found it had disappeared after the storm cleared. "They said they went flat on the water and were sunk in two minutes,"

Borner said, quoting the survivors. The rotating search teams, each made up of two specialized cave divers, worked Tuesday to open up access points to get inside the wreck, which lies at a depth far beyond what most recreational divers are certified to reach. The divers have not yet been able to access the below-deck cabins because they were blocked by furniture that had shifted during the violent storm.

Rescue crews said they assume the missing six are in those cabins because the storm struck when most wouldn't be sleeping, but the teams haven't verified their presence there through portholes. Luca Cari, a spokesman for the rescue teams, said the search was proceeding much more slowly than another big shipwreck in Italy, the 2012 Costa Concordia

cruise ship that flipped on its side off Tuscany's coast, because of the depth of the wreck and the space divers have to maneuver.

"That was much simpler. Here everything is more tight," he said. Among those missing was Mike Lynch, who was once hailed as Britain's king of technology. He was cleared in June of fraud and conspiracy charges in a US federal trial related to Hewlett Packard's USD 11 billion takeover of his company, Autonomy Corp.

His wife, Angela Bacares, survived. The sailing vacation appeared to be something of a celebration after Lynch's acquittal. Some of the people who stood by Lynch throughout the ordeal were on board, including one of Lynch's US lawyers, Christopher Morvillo, and Morvillo's wife.

BNP leader asks India to extradite Hasina

PTI n DHAKA

Bangladesh Nationalist Party's Secretary-General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir on Tuesday asked India to extradite deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina to face trial as he accused her of plotting to thwart the country's revolution.

Hasina, 76, resigned and fled to India on August 5 following massive protests by students and others against her government over a controversial quota system in government jobs.

"It is our call to you that you should hand her over to the government of Bangladesh in a legal way. The people of this country have given the decision for her trial. Let her face that trial," Fakhrul was quoted as saying by the Daily Star newspaper. Talking to reporters after placing a wreath at the grave of former president and BNP founder Zia-ur Rahman in the city, Fakhrul said India is seemingly not keeping its commitment towards democracy by providing shelter to her. "Staying there, she has started various plots to thwart the

Interim govt to set up foundation for victims of violence: Yunus

PTI n DHAKA

Bangladesh's interim government on Tuesday said it will set up a foundation headed by Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus to take care of the wounded and the families of the deceased and injured who participated in the unprecedented student-led protest which led to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government. Over 600 people, including 44 police personnel, were killed since the massive protest by students over a controversial quota system in government

revolution that happened in Bangladesh," he alleged. Over 230 people were killed in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina-led Awami League government, taking the death toll to

jobs first started in mid-July. "The government has decided to set up a Foundation to take care of the wounded and the families of the deceased and wounded who participated in the student-led revolution in July-August 2024," according to the official X handle of the Chief Adviser of the Government of Bangladesh.

"Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus will head the Foundation, which will include a number of Advisers of the Interim Government, student representatives, and the family members of the

deceased and injured," it said, adding that the modalities of the foundation will be announced very soon. Hasina, 76, resigned and fled to India on August 5 following the massive protest by students against the controversial quota system. An interim government was formed and 84-year-old Yunus was appointed as its Chief Adviser. More than a dozen murder cases have been filed against Hasina, holding her responsible for the deaths of students and ordinary citizens during the police crackdown earlier this month.

its Chief Adviser. The BNP secretary general said the people of this country do not consider her offences as minor. He said they think her "fascist rule has weakened Bangladesh's independence and hindered the country's progress

for the last 15 years". During her regime, she made a debt burden of Tk 18 lakh crores for the nation and nearly USD 100 billion were siphoned off from the country, Fakhrul said, adding that all institutions of the country were destroyed during her misrule. The interim government has been doing a commendable job, he said. The main task of this interim government, which was formed through a revolution and mass upsurge, is to hand over the power to the public representatives by holding an election, Fakhrul added. "It will definitely take some time to clear the garbage the Awami League government created. It will take time to hold a proper and fair election," he said. BNP chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia, 79, was sentenced to 17 years in prison for graft in 2018 under the rule of Hasina. Zia, currently undergoing treatment for various ailments, was released on an executive order from President Mohammed Shahabuddin after the collapse of the Hasina-led Awami League government.

Another complaint in tribunal against Hasina, 23 others

PTI n DHAKA

A fresh complaint was filed on Tuesday with Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal accusing deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 23 others of committing crimes against humanity and genocide during a rally by an Islamist group in May 2013. Supreme Court lawyer Gazi MH Tamim filed the complaint on behalf of Mufti Harun Jahar Chowdhury, joint secretary general (education and law) of Hefajat-e-Islam. The Daily Star newspaper reported.

"We registered the complaint, and thus the investigation has started from today," Ataur Rahman, deputy director (admin) of the investigation agency, was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

"Once we complete the preliminary investigation and visit the place of occurrence and the tribunal is reconstituted, we, through the prosecution, will

seek arrest warrants against the accused," he said. The complaint accused Hasina and 23 others of committing crimes against humanity and genocide during a Hefajat-e-Islam rally at Motijheel's Shapla Chattar on May 5, 2013. This is the fourth complaint filed with the International Crimes Tribunal accusing the 76-year-old former premier, who resigned and fled to India on August 5 following massive protests against her government over a controversial quota system in government jobs. Of the four, three cases are connected to the recent violence centring on the quota reform movement.

The other accused includes Awami League general secretary and former road transport and bridges minister Obaidul Quader, former minister Reshed Khan Menon, former mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, ex-advisor to prime minister Salman F Rahman,

former security advisor to the prime minister Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former inspector general of police AKM Shahidul Haque, editor of ABnews24.com Subhash Singha Roy and former army chief Aziz Ahmed.

Besides them, some unnamed ministers, state ministers and lawmakers, unnamed individuals from law enforcement agencies and the then policymakers of some electronic and print media were accused. Bangladesh Nationalist Party's Secretary-General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir on Tuesday asked India to extradite Hasina to face trial as he accused her of plotting to thwart the country's revolution. Over 230 people were killed in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina-led Awami League government, taking the death toll to more than 600 since the massive protest by students first started in mid-July.

Taiwan conducts live-fire missile drills as China ramps up threats



A MIM-104C (PAC-2) Patriot short-range anti-aircraft missile launches from Pingtung County, Southern Taiwan, on Tuesday. AP/PTI

AP n JIUPENG (TAIWAN)

Taiwan's military launched surface-to-air missiles in live-fire drills conducted Tuesday in response to growing military pressure from China. The exercises took place at the Jiupeng Military Base in a remote area in southern Taiwan. Among the missiles launched were Taiwan's domestically made Sky Bow III anti-ballistic missiles along with the US-made Patriot PAC II and surface-to-air Standard missiles.

China claims the democratically ruled island of Taiwan as its own territory, to be brought under its control by force if necessary and ramped up its military threat in recent years. Beijing in particular dislikes Taiwan's new President Lai Ching-te, who took office earlier this year and whom Beijing has called a separatist.

Taipei has boosted its deterrence capabilities in response. Missiles, both domestically built and US-made, are key to its defence strategy.

Defence Ministry spokesperson Sun Li-fang said all the missiles launched Tuesday hit their targets. "This shows our training is very strict and solid," he said. Beijing did not immediately react to Taiwan's drill. China sends military jets and vessels near Taiwan frequently in what critics call an intimidation tactic. Taiwan's Defence Ministry said early Tuesday it spotted five Chinese military jets and 11 ships close to its shores over the previous 24 hours. One aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial demarcation zone between the two sides.

While its military is dwarfed by China's, Taiwan has bought high-tech weaponry from the United States, revitalised its domestic arms industry and extended the length of mandatory military service from four months to one year.

The US is bound by its own laws to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself and considers all threats to the island as a matter of great concern.

Artworks grow on Dhaka walls to memorialise protests

PTI n DHAKA

'This is New Bangladesh' — screams one of the graffiti spray-painted on the gates of an official bungalow in the Dhaka University area — one of the hotbeds of the recent anti-government protests in Bangladesh.

Another mural carries the slogan 'Long Live the Resistance' with images of the country's national flag and human hands painted on the wall. For the very few non-Bangladeshi nationals in the capital city here, these artworks invite both a sense of curiosity and intrigue, while some of the university students PTI spoke to claim that these were made by "a group of fine arts students of the Dhaka University in the last few days".

The murals look fresh with glowing and vibrant paints but they all carry a poignant mes-

sage written mostly in Bengali, and some of these mock the deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina who on August 5 resigned and fled to India after unprecedented anti-government protests.

"These murals and artworks were made by some of the students of the fine arts department at DU (Dhaka University). This is to memorialise the struggle of the students and others in bringing a change of regime and hopefully, the system ahead, as also to inspire others," Abdur Rahman, a Dhaka University student, told PTI here.

A native of the historic Comilla district of Bangladesh, about 100 km from Dhaka, Rahman is currently a first-year undergraduate student in the English Department of the 103-year-old university that is no stranger to mass protests historically.

The public square facing the TSC (Teacher Student Centre) of the university has the famous 'Anti-Terrorism Raju Memorial Sculpture' opened in 1997 where many students gather these days to raise voices for their two principal demands — "no political interference in University and Dhaka University Students Union's election be held as soon as possible". As one moves towards the road leading to the Shaheed Minar — a monument dedicated to the Bengali language movement in the country — located in the Dhaka University area, walls on both sides burn bright with thematic murals, some of them being giant ones which catch the eyes of passers-by. Some stop by to click pictures or take selfies for memories. Several hundreds of people have been killed in the protests in Bangladesh, triggered by the reinstatement of a



quota system for the allocation of jobs in civil services, and injuries suffered in its aftermath.

The fall of the Hasina government after sustained protests has been described by many Bangladeshis as the 'Second Independence of Bangladesh', or the birth of a 'New Bangladesh' or 'Notun Bangladesh' (in Bengali).

Dhaka or Dacca as it was called during the British rule served as an important city in the Bengal Presidency of undivided India and then as the capital of East Pakistan from 1947-1971 after the Partition.

Bangladesh was born in 1971 when Mukti-jodhas and Indian troops fought shoulder-to-shoulder against the Pakistani forces resulting in the birth of

a new nation with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as its first president.

Much of the legacy of 'Bangabandhu' as he was called, is under attack at present following the protests, his towering statue in Dhaka toppled on August 5, while his old murals were being defaced across the city. Many of the new murals in the Dhaka University area, mention the date '36 July', a rather quirky coinage by local protesters to describe 'August 5'. '36 July We Will Never Forget We Will Never Forgive' — reads another mural.

"The protests ran through July month which has 31 days, and the 'victory' was achieved on August 5 with the fall of a 'corrupt and dictatorial government'. But, they wanted to memorialise July, so an extra 'five days' were added symbolically to call it 'July 36' (instead of August 5).

Indonesia, Australia finalise new bilateral defence treaty

AP n MELBOURNE

Indonesia and Australia on Tuesday finalised a new bilateral defence treaty that will enhance the neighbouring nations' ability to operate their militaries in each other's territory. The agreement was reached as Indonesian president-elect Prabowo Subianto, who also serves as defense minister, met with Australian officials at the country's Parliament earlier on Tuesday. The bilateral relationship is becoming increasingly important to Australians in face of growing tensions with China. New Australian prime ministers typically make Jakarta one of their first overseas destinations. The pact will be signed within days, when Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles visits Jakarta.

Marles said the successful conclusion of negotiations for two years was significant for both countries' national security. "What this agreement will do is provide for much greater interoperability between our defense forces, it will provide for much more exercises between our defense forces, it

will see us working together the global commons to support the rules-based order and, importantly, it will allow us to operate from each other's countries," Marles told reporters.

"And in that sense, this agreement will be the deepest, the most significant agreement that our two countries have ever made," Marles added. Subianto described the agreement as "ironing out some legalistic details" and said that it achieved "great progress" in the two countries' defence cooperation.

Euan Graham, an analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute think tank, questioned the pact's strategic value to Australia.

Subianto made clear that Indonesia would remain non-aligned under his leadership, Graham said. This means Indonesia will remain among a group of countries that don't want to be officially aligned with or against any major power bloc such as the United States. "The issue is that Indonesia doesn't share the same threat perception as Australia towards China," he

added. With around 275 million people, Indonesia has 10 times the population of Australia, which has fewer than 27 million people. Subianto's overnight Canberra visit was his first to Australia since he was elected president in February. He noted that Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was the first foreign leader to congratulate him on his election victory. "We have had our ups and downs as the political situation and the geopolitical situation of course evolved, but I think we are very happy today to have several decades of very close cooperation," Subianto told reporters and added he was determined to continue "this good neighbour relationship". Albanese said he looked forward to attending the president's inauguration in October. Albanese was elected prime minister in 2022 while Indonesian President Joko Widodo was in power. "There is no more important relationship than the relationship between our two great nations," Albanese said.

Japan's governing party to choose its head on Sept 27

AP n TOKYO

Japan's ruling party said Tuesday it will hold a vote on September 27 to choose its new leader after Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's surprise announcement that he will be stepping down.

The internal election must be held by the end of September, which marks the end of Kishida's three-year term and will only include the party's parliamentarians and its 1.1 million dues-paying members. The winner will be the head of the Liberal Democratic Party and the country's prime minister as the party and its smaller coalition partner control Japan's two-chamber parliament.

Last week, Kishida — who took office in October 2021 — said he was bowing out of the race to pave the way for a new leader to form a united LDP to make a fresh start to regain public trust, badly hurt by the party's extensive corruption scandal, causing his support ratings to dip below 20 per

cent. Within days of the prime minister's declaration, local media has speculated nearly a dozen possible candidates, with some already announcing their interest in leading a party desperate for public support.

A younger lawmaker, former Economic Security Minister Takayuki Kobayashi, 49, was the first to announce his candidacy Monday. Others whose names have been floated around as possible candidates include former Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, 43, three of the party's female veterans, Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, Economic Security Minister Sanae Takaichi and former Gender Equality Minister Seiko Noda, as well as past runner-ups, Digital Minister Taro Kono as well as former Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba who is an all-time favorite among the general public.

Each candidate needs support from 20 party lawmakers to run which usually requires time to drum up.

SL sets expenditure limits for president election campaign for first time

Colombo (PTI): For the first time, Sri Lanka's upcoming presidential election on September 21 will be subject to campaign finance regulations, following the introduction of the Regulation of Election Expenditure Act in January 2023. According to a gazette notification dated August 16 and published Monday, each candidate is allowed to spend a maximum of Rs 109 per elector for election campaigning activities, totalling Rs 1,868,298,586 (approx USD 5 million) per candidate.

The expenditure limit per candidate has been set at 60 per cent of the total amount, while political party secretaries are allowed 40 per cent for their candidate's election campaign activities. The parties must submit expenditure reports to the Elections Commission within 21 days of the election results being declared, the notification stated. Incumbent president Ranil Wickremesinghe, main opposition leader Sajith Premadasa, and leader of the Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna Anura Kumara Dissanayake are the front runners.

Fire rages at Russian oil depot after drone attack

AP n KYIV

Russian authorities struggled on Tuesday to put out a massive fire in the southern Rostov region for a third consecutive day after an oil depot was hit by Ukrainian drones as Ukrainian forces push into Russia's Kursk region.

The fire at the depot in the town of Proletarsk burned across an area of 10,000 square meters, according to Russian state news agencies. There are 500 firefighters involved in the operation, and 41 of them already have been hospitalized with injuries, according to the Russian state-owned news agency TASS, citing local officials. Ukraine's Army General Staff claimed responsibility Sunday for attacking the oil depot, which was used to supply the needs of Russia's army, calling it a measure "to undermine the military and econom-

ic potential of the Russian Federation." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the daring Kursk incursion has allowed his army to capture a significant number of prisoners who could be used in exchange for captured Ukrainians, expanding on Kyiv's objectives for the mission launched two weeks ago. He earlier said that Ukraine sought to create a buffer zone that might prevent further attacks by Moscow across the border, especially with long-range artillery, missiles and glide bombs.

"Overall, this (Kursk) operation became our largest investment in the process of freeing Ukrainian men and women from Russian captivity," Zelenskyy told diplomats on Monday, according to a statement published on Telegram late in the day. "We have already captured the largest



number of Russian prisoners in one operation." Zelenskyy said the Ukrainian army has captured 1,250 square kilometers (480 square miles) and 92 settlements of Russia's Kursk region. Ukraine's incursion into Kursk, the largest attack on Russia since World War II, has exposed Russian vulnerabilities. "Our defensive actions across the border, as

well as (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's inability to defend his territory, are telling," Zelenskyy said. "Our proactive defense is the most effective counter to Russian terror, causing significant difficulties for the aggressor." But as he hailed successes in Kursk, his troops face a bleak situation in the Donbas region, where Russia is bearing down on the city of

Pokrovsk and forcing Ukrainian forces to pull back and Ukrainian civilians to flee their homes.

Russia's relentless six-month slog across Ukraine's Donetsk region following the capture of Avdiivka has cost Ukraine heavily in troops and armor. Ukrainian defenders have no choice but to pull back from positions blown to pieces by Russian artillery, missiles and bombs. Pokrovsk is one of Ukraine's main defensive strongholds and a key logistics hub in the Donetsk region. Its capture would compromise Ukraine's defensive abilities and supply routes and would bring Russia closer to its stated aim of capturing the entire Donetsk region.

Russia wants control of all parts of Donetsk and neighboring Luhansk, which together make up the Donbas industrial region.

Nine dead after consuming poisonous food in Pakistan

Karachi (PTI): Nine young people, eight of them siblings, died and one was hospitalized after reportedly eating poisonous food in Pakistan's Sindh province, a media report said here on Tuesday. The deceased include five sisters and three brothers in the age group four to 18 years.

As soon as the 10-member family and their guest had dinner on Monday night at Haibat Khan Brohi village near Pir-jo-Goth, Khairpur district, they started falling unconscious, the Dawn newspaper said. Their relatives and neighbours rushed them to Kingri Taluka Hospital where three members of the family died and their bodies were returned to the heirs without autopsy as there were no doctors to perform it. Villagers accused

paramedics and nurses of mishandling the victims in the absence of doctors, leading to the deaths of three family members. "Later, others also succumbed to the poison and hence nine siblings had died since last night," the newspaper said quoting the villagers.

The 10th victim, whose condition is unstable, is under treatment at the hospital, they said. The newspaper further quoted Gul Baig Brohi, father of the victims, who said that his daughters and sons had died due to the absence of doctors and mishandling at the taluka hospital. He also corroborated that no post-mortem examination was carried out. Area's SHO Ameer Ali Chang said that police have started an investigation of the incident even as a team of food

officials from Sukkur took samples of the leftover food eaten by the victims.

5-YEAR-OLD GIRL RAPED BY SANITATION WORKER
Lahore: A five-year-old girl was raped allegedly by a sanitation worker at a prominent hospital here in the capital of Pakistan's Punjab province, police said on Tuesday. The heinous incident took place on the third floor of Sir Ganga Ram Hospital on Monday. According to Lahore police, the sanitation worker, who is in his 20s, was committing the heinous crime, the child's cries caught the attention of nearby patients' attendants who overpowered him and handed him over to police after giving him a sound thrashing.

Sensex rebounds 370 points; bank, finance stocks spurt

PTI n MUMBAI

Stock market benchmark Sindices Sensex and Nifty found firmer ground on Tuesday, propelled by robust buying in banking, financial and auto stocks amid a largely firm trend in global equities. Besides, easing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and falling global crude oil prices further bolstered sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rebounded 378.18 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 80,802.86. During the day, the benchmark soared 518.28 points or 0.64 per cent to 80,942.96. Rising for the fourth consecutive day, the NSE Nifty surged 126.20 points or 0.51 per cent to 24,698.85.

"The domestic market started the session with a strong surge, buoyed by positive global sentiment amidst Israel-Hamas ceasefire talks and diminishing US recession fears due to recent favourable data."

"Concurrently, easing geopolitical risks and weak China demand have led to a



decline in crude prices, benefiting the domestic economy," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank, NTPC, and Sun Pharma were the major gainers.

On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Adani Ports, JSW Steel and Tata Motors were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.98 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.52 per cent.

Among the indices, financial services jumped 1.19 per cent, utilities (1.07 per cent), power (0.80 per cent), IT (0.76 per cent) and auto (0.75 per cent). Capital Goods and FMCG were the laggards. "Meanwhile, inflationary pressure in Japan and the appreciating Yen cautioned the rally. This week's Japan inflation data and FOMC minutes will provide insights into future interest rate trajectories and market trends," Nair said.

In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo settled higher, while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower.

European markets were trading with gains. The US markets ended in positive territory on Monday.

"Much of the strength and rally at Dalal Street is in the backdrop of steady SIP flows by retail investors. Global factors will be keenly watched as local investors would be eyeing the July FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting minutes to be released on Wednesday," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,667.46 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. However, Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,802.92 crore.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.72 per cent to USD 77.10 a barrel. In a range-bound trade, the BSE benchmark on Monday slipped 12.16 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 80,424.68. The NSE Nifty edged up 31.50 points or 0.13 per cent to 24,572.65 in a volatile trade.

Developed countries push to expand contributor base for new climate finance goal

PTI n NEW DELHI

As the deadline to agree on a new climate finance goal nears, developed nations are pushing to expand the list of countries responsible for contributing funds to help developing countries address climate change, with Switzerland even proposing criteria to broaden the donor base.

Submissions made by some developed countries to the UNFCCC regarding negotiations on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) — the new climate finance goal to be finalised in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November — suggest that wealthy nations might pressure countries with high emissions and high gross national income (GNI) per capita, such as Saudi Arabia, Russia and China, to contribute.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted in 1992, high-income, industrialised nations (referred to as Annex II countries) are responsible for providing finance and technology to help developing countries combat



and adapt to climate change. These countries include the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and European Union (EU) member states such as Germany, France and the UK. Some developed countries, led by the EU and the US, argue that the global economic landscape has changed significantly since 1992. They suggest that nations which have become wealthier during this period, like China and some Gulf states, should also contribute to the new climate finance goal. Developing countries view this

as an attempt to shift responsibility from those who have historically benefited from industrialisation and contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions. They argue that expecting them to contribute, especially when many are still struggling with poverty and inadequate infrastructure amid worsening climate impacts, undermines the principle of equity. In a submission to the UNFCCC last week, the European Commission said that the "collective goal can only be reached if parties with high GHG emissions and

economic capabilities join the effort".

The US said that while current contributors will continue to support developing countries, other nations with the "capacity to support others in pursuing mitigation and adaptation must also be accountable for delivering on the NCQG's support layer".

"Their contributions will also enable a larger quantum for the support layer of the NCQG," the US said, adding that contributing parties could be identified in various ways — through a "definitional approach, a criteria-based approach, a de facto approach, or otherwise".

"We are open to discussing various options. In no event are we considering a large number of new contributing parties," said the US, the world's second-largest GHG emitter. Switzerland proposed that in addition to developed countries, parties that are among the "10 largest current emitters and have a purchasing power parity-adjusted gross national income per capita of more than USD 22,000" should also contribute to the new climate finance goal.

Note floated to seek distinction between online game of skill, game of chance for FDI: Official

PTI n NEW DELHI

The department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) has circulated a note seeking views of different ministries on distinguishing between online 'Game of Skill' and 'Game of Chance' for the purpose of FDI, a senior official said.

The official said that a clear distinction between the two is necessary to seek foreign investments as online game of skill has huge potential.

In his address during the 78th Independence Day celebrations here, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called upon Indian professionals to lead the global gaming market and help establish the country as a global leader in the industry. He had emphasised the need for Indian talent to dominate not just in gaming but in game production as well by leveraging the country's rich cultural heritage.

"A concept note was circulated for inter-ministerial discussions to distinguish between the two for the purpose of FDI (foreign direct investment). We need to see how in online gaming, we can make



distinction between 'games of skill' and 'games of chance' for the purpose of FDI," the official, who does not wish to be named, said.

Certain quarters raise objections as they relate online gaming with gambling and betting. There are also issues that who would be the final authority to define these things. "We need an independent body to assess that," the official said, adding, "in our interpretation, there is no restriction when it comes to Game of Skill but the problem is who will define Game of Skill."

Online gaming as an industry is evolving and has expanded across horizons. India is the fastest growing mobile gaming market and

the annual revenue of the overall Indian gaming industry is expected to almost double to USD 6 billion by 2028 from USD 3.1 billion in 2023, a joint report by Interactive Entertainment and Innovation Council and online gaming firm Winzo has said. According to that report, the Indian gaming industry comprises over 1,400 gaming companies, including 500 gaming studios. The annual revenue for gaming is projected to reach USD 6 billion by 2028.

The GST Council last year decided that 28 per cent GST (Goods and Services Tax) will be levied at face value of entry level bets placed on gaming platforms and casinos.

Rupee rises 8 paise to 83.79 against US dollar

PTI n MUMBAI

The Indian rupee stayed firm for the second straight session and settled 8 paise higher at 83.79 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, buoyed by positive domestic equity markets, weak American currency and lower crude oil prices.

Forex traders said, foreign fund outflow, however, resisted a sharp rise in the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 83.86 against the greenback and traded in the range of 83.76 to 83.88. The unit finally settled at 83.79 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 8 paise from its previous closing level.

On Monday, the rupee settled 8 paise higher at 83.87 against the American currency. Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said the rupee rose to the highest levels in nearly two and a half weeks on a weak US dollar and positive domestic markets. "A decline in crude oil prices also supported the rupee. However, FII outflows capped

sharp gains." Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.04 per cent to 101.68.

Analysts said the US dollar declined to a seven-month low on rising odds of a rate cut by the Federal Reserve. "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.50 to Rs 84," Choudhary said, adding that concerns over upcoming PMI data from the US and Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's speech at Jackson Hole Symposium later this week may keep investors awaiting for further cues.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.31 per cent to USD 77.42 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex climbed 378.18 points, or 0.47 per cent, to 80,802.86 points. The Nifty rose 126.20 points, or 0.51 per cent, to 24,698.85 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Monday, offloading shares worth Rs 2,667.46 crore, according to exchange data.

Abandoning RBI's inflation target regime could be risky, counterproductive: Research paper

PTI n NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) inflation targeting regime has worked well and need not be abandoned in favour of a more discretionary regime that could be risky and counterproductive, a new research paper has said.

The paper titled 'Inflation Targeting In India: A Further Assessment' said the weight of food-price inflation in the CPI inflation basket should be reduced to better reflect the circumstances of Indian households.

"The RBI's inflation targeting regime has worked well. Given this record, radical changes such as broadening its mandate or abandoning the target in favour of a more discretionary regime would be risky and counterproductive," it said.

The paper is authored by economists Barry Eichengreen (University of California, Berkeley) and Poonam Gupta (NCAER). In contrast, the paper noted that the 4 per cent point target, +/-2 per cent point tolerance band and focus on headline inflation remain broadly appropriate. "That said, the regime can be



tweaked to improve performance," it suggested. The government and the RBI signed an inflation-targeting agreement in February 2015 and amended the RBI Act in May 2016. The inflation target was set by the government in consultation with the RBI with the possibility of revisiting it after five years. Accordingly, the government announced, via the Official Gazette, 4 per cent Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation as the target from August 5, 2016, with an upper tolerance limit of 6 per cent and a lower limit of 2 per cent.

For most part, the paper pointed out that targets set under the inflation-targeting agreement have been met; and on almost all counts, it has performed as envisaged.

"It has been only once that inflation exceeded the upper tolerance band of 6 per cent for three consecutive quarters (during January 2022-September 2022)," the paper said.

According to the paper, evidence points to improved outcomes during inflation targeting. "Inflation is lower and less volatile; inflation expectations are better anchored, and the transmission of monetary policy is more effective," it said.

Recently, Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran had pitched for excluding food inflation from the rate setting calls, saying that the monetary policy has no bearing on the prices of food items, which are dictated by supply side pressures.

India a priority market; seeing digital demand across new sectors: Adobe

PTI n NEW DELHI

India is a high-performing market for Adobe in Asia-Pacific region and among the fastest-growing globally, Adobe India Vice-President and Managing Director, Prativa Mohapatra has said, adding that momentum on productivity, creativity and personalisation are driving digital opportunities across new sectors.

In an interview to PTI, Mohapatra said India is a big innovation hub and a "great market" for Adobe.

"Adobe in India is a microcosm of Adobe as a whole... Today we have research, we have products and the market... And it is the second-largest base for Adobe, beyond the US," Mohapatra said, asserting that the company's focus on talent and infrastructure investments in the country, continue.

Describing Artificial Intelligence as "very transformative technology", she said the company is of the firm belief that AI has to be "responsible".

"Technologies that are transformative have to be really dealt with very responsibly," Mohapatra said, pointing out that the company operates within AI-ethics framework of accountability, responsibility, and transparency.



The power of digital has turned every business into a "technology business" irrespective of the sector they operate in, she further said. "We as Adobe, and India in particular, are in space where we are focused on productivity, creativity and experience, and that is where the opportunity lies. The opportunity is how do we make everyone creative, how do we bring productivity across business and people, and how do we upgrade personalised experiences for every customer," Mohapatra said. Businesses are experiencing AI-driven experiential growth, and new age technologies are set to unleash the power of personalisation. "In terms of evolution, the era of experience...

Personalisation is here," she said. For three consecutive years now, India has been the best-performing market in the Asia Pacific region for Adobe India and one of the fastest-growing markets globally, she said. "So that is really a great place to be in, and demand continues to be across sectors." "A couple of years back, the demand was in sectors like banking and financial services, and in travel and transportation..." These consumer-driven industries were early adopters of our technology... The good news is that B2B sectors are now adopting digital... Growth is expanding and we are unlocking new sectors," she said. The government's sharp focus on technology and

digitisation have also opened up opportunities in areas such as citizen services and e-governance.

"I am sure that with all the focus that the government has on technology, there will be lot of opportunities in that space in reaching out to citizens, bringing e-governance and productivity at scale," Mohapatra said.

Organisations have started acknowledging the power of digital in driving business momentum, she said.

"We are tracking where can digital 'use cases' become real... New ways of digital use are emerging, say, in how you buy your new car, or how you experience a new washing machine," she said. Smaller cities and towns are offering massive runway for growth.

"Tier 2-3 cities are emerging as growth drivers, as tech companies are going into these markets. Also, there are skills available in smaller cities, and accordingly a lot of growth potential. "Even the government is talking about skill-building and that is another big positive we are seeing in the market.

At the same time policy frameworks are getting more and more user-friendly, and organisation-friendly," Mohapatra said on the business drivers.

Indian firms to spend USD 45-50 bn in capex over 1-2 years, RIL to lead: Moody's

PTI n NEW DELHI

Moody's Ratings on Tuesday said rated Indian companies will spend USD 45-50 billion annually over the next 1-2 years towards capex as companies boost capacity, with the country's most valued firm Reliance Industries alone accounting for 30 per cent of the spendings.

Investments to increase vertical integration and achieve net zero targets will also keep spending high, Moody's Ratings said in a report on corporates in India and Indonesia.

"Rated Indian companies' capex will remain elevated at around USD 45-50 billion annually over the next one to two years. With an annual capex budget of around USD 15 billion spread across its different business segments, Reliance Industries alone will account for around 30 per cent of the portfolio capex," Moody's Ratings said. The oil and gas sector and Reliance Industries will collectively account for over 60 per cent of the rated Indian portfolio's spending over the next couple of years. Moody's said the seven rated oil and gas companies in India will also account for around 30 per cent of rated Indian companies' capex. These companies will spend around USD 15 billion annually to expand existing capacity and make green energy investments to reduce



carbon transition risk. For instance, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (Baa3 stable) and Indian Oil will spend USD 6 billion and USD 4 billion, respectively, in each of the next two years on reserves addition, downstream integration and energy transition, Moody's added. It also said strong earnings will continue to keep the leverage of Indian corporates low, even as companies push ahead with capital spending plans in response to consumption growth and as offshore borrowing rates remain high. Moody's said credit quality will remain robust for companies in India and Indonesia. India and Indonesia are the two largest emerging market economies in Asia excluding China. These two G-20 countries have the highest number of rated companies and volume of rated debt

among emerging economies in the region outside of China. India's GDP is projected to grow at over 6 per cent over the next two years, Moody's said, adding domestic demand will be the main driving force behind India's growth. The large proportion of domestic consumption in India has and will continue to insulate the rated companies from external shocks. In addition, as urbanisation accelerates across the country, sustained government spending on infrastructure will stimulate business activities across key industrial sectors, Moody's said. India's economy is well diversified across services and manufacturing. India's large domestic market helps to shelter the country from fluctuations in external demand, Moody's said, adding it expects leverage for rated companies in India will remain low.

Almost 2,000 registrations issued under India Handloom Brand so far: Govt

PTI n NEW DELHI

About 2,000 registrations have been issued under the 'India Handloom' Brand for 184 product categories, the government said on Tuesday. The 'India Handloom' Brand was launched on August 7, 2015, on the occasion of the National Handloom Day, to brand high-quality handloom products with zero defects and no ill-effects on the environment.

"Since the launch of the 'India Handloom' Brand, 1,998 registrations have been issued under 184 product categories," the Ministry of Textiles said. The government has undertaken various measures for promoting the handloom sector. To provide end-to-end support for promotion of the sector and welfare of handloom workers, the Ministry of Textiles is implementing the National Handloom Development Programme and Raw Material Supply Scheme across the country, it said. Under the NHD Programme, financial assistance is provided to eligible handloom organisations/workers for upgraded looms and accessories, solar lighting units, construction of workshop, product and design development, technical and common infrastructure, marketing of handloom products in domestic/overseas markets, etc.

SPORTS LIFE IS A BEAUTIFUL LIFE: MANU TELLS STUDENTS

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Crisscrossing the country since returning from Paris with two historic Olympic medals, ace shooter Manu Bhaker was in the southern metropolis on Tuesday, exhorting students to try making a career out of sports as it offers "a beautiful life".

Manu, 22, scripted history in Paris by becoming the first Indian athlete post Independence to win two medals in a single edition of the Olympics, more than making up for her forgettable games debut in Tokyo three years ago.

"My journey, coming from the Tokyo Olympics, it was very difficult for me to be confident again. I was world number two, but I did not do good in it," a garlanded Manu said after being felicitated by the Velammal Nexus School here. "I know the taste of losing and then winning. It's the beauty of sports. One competition you lose, and you can win the other. But, it would only happen if you put in hard work."

Urging young students to take up sports as career options, Manu emphasised on "dreaming big" and "hard work".

"To achieve the goal, we must put in a lot of hard work and effort. It doesn't always start



with aiming for something big, you also have to work to achieve it.

"If you can dream big, you can achieve big. So, always start by dreaming big."

"I always tell myself that no matter if I win or lose in any competition, I'll always be very confident and hold myself high and together, and be very confident."

"We have many career options. You don't have to become a doctor or an engineer. Sports life is a beautiful life. From financial support to any kind of it, you get everything in sports," she asserted.

Manu, who won a bronze each in the women's 10m air pistol and 10m air pistol mixed team event -- where she had paired with Sarabjot Singh -- weighed in on the role of her parents in inspiring her.

"My inspiration came from my mother. She made me the way I am today. She told me to take inspiration, but not to become like anyone else. Without parents' support, a child cannot do much," Manu said.

"My shooting career and journey started at my school. In any sporting career, the beginning happens first from home, and then from school. All the parents and teachers play a very significant role in what you become and what you do with your life."

In her career so far, Manu has won innumerable medals in

top competitions across the world. Reflecting on her journey, the champion shooter said she has learnt a lot in the last few years and urged the youngsters to never shy away from learning new things.

"I have had eight and a half years in my shooting career. I have travelled almost half of the world. I have seen different kinds of people and cultures, their backgrounds and struggles, and also known their journeys."

"We should never be ashamed of where we come from -- the cultural background. You should carry it with pride, and you should be proud of yourself, how far you have come, and you have a long way to go."

"I never knew English, how to talk to people, and many other things I never knew. But, I taught myself."

"People helped me to learn different things. You can always approach a teacher or your parents to learn something new. You can always ask somebody to teach you." Manu also asked the students to not give up after facing setbacks.

"Do not give up on any small setbacks that you face. If you do not win a competition or do not perform well in an exam, do not give up, but hold yourself together, get back up and keep going on," she signed off.

SINQUEFIELD CUP

Gukesh holds Ding Liren, Praggnanandhaa draws with Abdusattorov

PTI ■ SAINT LOUIS (USA)

Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh held reigning world champion Ding Liren of China to a draw in a highly anticipated contest in the first round of the Sinquefield Cup chess tournament here. The clash resembled more of a shadow boxing match than a genuine contest, as both Gukesh, the World Championship challenger, and Liren avoided revealing their true preparations for their upcoming World Championship battle later this year.

The Italian opening met with some usual response and Liren's attempt to complicate

matters through a king side attack met with a cold-water treatment.

In the end, the Chinese decided to end the game through perpetual checks after sacrificing a Bishop and a rook.

After a rather disappointing show in the Saint Louis rapid and blitz tournament where he finished last, Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa made some amends taking a draw with Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan in his opening game.

There was hardly any recovery time for Praggnanandhaa but it seems that the young gun has moved on from the last



event. Petroff defense from Praggnanandhaa faced the Abdusattorov and could do

little as the queens got traded in the early middle game. The remainder was a position wherein neither players could push for more and drew the game in just 36 moves.

Alireza Firouzja of France continued from where he left in the Saint Louis Rapid and blitz tournament and defeated American Fabiano Caruana in what was an important contest for the Grand Chess tour ranking. Leading over Caruana after a fantastic show that netted him the winner's trophy in the rapid and blitz that ended just a couple of days back, Firouzja is now a firm favourite to win the crown from Caruana in the overall

rankings on the tour that had five tournaments this year.

There are eight more rounds to come in the ten player double round robin tournament that has a total prize pool of USD 350000 apart from the Grand Chess tour bonus prize fund of USD 175000.

Results round 1: Fabiano Caruana (USA) lost to Alireza Firouzja (Fra); 2. Wesley So (USA) drew with Anish Giri (ned); Ding Liren (Chn) drew with D Gukesh (Ind); Ian Nepomniachtchi (Fid) drew with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra); R Praggnanandhaa (Ind) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb) 16.



Bumrah has been best multi-format bowler for last 5-6 years: Ponting

PTI ■ DUBAI

India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been the best multi-format bowler for the last five or six years, reckons former Australia captain Ricky Ponting.

Ponting said that there might have been a few concerns over Bumrah's longevity but he has only returned stronger from injuries.

"I've said it for a long time, he's probably been the best multi-format bowler there's been in world cricket for the last five or six years," Ponting said on the ICC review.

"There might have been some fears a couple of years ago when the injuries come in and 'would he come back the same?', but I think he's actually come back better," he added.

"The greatest way to always get a real gauge on these players is by asking (other) players. And when you talk to opposition batsmen about him (Bumrah) in particular, it's always, 'No, he's a

nightmare! You never know what's going to happen."

"One's going to swing, one's going to seam, he's going to bowl an in-swing, he's going to bowl an out-swing," he continued.

With 15 wickets in the T20 World Cup, Bumrah played a pivotal role in India's title triumph and Ponting heaped praise on the 30-year-old.

"If I watch what he did in the T20 World Cup - the pace is still there, there's nothing that's changed with the accuracy or what he can deliver," Ponting said.

"The skillset is all the same. He's getting better year on year. He would rank right up there."

"When you've got that skillset and the consistency that he has, then you're going to be a great player. Look at (Glenn) McGrath, look at (James) Anderson, these guys, their longevity and their skills being able to hold up for such a long period of time is what separates them from the rest," Ponting added.

Dhruv Chavan crowned Polo Cup champion

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Mumbai's Dhruv Chavan edged out Aditya Patnaik to emerge champion in the Polo Cup India 2024 racing event here on Tuesday.

Dhruv (183 points) pipped Aditya (170 points) to the post to take the title by a mere four points. Ojas Surve settled for the third position with 159 points.

Aditya jumped into the lead, winning Race 1 at the Madras International Circuit.

But Dhruv took the next race to catch up with him. In round 2, Aditya made a strong statement by winning the first race. However, Dhruv was more consistent, securing crucial



points in rest of the races in the round to bag the title. Romir Arya was crowned the Best Rookie of the season while Munjal Savla won the Master Championship.

T20 World Cup: New York's notorious drop-in pitches get six satisfactory ratings

PTI ■ DUBAI

The ICC match referees have gone soft on the much-maligned pitches used for the New York leg of the T20 World Cup with six of the eight games, including the India versus Pakistan contest, getting a "satisfactory" rating. Only two games at the makeshift Nassau County Cricket Stadium, including India's opening fixture against Ireland, have got an "unsatisfactory" rating from the game's governing body which remains bullish on promoting cricket in the United States.

The surface used for the game between Sri Lanka

and South Africa also got thumbs down from the match referee.

After a rather long delay, the ICC published the pitch ratings on its website on Tuesday. The tournament, won by India, was played from June 1 to 29.

All eight games in New York ended up being low-scoring affairs, drawing scathing criticism from experts and fans during and after the ICC event.

The cricket on display in New York was not the best advert for a sport trying to make its presence felt ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, where it will make its debut.

India played three games in New York while their match against Canada in Fort Lauderdale was washed out. The drop-in tracks prepared in Adelaide by curator Damian Hough and transported to New York proved to be underprepared with hardly any testing done before the opening game between South Africa and Sri Lanka.

The surface came under fire for its unpredictable bounce and sluggish outfield throughout the tournament.

For the eight games in New York, the average first innings score was 107.6.

Ranjan Madugalle, David Boon, Jeff Crowe and Richie Richardson were the four

match referees for the games in New York.

The pitch for India's Super 8 game against Afghanistan in Barbados was rated "satisfactory" with only the final match's strip being deemed "very good".

Out of the 52 games staged in the competition, only three games were rated "unsatisfactory" and the third one being the semi-final between Afghanistan and South Africa in Trinidad, where the former was bowled out for 56.

Last year, the ICC had given "average" rating to the surface for the ODI World Cup final between India and Australia in Ahmedabad.

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Coming off a fighting 1-0 win over Bhutan, the Indian team will need to work on its finishing in the upcoming matches of the SAFF U20 Championship, head coach Ranjan Chaudhuri reckoned on Tuesday.

Having beaten their Himalayan neighbours 1-0 in their opening match, India have provisionally taken the top spot in Group B with three points.

While Chaudhuri was full of praise for his boys who managed to hold on to the lead against Bhutan despite being down to nine men, he also pointed out how India still need to improve while going forward.

"The way our boys fought after the two red cards is indeed commendable. It's not easy to set a stable formation with nine players, but they managed to hold fort. It speaks a great deal about their character," said Chaudhuri. "Not only did they hold fort,

India need to hone finishing skills after Bhutan triumph: Head coach



but they also broke through Bhutan's defence a few times. Finishing is perhaps the one area we have to work on."

With a three-day gap before their next match against Maldives on August 23, the Blue Colts could manage to squeeze some rest and recovery into their packed schedule.

Chaudhuri said, "We are playing on artificial turfs, which do tend to take a toll on the body, so we have planned to have a recovery session today (Tuesday, August 20). We had initially planned for a pool session, but the rain and the relatively cooler weather here in Nepal made us reconsider those plans.

Hence we went ahead with light stretching."

"We plan to put in two productive training sessions in the next couple of days before we play Maldives."

With three points on board, the India U20s will have one eye on the next Group B match between Bhutan and Maldives on Wednesday, where a victory for the latter would secure a spot in the semi-finals for the Blue Colts.

"I'm watching all the matches in this tournament, and I will definitely be watching that one. A lot depends on how that match goes," he said. "We are also going to dissect our match and try to rectify our mistakes from it."

Midfielder Manjot Singh

Dhami was in agreement with his coach, and felt that the team could only improve from here on.

"We can play much better than what we did, and we must show that in our next game. We must work on our combination and communication. But I feel the more matches we play here, the better we will get," said Dhami.

"This is the competition phase, after all. It's all about what attitude we approach these games with."

As India prepare for the next match against Maldives, two of their players, Pramveer and Vanlalpeka Guite will be suspended after being sent off against Bhutan. However, the Blue Colts head coach is not overwhelmed by the situation.

"Yes, we will have to replace them in our next match, but the boys are all ready. Those players who started from the bench are equally good, and now it's an opportunity for the others to fight for those two spots," he said.

Samoan batter Visser sets new T20I record with 39-run over



Nepal's Dipendra Singh Airee creamed sixes off Qatar's Kamran Khan in the ACC Premier Cup, while Windies' Nicholas Pooran hit Afghanistan pacer Azmatullah Omarzai for six sixes during the T20 World Cup this June at Gros Islet. Rohit Sharma and Rinku Singh combined to take 36 runs off Afghanistan pacer Karim Janat at Bengaluru during a bilateral T20I that India won in the first-ever second Super Over. Along with joining these big names, Visser, who also dabbles in coaching in Australia when he does not have international commitments, made another piece of history as his century was the first by a Samoan batter in T20Is. The knock guided the side to a competitive 174 all out. The next highest score in Samoa innings was 16 by Jasmat, and it underlined the value of his knock. In reply, Vanuatu gave a strong chase but ended up at 164 for nine, losing the match by 10 runs. Opener Nipiko nearly amended his waywardness with the ball with a 73 off 52 balls with six fours and three sixes. He had good support from skipper Joshua Rasu (23 off 14 balls) and Tim Cutler (21 off 11 balls) but Vanuatu fell short.



Bhushan's T-Series announces a biopic on Indian cricketer Yuvraj

PTI ■ MUMBAI
A biographical upcoming movie will chronicle the inspiring journey of former Indian cricketer Yuvraj Singh, the makers announced Tuesday. The yet-to-be-titled biopic will be produced by Bhushan Kumar's T-Series and co-produced by Ravi Bhagchandka, known for "Sachin: A Billion Dreams" and the upcoming Aamir Khan-starrer "Sitaare Zameen Par". The film is touted as a "grand celebration of Singh's unparalleled journey and contributions to cricket, capturing the essence of his career, unforgettable six sixes in the 2007 T20 World Cup, his courageous off-field battles and his subsequent return to cricket in 2012", a press release said. Singh, who began his career at the age of 13, said he is hoping his life story will inspire people to overcome challenges. "I'm deeply honoured that my story will be showcased to millions of my fans across the globe by Bhushan and Ravi. Cricket has been my greatest love and source of strength through all the highs and lows. I hope this film inspires others to overcome their own challenges and pursue their dreams with unwavering passion," the former India all-rounder said. Kumar, known for backing blockbuster films such as "Drishtiyaa 2", "Animal", "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2", "Kabir Singh" and "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior", said he is excited to bring out the inspiring journey of Singh on the big screen. "Yuvraj Singh's life is a compelling narrative of resilience, triumph, and passion. His journey from a promising cricketer to a cricketing hero, and then to a hero in real life, is truly inspiring. "I'm thrilled to bring a story that needs to be told and heard through the big screen and to celebrate his extraordinary achievements," he said. The makers are yet to announce the key details about the film, including the director and cast.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Samoa middle-order batter Darius Visser on Tuesday set a new world record for most runs in an over in T20Is, accumulating 39 against Vanuatu in the World Cup East Asia-Pacific Region Qualifier in the capital city of Apia. Visser hammered pacer Nalin

Nipiko for six sixes in an over that also included three no balls. The 28-year-old right-handed batter, who learned the ropes in Sydney grade cricket, was playing in only his third T20I, and comes with the reputation of being a genuine power-hitter, who once topped the shot-speed session by Hype Cricket Academy in

New South Wales, clocking a shade over 160 kmph. His big-hitting ability was evident in his knock against Vanuatu -- 132 off 62 balls with five fours and 14 sixes. "It was clean hitting (by Visser). We did not know it was a world record, and later it was mentioned during the innings break. "But happy for him, and

happy that we managed a win. Looking forward to the next match," Samoa skipper Jasmat Caleb replied to a PTI query. Samoa will face bitter rivals Fiji in their next EAP Qualifier match on Wednesday. Previously, there were five occasions when a bowler conceded 36 runs in an over and they were Stuart Broad

(2007), Akila Dananjaya (2021), Karim Jannat (2024), Kamran Khan (2024) and Azmatullah Omarzai (2024). Broad conceded six sixes in as many balls against Yuvraj Singh of India in the 2007 T20 World Cup, while Windies batsman Kieron Pollard achieved the feat against Dananjaya during a bilateral T20I at Coolidge, Antigua.



Debutants grab goals for Juventus

AP ■ LECCE (ITALY)
It was a good day for debutants in Italy's Serie A as new faces at Juventus and Atalanta gave their teams a winning start to the league season. New Juventus coach Thiago Motta surprised fans by handing a debut to youth academy graduate Samuel Mbangula on Monday and the 20-year-old winger responded by scoring the opening goal in a 3-0 win over Como. Mbangula cut in from the left in the 23rd minute and slotted a low drive into the far corner to give Juventus the lead. US international Timothy Weah scored the second for the Turin club when he smashed a shot in off the underside of the bar just before halftime. It was the American's first league goal for the club. Andrea Cambiaso added a third in injury time to pad the scoreline in Cesc Fabregas' first league game in charge of Como since taking over as head coach this offseason.

Nagal, Gaston to feature in 6th Tennis Premier League in Mumbai from Dec 3-8

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Ace Indian player Sumit Nagal and France's Hugo Gaston will be the main attractions in the men's category of the sixth Tennis Premier League to be held here from December 3-8. Poland's Magda Linette, who is ranked 41st in the world, and Armenia's world No 52 Elna Avanesyan, will headline the women's category in the tournament which will be held at the

Cricket Club of India. The tournament will be played in a 25-point format in which each franchise will play a total of five matches to make the semifinals. The matches between two franchises will include men's singles, women's singles, mixed doubles and men's doubles as there will be a total of 100 points at stake with each category carrying 25 points. "Each team will play a total of 500 points (100 points x 5



matches) at the league stage and the top four teams in the points table to qualify for the semi-finals," the organisers

said in a release on Tuesday. A total of seven franchises, PBG Pune Jaguars, Bengal Wizards, Punjab Patriots, Hyderabad Strikers, Gujarat Panthers, Mumbai Leon Army and defending champions Bengaluru SG Pipers will vie for top honours. In order to discover and monitor young players, the organisers said TPL has tied up with Gujarat State Tennis Association (GSTA), Delhi Lawn Tennis Association

(DLTA) and Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA) for conducting district ranking tournaments apart from introducing their own mobile app. "Over 100 academies have been affiliated with TPL app from various regions of India. It connects the tennis community across India and allows them to compete with each other and helps the tennis players to track their progress," it added.

Atalanta routs Lecce
New signings Mateo Retegui and Marco Brescianini both scored twice as Atalanta routed Lecce 4-0 in a blistering start to its campaign. Brescianini joined last season's Europa League winners from Frosinone just three days ago and Retegui was signed last week from Genoa. Brescianini got the opener when the midfielder pounced on a parried save by goalkeeper Wladimiro Falcone after 35 minutes and then Retegui doubled Atalanta's lead with a powerful header on the stroke of halftime. Retegui got the third from the penalty spot 12 minutes into the second period and then Brescianini took advantage of gaping holes in the Lecce defence to make it four after 65 minutes. The result means the Bergamo club sits top of the Serie A table on goal difference after one round.

Injured Messi out of Argentina's squad for World Cup qualifiers against Chile, Colombia

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA)
Lionel Messi will not play in Argentina's next two World Cup qualifiers because of injury. Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni announced his 28-man squad on Monday for the matches against Chile on September 5 and Colombia five days later. Messi is still recovering from a right ankle injury. The 36-year-old Angel Di Maria, who retired from the national team after winning the recent Copa America, is not on the list either. World Cup champion Argentina leads South American qualifying with 15 points after six matches.



(Atletico Madrid), Cristian Romero (Tottenham), Germán Pezzella (River Plate), Leonardo Balerdi (Olympique Marseille), Nicolás Otamendi (Benfica), Lisandro Martínez (Manchester United), Nicolás Tagliafico (Olympique Lyon), Valentín Barco (Brighton).

(Chelsea), Giovanni Lo Celso (Tottenham), Ezequiel Fernández (Al Qadisiya), Rodrigo de Paul (Atletico Madrid), Nico González (Fiorentina).

Goalkeepers: Walter Benítez (PSV Eindhoven), Gerónimo Rulli (Olympique Marseille), Juan Musso (Atalanta), Emiliano Martínez (Aston Villa).

Forwards: Alejandro Garnacho (Manchester United), Matías Soule (Roma), Giuliano Simeone, Julián Álvarez both (Atletico Madrid), Valentín Carboni (Olympique Marseille), Lautaro Martínez (Inter Milan) and Valentín Castellanos (Lazio).

Vardy scores on PL return as Leicester holds Tottenham to 1-1 draw

PTI ■ LEICESTER (ENGLAND)
Jamie Vardy still knows how to score in the Premier League. The 37-year-old striker rescued a point for Leicester in its return to the Premier League on Monday by heading home a second-half equaliser in a 1-1 draw against Tottenham, which had largely dominated the first half. Tottenham had plenty of opportunities to build a bigger lead but new signing Dominic Solanke was among those guilty of missing chances. Instead it was Spanish defender Pedro Porro who made

Tottenham's early superiority count after 29 minutes when he got between two Leicester defenders to head James Maddison's cross into the net at the far post. But Vardy, who was key to Leicester's stunning Premier League title win in 2016 and has remained with the club since then, was left unmarked to head home an equaliser. A corner count of 9-0 gave some indication of Spurs' dominance in the first half but Vardy's goal changed the game completely. Steve Cooper's team suddenly looked a lot livelier and both



teams had chances to win in a busy last half hour. "Tottenham are a really good team but we gave them too much respect, and we started getting after them and it changed the momentum," Vardy told Sky Sports. Vardy spurned a good chance in the 70th minute when he was able to run clear on goal but his low shot was saved by Guglielmo Vicario. At the other end, Richarlison sent a header wide deep into injury time with the last chance of the match. "It is a disappointing night for us," Tottenham manager Ange

Postecoglou said. "We need to be more ruthless in front of goal. We were that dominant, we should have been well away from the opposition. To be that wasteful tonight when we had so much of the ball and territory, it is disappointing." The game was halted for eight minutes late in the second half after Tottenham midfielder Rodrigo Bentancur sustained a head injury. The Uruguayan received oxygen and taken off on a stretcher, but Postecoglou said he was "conscious and communicating."

Top-ranked Jannik and women's number 2 Aryna win titles in Cincinnati

AP ■ MASON (US)
Top-ranked Jannik Sinner and women's No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka earned straight-set victories in the finals of the Cincinnati Open, the first titles at the tournament for both players. Sabalenka on Monday defeated Jessica Pegula 6-3 7-5 for her first title since the Australian Open in January. Sinner, who turned 23 on Friday, beat American Frances Tiafoe 7-6(4) 6-2 to become the youngest Cincinnati champion since 21-year-old Andy Murray won in 2008. "I'm very happy to be in the position where I am," Sinner said. "I'm just trying to keep going this way mentally. It's important to recover to be ready for New York. That's the most important thing." The US Open begins on August 26 in New York. Sinner and Tiafoe were both playing in their first Cincinnati finals with their previous best results being the third round. Tiafoe forced a tiebreak in the first set, but three straight



errors led to a 7-6 defeat. Sinner had a 5-1 lead in the second before Tiafoe saved three match points to make it 5-2 before Sinner was able to serve out for the win. Tiafoe had a less conventional path to the final. He won the first set in the quarterfinals on Saturday before Hubert Hurkacz retired with a calf injury then saved two match points to defeat Holger Rune in three sets in the semis. An American man hasn't won the title in Cincinnati since Andy Roddick in 2006. Sabalenka moved up a spot to No. 2 in the rankings before the match, then didn't lose a set en

route to her 15th WTA title. She had never gotten past the semifinals at Cincinnati, losing three times in that round. The 26-year-old Sabalenka can now be considered a favorite at the US Open. The Belarusian missed Wimbledon with a shoulder injury, then returned to the tour at Washington two weeks ago. "I would say that I'm really playing great tennis," Sabalenka said. "Probably not the best tennis I can play but I'm definitely getting there. Hopefully at the US Open I can reach even higher levels." Against Pegula, Sabalenka took 17 minutes to build a 4-1 lead in the first set. Pegula, who double-faulted five times, broke serve for the first time to tie the second set at 5-all, but Sabalenka won the next two games to finish off the 1-hour, 14-minute match. "She was playing at a high level and never really came down," Pegula said. "When she's serving really well, it's tough, especially on these fast courts." The sixth-ranked Pegula had a challenging road to the final. After defending her title at Toronto, the American played two matches on Friday because of weather-related postponements and had three matches go three sets. Her time on the court exceeded Sabalenka's by more than two hours entering the final. "I'm proving to myself that I can play a lot of matches and overcome a lot of challenges," Pegula said. "I'm looking forward to not doing anything for a few days." Sabalenka joined top-ranked Iga Swiatek as the only players with 10 or more WTA titles since 2020.